

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

VOLUME 117

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION (1987) OF THE NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF  
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

---

6th Sitting

14:00 hr Thursday, 1986-03-06

---

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (73)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (61)

Ministers in the Cabinet (10)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,  
Prime Minister

Other Vice-President and First Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,  
Vice-President, First Deputy Prime Minister  
and Attorney General

Other Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,  
Vice-President, National Mobilisation,  
and Deputy Prime Minister

Cde. Viola V. Burnham, O.R., M.P.,  
Vice-President, Education and Social Development,  
and Deputy Prime Minister

Other Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. W.A.L.H. Parris, C.C.H., M.P.,  
Deputy Prime Minister, Planning and  
Development (Absent)

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,  
Deputy Prime Minister, Public Utilities

Senior Ministers (4)

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

\*Cde. C.B. Greenidge, M.P.,  
Minister of Finance

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,  
Minister of Manpower and Housing

\*Cde. W.S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P., (Absent - on leave)  
Minister of Trade and Tourism

Other Ministers (11)

Senior Minister (3)

Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,  
Ministry of Manpower, Housing and Environment

Cde. Dr. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,

Minister of Health

Cde. Yvonne V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,  
Minister of Information and the Public Service

\* Non-elected Member

**Ministers (4)**

- Cde. Urmia E.H. Johnson, M.P.,  
Minister within the Ministry of National  
Mobilisation
- \*Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,  
Minister of Youth and Sport within the Ministry of Education
- Cde. C.G. Sharma, A.A., J.P., M.P.,  
Minister within the Office of the President
- \*Cde. D.M.A. Bernard, M.P.,  
Minister within the Ministry of Education

**Ministers of State (4)**

- \*Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of Manpower, Housing and Environment
- Cde. J.T. Kissoon, M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. D. Sawh, M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of Forestry
- \*Cde. Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of Planning and Development

**Parliamentary Secretaries (3)**

- Cde. A.K. Habibulla, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the President
- Cde. Stella Odie-Ali, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Home Affairs
- \*Cde. Jean M.G. Persico, A.A., M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Education

**Government Chief Whip (1)**

- Cde. Jennifer A. Ferreira, M.P., (Absent – on leave)  
Government Chief Whip

**Other Members (24)**

- Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P. (Absent – on leave)
- Cde. Agnes W. Bend-Kirton, M.P.
- Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
- Cde. Joyce Gill-Mingo, M.P.
- Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
- Cde. Bissoondai Beniprashad-Rayman, M.P.
- Cde. Elaine B. Davidson, M.P.
- Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
- Cde. Joyce M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. Edwina Melville, M.P.
- Cde. Amna Ally, M.P.
- Cde. L. Arthur, M.P.
- Cde. J.R.L. Bovell-Drakes, M.P.
- Cde. N. Calistro, M.P.
- Cde. G.W. Chin, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. F.M. Cumberbatch, M.P.
- Cde. M.I. Deen, M.P.

\* Non-elected Member

Cde. Cyrilda A. DeJesus, M.P.  
Cde. Edith Deygoo, M.P.  
Cde. Clarice A. Edwards, M.P.  
Cde. C.L. Geddes, M.P.  
Cde. G. Marshall, M.P.  
Cde. B. Persaud, M.P.  
Cde. E.W. Trotman, M.P.

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

Cde. E. Mohamed, M.P.  
Cde. Rose I. Semple, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. Nellie R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)  
Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)  
Cde. Bhagmatee Latchminarayan, M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)  
Cde. Y. Khan, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)  
Cde. Enid E. Abrahams, M.S., J.P., M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo  
Islands/West Demerara)  
Cde. I. Ally, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)  
Cde. Patricia A. Daniel, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/  
Berbice)  
Cde. B.L. Domingo, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)  
Cde. S.I. McGarrell, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)  
Cde. M. Stephens, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper  
Essequibo)

Members of the Minority (11)

(i) People's Progressive Party (8)

Minority Leader (1)

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

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.,  
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (6)

Cde. Janet Jagan, M.P.  
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.  
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.,  
Minority Chief Whip  
Cde. H. Nokta, M.P. (Absent - on leave)  
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.  
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, C.C.H., J.P., M.P. (Absent - on leave)  
Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

(iii) Working People's Alliance (1)

Mr. E. Kwayana, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

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

14:05 hrs

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

LEAVE

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Murray until 8th March, Cde. Williams until 15th March, Cde. Nokta until the end of March and Mr. M.F. Singh for today's sitting.

The Speaker: Comrades, I also wish to state that I received two applications for the adjournment of the Assembly on matters of urgent public business, one by Mr. Kwayana and one from Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud. I informed them that I regret that I was unable to entertain that motion because the rules provide that when a matter is to be raised on the Estimates no leave should be granted. Such a situation is now before the Assembly and they will have to use the appropriate time to discuss this matter. I would also like to take this opportunity to remind members that there are two election petitions before the court and I will not entertain any reference to the election petitions pending the decision of the courts.

STATEMENT BY MINISTERS

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, I wish to make a statement on a subject that is of interest to all of us in this honourable Assembly and indeed in Guyana. During the past two or three weeks a majority of us have been affected by an uneven supply of fuel. Perhaps the most noticeable phenomena has been the long lines with motorists experiencing difficulty in obtaining gasoline which has in turn had some impact on transportation of workers, school children and other members of the public. The importance of fuel both gas and oil, in sustaining the economic growth in Guyana and indeed throughout the world can neither be denied nor underestimated. By now we are all aware of the fundamental problem mainly the unavailability of adequate amounts of foreign exchange to finance the normal quantities of petroleum export products. I, Cde. Speaker, however, thought that I should take this opportunity to recap on some developments leading up to the present.

Cde. Speaker, we are all in this honourable Assembly familiar with developments which have taken place in the International Oil Market during the past twelve years when two days before the Christmas of 1973 in the lavish surroundings of the Neavada Palace, the Shah of Iran announced new oil prices. The already delicately balance economies of every non oil producing countries were severely shaken and undermined. The Shah informed the world that for the

1986-03-06

14:05 - 14:15 hrs

second time within three months the price of fuel was to be doubled, Come the beginning of the following year that is 1974. As a result of this and other developments, Guyana's fuel import bill has increased dramatically from \$60 million in 1973 to \$436 million in 1985 last year. This is an increase of 627 per cent. An average increase of well over 50 per cent per annum.

Although the trend very recently has been for the international price of crude oil to stop, Guyana and other importers of petroleum products have not yet benefitted. There has not been any significant consequential reduction of our fuel bills. Cde. Speaker, whereas the country expended 9 per cent of its foreign exchange earnings on fuel in 1973, by 1985 that figure, that is the expenditure on this single item, fuel, has risen to 50 per cent. All economic activity depends upon the supply of fuel. Our major industries, electricity, transportation and manufacturing and we must not forget cooking are all paralysed without this item fuel.

1986-07-06

National Assembly

14:15 - 14:25 hrs

14:15 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

The big consuming nations are directing considerable sums towards research and development, but it is believed that for the immediate a significant increase in alternative supplies cannot be realised to take the burden off oil. We too continue to ease our over dependence on oil. Efforts to expand the charcoal industry continue. Sugar has made progress in the use of bagasse, the timber industry is seeking ways to make full use of their waste for energy. But while these efforts continue the fact is that we still depend on oil to keep <sup>us</sup> going.

The reality is that during 1979 to 1982 importers in the Caribbean Community benefitted from a CARICOM OIL Facility which was established by the Trinidad and Tobago Government to assist CARICOM States to cope with balance of payments difficulties associated with oil price increases. This Facility was and indeed tremendous of significant assistance to Guyana in these earlier years. However, in September of last year, the Governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana agreed that with effect from October 1, 1985, trade between the two countries should balance. This in effect required Guyana to export goods and services to Trinidad and Tobago equivalent in value to the goods and services imported from Trinidad and Tobago. In addition, it was stipulated that to the extent that Trinidad's exports to Guyana exceeded the value of Guyana's exports to that country, Guyana would be required to settle the difference in hard currency, to be more specific, in U.S. dollars.

Now is the real problem. Previously, it was possible to settle this difference in Trinidad and Tobago dollars.

We have been unable to sell Trinidad and Tobago the equivalent value of our goods, mainly rice, due to the high value of Trinidad and Tobago exports, mainly fuel, to us. By way of example, for October and November last year, we ran up deficits of US\$2 million per month. This had to be financed by hard U.S. dollar payment garnered from other sources. On top of all this, in December last year the situation was aggravated because exports to Trinidad were temporarily stopped due to the existence of sizeable stocks of rice in the Trinidad market. Since rice was our main traditional export to Trinidad, it

1986-03-06

14:15 - 14:25 hrs

was further agreed that Guyana should supply a minimum of 3,000 tons of rice per month at an agreed price of US\$581 per ton. This had a particularly damaging effect and impact on our efforts to achieve balance in our trade with Trinidad since the value of rice exports represented some 58 per cent of our total exports to them. We thus, Cde. Speaker, see the level and frequency of U.S. dollar payments required to finance fuel imports increased sharply and were consequently difficult to sustain. The outcome - intermittent delays in the supply of petroleum products to us.

Discussions with Trinidad and Tobago are continuing with a view to expanding our trade. In the meantime, rice shipments are expected to recommence very shortly.

In view of the importance of the supply of fuel to our economy it was necessary that our current situation be carefully examined and some realistic decisions made. To this end, along with the Cde. Ministers of Finance, Information and the Public Service, Transport and the Cde. President's Economic Adviser, I met recently with representatives of the Oil Companies, Gas Stations, Guyana Consumers Association and other interested groups, including the Patriots. Today I received a delegation from the Trades Union Congress, headed by its President, Cde. George Daniels. Cde. Speaker, in every case I was able to discuss and benefit from their advice.

The outcome of these discussions reinforced our view that it is necessary to focus on ways and means of improving on the efficient use of petroleum products and intensify our efforts on energy conservation.

As you are aware, some measures, namely, Guyana Electricity Corporation's load shedding programme and new opening hours for gas stations were put in place last week. However, as a result of that meeting and our discussions, we have accepted the recommendations of the distributors and the owners of the gas stations. Consequently, with immediate effect, the restriction on opening hours for gas stations would be removed. Gas station dealers will be given the flexibility to determine their opening hours of business, and that due consideration will be given and taken of G.E.C.'s load shedding programme and, of course, the availability of fuel.

14:25 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

Second, Oil Companies have undertaken to cooperate among themselves and with the gas station dealers to ensure an even distribution to gas stations of available supplies of fuel and thirdly, the sale of gasoline in containers will be discontinued until further notice. I repeat Cde. Speaker, these measures proposed and agreed by those involved will come with effect immediately.

The Government is very heartened and encouraged by the support and cooperation expressed by the Oil Companies, gas station dealers and other interested groups including the T.U.C. The Government, through the Guyana National Energy Authority will continue to monitor the situation closely, and stands ready to discuss further this question with interested and patriotic citizens.

Cde. Speaker, together let us face our difficulties with strength and resolve - together I am confident without Cde. President we stand up for Guyana. Thank you.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1986

BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed debate on the Motion moved by the Minister of Finance for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1986.

The Speaker: Cde. Collymore.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Speaker, we on this side of the House . . . . with the Minister giving a statement. It is statement of facts, but some of the facts are not there.

The Speaker: What are you dealing with?

Cde. Collymore: Budget.

The Speaker: Oh!

Cde. Collymore: This is not the first time we have had a fuel crisis but this is the first time it has been so severe and pronounced. Crisis is part of the budget. I have read the budget statement it contains all the same old clichés and parameters. We seem to be in a rock in which we cannot extricate ourselves. There is a light at



the end of the tunnel, Mr. Burnham said in 1982, obviously the light . . . .  
 Our economic cloud has a silver lining, Minister Greenidge said in 1986.  
 The positive features which are in the budget have been swamped by the negative aspects. We can see an acceleration in economic downturn.

Gda. Speaker, noting what the Prime Minister has said - I will not want to fault him, I can only deduce that <sup>what</sup> we have here is a coalpot budget in an age of high technology. A coalpot budget also existing in a time of loftier Guyanese aspirations. It is the same old structure budget, increase taxation, retrenchment and redundancy, wage restraint, soaring cost of living, chronic indebtedness, cut in social spending, economic strictures, bloated security bureaucracy, waiting about adverse terms of trade but they are not doing anything about it. Empty sloganeering - stand up for Guyana, we just heard. We are lining up for Guyana according to one of my friends at the Press table. Gda. Speaker, if any country has queues of deep magnitude it means that the economy is malfunctioning and it is a sign of <sup>economic</sup> inefficiency and mal-administration and I hold no apologies for that. They are inefficient, notwithstanding what the honourable Prime Minister has said.

Sharing in the budget - if you look at it you will see once more there are some cinderella sectors who are Godmothers and some sectors which are over-patronised. We call these warps - they are warps in the budget structure and as long as these warps continue like this we cannot come out of this problem. We can come out if production moves. Production is not moving. Do you think the huge big vehicles . . . will generate production, those people are idling.

Debt, we have here in this year \$451.9 m in debt charges, debt payments. The total, that comes up to 23.7% of the total for the capital and current. Security, we have worn out \$250.6 m or 13.1% of the total budget. Agriculture \$158.5 m or 8.3% of the budget. Taking into consideration what the Minister has just said on which sector are we depending to get us out of this problem debt, security or agriculture? but here we find that agriculture has been down graded to third place. We have given this Government some advice in 1982 as to how to find necessary sums to finance agriculture and to make funds, but they have not heeded the advice. One or two things they did but the main advice was not heeded so we are in this problem in 1986. Our advice in 1982 stands firm in 1986. Last year the warp was demonstrated in a dramatic fashion, we paid \$437.7 m towards debts and the security budget jumped to \$274.5 m, 18.3 % of the

1986-03-06

14:25 - 14:35 hrs

total budget. Agriculture was 99.9% less than one hundred million dollars. 6.6%, compare 6.6% with 18.5% and 29.0% for security and debt respectively. The security budget last year was approximately three times the size of the agricultural vote. Debt charges were approximately five times the size of the agricultural vote, where industry is concerned, that is not visible on their item. As I said before, cinderella sectors still exist without fairy Godmothers. We are telling our friends on the opposite side that their priorities are all wrong, for twenty one years therefore, progress never came.

Cde. Speaker, when we look at the statistics for last year, Government estimated at a budget - occasion like this expenditure of \$80.5m on debt charges but our friends found \$55.5m more to solve the debt, they found that, that had to be found in foreign currency and local currency. \$55.5m more they found from their grasp. Security had estimated \$180.9 m, Army Militia, National Service, Police \$190.8m. Our friends found \$224.5m, \$83.4m more they found somewhere.

14:35 hrs

In Agriculture they budgeted for \$182.5 million. They spent only \$95.5 million. They spent \$82.2 million less than the sum budgeted. Agriculture is a valuable sector and has problems. I am forced to conclude that there were reasons. The Minister can explain to this Assembly, but we on this side of the Assembly are forced to conclude that money that should have been spent on agriculture went to the military bureaucracy. The vote for agriculture was reduced by \$82.2 million and the military vote was increased by \$83 million. Work it out.

We are saying that without greater earnings from agriculture the debt obligations will not be met. The country is in debt. We all know that and we ought, therefore, to spend more money on agriculture. Why is the Government spending so much money on security? We cannot come out of debt and next year we are going to be treated to a statement similar to that given to this Assembly by the hon. Prime Minister.

Our friends cry oceans of crocodile tears when they see things going wrong. In the Cinderella sectors like Housing and Co-operatives - not a single house was built by this Government last year. Let them tell me how many houses were built, if they say that this statement is not true. The sum voted was \$3 million. The Government spent \$2.8 million and, in accordance with the legend in the 1985 Estimates, it was not trying to build any houses. The Government seems to be washing its hands of housing construction and handing it over to the private sector and to individuals.

Where co-operatives are concerned, I would say that last year the vote was \$2.5 million. When you look at the legend you will see that not a single cent was earmarked for co-operative development. I do not know why my friends do not read the Estimates, unless the Estimates are meant for public consumption and they read something else. This year the sum to be voted is \$1.5 million and co-op development is being given \$85,000 to buy a Land Rover. My friends are going to buy one Land Rover. The vote shows that they spent \$25,000 on co-op development and that sum of money cannot buy a Land Rover.

Another sector in the Cinderella area is Education. When I looked at the Estimates I saw that last year the vote was revised to \$148.4 million. This year it is \$93.9 million. It is chopped by \$54.5 million. My good friend on the other side, Cde. Donald Ainsworth, was ousted from the Ministry of Education but I am sure that his ouster would not have resulted in such a large saving.

Something has to be wrong. There is more in the mortar than the pestle, but we are going to have wholesale redundancies, falling standards, decrepit structures and overcrowding in schools.

With regard to consumer goods, we are urging our friends to reimport wheat. The President said he is going to take the necessary step to import wheat. This should have been done ever since. We are not saying that this is a big point. We are also saying that split peas should be imported again and our fuel shopping list should be diversified. The Prime Minister gave a very interesting analysis of the fuel situation. We cannot fault it unless we have other facts. Why is the Government not diversifying the basket of fuel? There is a currency basket; there is a fuel basket. Why is the Government buying only from Trinidad and Trinidad is the short end of the Caribbean states. Why are we always making sacrifices to CARICOM? The Caribbean states are like second-class cousins. We are saying that we should move out and diversify our fuel shopping list. We will find other areas. Venezuela is right next door to us. Venezuela refines oil and Venezuela is 600 miles closer to us than Trinidad. The Soviet Union has tankers. They go to Nicaragua, they go to Cuba and they go elsewhere. Why can't they stop at Port Georgetown in Guyana to bring fuel. We are exporting bauxite. Make arrangements to trade bauxite for fuel. Trinidad is no longer prepared to give us credit for oil. If you have to pay cash, then buy where you want. Go and buy in the cheapest market. We do not agree that we should be held to ransom by Trinidad and its problems.

Consumer goods have been under-purchased for many years. This is the reason why we have such a large and expanding parallel market. Statistics show that in 1984 we spent \$110 million buying consumer goods. Last year we budgeted to spend \$150 million but we only spent a revised sum of \$100 million. This year it is to be \$108 million. We are saying that the figures are much too low and this is the reason why the parallel market is so bloated and so vibrant.

Obviously we have problems on the foreign front. We have many diplomats and many diplomatic missions. We are saying that the Government should put the diplomats to work. Let them find the markets and find the loans. Over a three year period, 1984 to 1986, these diplomatic missions have cost us \$66.8 million. These people are not working hard enough. Some of them are not working at all. They are supposed to find the loans and the credit is not available in this country. The capital is in the countries where they are and obviously the proof of the

pudding is in the eating. They are not working.

On the subject of conservation of energy, we agree with the Minister that we should conserve energy, but we must have the energy to conserve. Where is the fuel? The Minister just said that fuel is in short supply. The squeeze is on. Credit is drying up. Because of this we observe that there is more frustration before the altar of the I.M.F. and before the almighty dollar. We only hope that the national interest will not be sold out because we have seen in the Budget Statement that there is going to be a sell-out of national assets. We are making a distinction between national interest and national assets.

Mammoth queues are a scandal and a colossal waste of time. Vehicles, workers, farmers, administrators, citizens and consumers are standing up for Guyana in queues. Do you know what is happening with thousands of vehicles in queues? When they are about to receive gasoline there is a black-out for six hours. What is going to happen to the productive sector? Permit me, Cde. Speaker, to quote from page 10 of the Budget Statement by the hon. Minister of Finance:

"Naturally one important consideration to be borne in mind when considering conservation policies is the need to avoid sudden and drastic changes in supply since such changes can have adverse social consequences and also disrupt production."

(Cdo. Gollymore continues)

1986-03-06

National Assembly

14:45 - 14:55 hrs

14:45 hrs

I will now quote from page 10 of the Budget Speech:

"Naturally one important consideration to be borne in mind when considering conservation policies is the need to avoid sudden and drastic changes in supply since such changes can have adverse social consequences and also disrupt production."

Well, why have they done it? Why have they made such a sudden and drastic change to disrupt production? And these are the same people who are saying workers are not working, they are not producing. Everybody must try and help and stand up for Guyana and you are not giving the people the food. The people want to work. The Guyanese people want to work, they want to produce, they want to manufacture, you are giving them blackouts and outages.

Cdo. Speaker, I have here with me a Memo from the Guyana Electricity Corporation talking about the conservation scandals. They call it a programme and they say it is going to last from March to December 1986. Can you imagine that thing lasting till December 1986? Perhaps my friends will not be there anymore. We will be there and they will be here. [Laughter.] Cdo. Speaker, the laugh is on me. According to this memo it says on page 1: "There will be compulsory 6 hour periods of load shedding for a maximum period of 6 days each week within the DIS". When I asked what is DIS, I was told Demerara Interconnected System. So within Demerara alone you will six hours load shedding for 6 days during the week. When you compute this list here it comes up 1,584 hours of no power. Of 7,392 hours there is 21.4 per cent of a power out. Last year we had a zero growth, this year we will have another zero growth if we do not stop this nonsense. Cdo. Speaker, our friends seems to be scraping the barrel for money. We are saying the money can come from production. Give the people the food and they will produce. Guyanese people can work. They are working in Surinam, they are working in Canada, America, England, they are working in Brazil and Venezuela, so why they can't work here?

Capital inflows for 1985 was below expectations. Our friends expected to have \$1 billion and they merely happened to get \$414,900,000. The shortfall in capital inflows was \$645.4 million. This is a tremendous set back to Government development projects and plans. Our capital inflows, inflows they expected to get last year from overseas were estimated at \$458.1 million but for the revised estimates it was \$129.9 million. Obviously they only managed to procure 28.3 per cent of what was expected which is a short fall of nearly 75 per cent. This is not good business it is bad business.

This is the reason now for the desperate need for the IMF as indicated in the Budget statement. If the IMF comes and give you money you have to do as the IMF says. Capital inflows for 1986 are more or less the same pattern as prevailed in 1985. They want to get \$58.3 million in grants, \$277 millions in loans, \$11 millions in credit. The total come up to \$46.3 million. It is quite likely that this sum will come.

Cde. Speaker what are some of the negative observations in the Budget. The Ministry of Economic Planning has no funds. In fact they have switched this Ministry. They have rebaptised it to Planning and development. The Ministry of Manufacture and processing is dead. The Ministry of Housing is dying. Then there is the closure of state enterprises. Guyana Timbers Limited, Lonora Estate, Bideo Subsidiary and one of the Estates on the East Coast. The Minister did not identify the Estate, But it is either Diamond, LBI or Enmore. It is quite likely that LBI will get the axe. They are selling off state assets according to the Budget Statement. Massive time wasting accrues if you are counter-productive, accelerating unemployment because the Budget speaks about cuts in certain areas which spells increased unemployment and redundancy. The cost of living we are told again that they are pumping more funds into Guymine and Guysuco, \$250 million to Guymine and \$225 to Guysuco. Where is the Agro B plan. Where is the Agricultural development plan? I am seeing it in the Chronicle, and I am hearing about it on the radio but comrades I want it in this parliament. You are treating this forum with contempt. This is the highest forum and you have got the Agricultural Development plan outside and not in here. People are supposed to be elected too, isn't that so?

The Speaker: Cde. Collymore. I am reminding you that you are addressing me not the Deputy Vice-President.

Cde. Collymore: Yes, Yes, you are quite in order. I am saying that the Agriculture development plan should have been brought to this house. They are going to bring it here last. They are treating this house with contempt. We had zero growth in 1985. The Minister did not notice that in 1985, perhaps that was too small to go into the Budget Statement. It was too infinitesimal a point to enter into the Budget Statement. We had zero growth and they are still borrowing short-term for medium term investments, for long term investments and for wages and salaries, and consumption. That is very bad economics as any economist will tell you. Cde. Speaker, permit me to quote from what the Minister said on page 4643 of the 1986 Budget Speech:

“It was stated that within recent years there has been a growing tendency for the short-medium and long-term development needs of the Government to be met by short-term borrowings. Thus, in an economic environment characterised by what appears to be a perennial disparity between expenditures and revenues, we have been borrowing in a manner which compounds the imbalance in the accounts of the Government.”

He is actually saying that what he said in 1985 obtains so far for this year. Cde. Speaker, how can we borrow short-term expensive money to finance long-term projects. Wages and salaries consumptions? We are going to be in serious problems. There is a big scramble for foreign currency. We can see the desperation in the Government when they are taxing barrels. Taxing barrels, taxing alms. It is alms they are taxing. Many Guyanese family make sure that they send at least one person away overseas so that they can send back barrels and remittances and the Government are taxing alms. Guyana is like a gigantic alms house and the Government is the biggest beggar and the biggest mendicant. We are saying that the Government should renegotiate the foreign debt. The Government should pay 10 percent to overseas creditors. We are not saying they must not pay. Give them something, about five or ten per cent, the IMF included and renegotiate the local section of the debt, then produce more and export more. We on this side are prepared to produce more. You are lamenting the loss of the sugar market of 100,000 tons of sugar but if they have that market they do not have that amount of sugar. They do not have the bauxite to recapture the bauxite market last December. They do not have rice to recapture lost markets in the USA and the West Indies. We are calling on them to also build up the tourist industry. Why does Guyana not have a tourist industry?



14:55 hrs

(Cde. Collymore continues)

All other countries have tourist industries, where tourists come and bring in hard currency. We must have this to encourage tourists to come in rather than taxing barrels. Barrels are supposed to be taxed in Canada, but they are taxing them here and they collect the money from Canada.

We are saying put more money to the co-operative sector. Put more money to the agricultural sector. Restore the industrialisation drive. Cut down on storing security votes and stop hammering the local businessmen. Businessmen have a role to play and they must be given the necessary licences, exchange and incentives to produce and they must be given electric power and the . . . fuel.

We would like to remind the Government of the fate of the East Bank United Bus Company. The Minister said yes, the private sector will be brought in to help with the transportation sector. They went ahead and put the hammer on the East Bank Bus Company and now people are left stranded on the roadside. The private sector has a role to play in any socialist state.

Cde. Speaker, to close, we would like to say that the Budget is wrongly structured. Its priorities are bad. It is anti-popular in its thrust and it is counter-productive. As such, myself and my colleagues on this side will not be supporting it. It is a coalpot Budget.

The Speaker: Cde. Chandisingh.

The Vice President, National Mobilisation, and Deputy Prime Minister

(Cde. Chandisingh): Cde. Speaker, in his Budget Speech, the Minister of Finance has presented concisely and effectively Government's financial programme and prospects for 1986. I would like to take this opportunity to compliment and commend him on his well-conceived and excellent presentation. [Applause]

This programme that the Minister of Finance has outlined in his Budget Speech is aimed at improving our national economic performance. It must be seen not merely as a projection of financial and economic prospects, for running through the presentation is a very serious and succinct analysis of problems lying in the way of progress and proposals for tackling those problems. It seeks further to identify reserves in the system and to find the ways and means to more efficiently and effectively utilise these reserves for the greater well being of our people. To infuse dynamism in our economy is the thrust of this effort.

The theme of the 1986 Budget Speech - "Conservation for Growth and Development" - I think is very well chosen, for it links three concepts characteristic of our outlook. Conservation of our resources - human, natural, financial - is an essential element in our programme for development for the rational utilisation of resources for the maximum benefit of our people. A proper programme of conservation effectively implemented will generate hidden reserves, will actually contribute new resources that now go to waste. So a conscious, purposive and organised policy and programme of conservation requiring new attitudes on the part of the public, by all of us, is vital to progress in current circumstances, and even in better times to come.

Too often in the past we have paid only lip service to conservation. The time has now come when we must all take this matter very seriously.

Growth is another important factor in the equation, but we are concerned with that growth should lead to real development and further, that development takes place in a manner consistent with our socialist outlook. In other words, we must be concerned not only with growth for the sake of growth, but with the

development by and for people for all our people.

In this respect I think we need to know that the economy is the key, is the basis for all development and much consideration is being devoted to infusing dynamism in the economy to the extent even of requiring certain public enterprises to show better performance within certain time frames, or go "to the wall". At the same time, as we move to higher levels of performance and rectitude in the directly economic more/productive sector, note must be taken of the great concern, effort and resources for and in the interest of the people's well-being. Indeed, our social outlook prescribes the policy aimed at sustaining and providing other higher standards, living standards for our people, within the nation's means, at any particular time and in the context of equality of opportunity for all, in the context of striving for greater social justice.

This is a programme that relies largely on our national policy of self-reliance. In doing so we seek to mobilise our resources, including those of the private sector and even foreign, for certain areas of development for which we do not now have all the means, but which could, by such application, afford substantial development. At the same time, we must retain the levers of control necessary to maintain political and social objectives.

My colleague, the Cde. Minister of Finance, in his Budget Speech has spelled out in more concrete terms some of the guidelines that were indicated by His Excellency the President when he addressed the First Session of this Fifth Parliament. I believe that these addresses can well be read in conjunction for full appreciation of the Government's thrust and initiatives to respond frankly to a difficult world economic situation and its consequential effects on our national economy. I think that we would also do well as we participate in this debate and as the Cde, Minister of Finance has observed, not to lose sight of our successes and achievements as a nation over the past 20-odd years.

15:05 hrs

(Cde. R. Chandisingh continues)

Of course the Jermiahs and ill-wishers in and outside of our country tend to see and to concentrate on only the short-comings and irritants and Cde. Speaker, these do exist and on that basis, on that distorted and limited perspective, they tend to predict gloom and nothing but gloom. There is however, Cde. Speaker, no inevitability about these predictions, far from it. Time and again our people's efforts have proved them wrong. So often, as we can all recall these Jermiahs and ill-wishers predicted our national doom, they have predicted it so often Cde. Speaker that if these predictions had come to pass Guyana long ago would have been nothing but a wasteland but Cde. Speaker, we have survived as a nation where with all the difficulties encountered, with all the irritants arising as we have seen in a name from a World Financial and Economic Order Guyanese of all walks of life, of all political and religious persuasions, of various cultural and ethnic origin work, play, live and worship in harmony and in a relaxed atmosphere in our land. So the more, as a nation we have by no means gone down or gone under as some would have us to believe. For Guyanese over the past twenty odd years have been imbued with the spirit and determination to meet challenges and to overcome them, to think for ourselves, to be self-reliant and innovative, to be self confident and this as my colleague the Minister of Finance has said already is attributable to the work of our late President and Founder Leader Cde. L.F.S. Burnham.

Cde. Speaker, in the course of this debate my colleagues from the Government side of the House will elucidate and elaborate on some of the programmes envisaged for development. I would like now however, Cde. Speaker, to refer to certain aspects of the programme for the infusion of dynamism in so far as this relates to the involvement of people, for the further democratisation of our society, the mobilisation of our people's minds and energies to control their lives and the agencies that affect their daily lives.

Mobilising and motivating our people for sustained and strenuous work that lies ahead to quote our President, Cde. Hugh Desmond Hoyte. In this respect I would like to take as my starting point the reference to regionalisation on page 42 of the budget speech. With your permission Cde. Speaker I quote the two relevant paragraphs.

“In an effort to strengthen the administrative capacity and heighten the efficiency of regional administrations, the Government embarked in 1985 on a reconfiguration of Central Ministries and Institutions, fully recognising that the deployment of skilled personnel to the ten administrative regions where projects are actually implemented was a key task. This measure was informed by the fact that effective monitoring of programme implementation can be most meaningfully undertaken within the region.

During 1986 the regions will be given an increasing role in the management of their own affairs with the regionalisation of Health and Educational facilities. This is in addition to their commitment to the maintenance of assets, particularly rehabilitation of Drainage and Irrigation schemes.”

Cde. Speaker, since the new system of local democracy was initiated in 1981 the Regional Democratic has been established as instrument through which people expressed their sovereignty in terms of article 9 of the constitution and have been provided with increasing resources with which to organise development around people and to stimulate equality, peace and concept of that development. The institutional arrangements have been pervertedly strengthened over the first five years of the system and 1986 will see the completion of regionalisation of the Ministry of Health, Education, Social Development and Culture, Information and Manpower. Together with these, the previously regionalised bodies namely Guywa, Agriculture, Co-operatives, Works and Regional Development constitute nature Governmental activities and programmes which are now placed under the management of people in their regions.

Cde. Speaker, the first five years have provided invaluable experience and insight to both the people and the administrators in terms of conceptualising, planning and implementing programmes of relevance to local needs and aspirations. This period has provided strong foundations for the growth of the people's democratic institutions which can now flourish with the continuing strengthening of the managerial capabilities in the regions. This has been of course as we all know, a problem that has plagued the Regional system in the past but during 1986, planning units would be established in all the regions recruitment has been completed and training and placements are expected to be completed later this year. For example, fourteen positions of Deputy Regional Executive Officers have been created along with positions of Senior Personnel Officers and also Principal Assistant Secretaries - Finance and all of this is intended to inject improved

1986-03-06

15:05 - 15:15 hrs

management and finance a cadets in the region. Significant improvement have also materialised in the field of professional staff such as Engineers and Senior Agricultural staff for both crops and livestock within the regions and with the regionalisation of the Ministries of Education and Health in particular more professional experts are being placed at the disposal of the Regional Democratic Council in order to improve the quality of the Regional Administrative and consequently the speed, quality, competence and efficiency of the delivery of services to the people.

Cde. Chandisingh continues

1986-03-06

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:15 - 15:25 hrs

15:15 hrs

What is of primary importance is the element of accountability within the system, accountability of officials to the people and their accredited representatives whom they serve and accountability of regional institutions and efforts to national policies, goals and objectives.

To help achieve this, some firm arrangements are being put in place in the regions and it is the intention that corporations operating in the regions should seek to co-operate in effecting these measures which are built around practical programmes in keeping with the three yardsticks enunciated by His Excellency the President when he addressed the First Session of the Fifth Parliament recently. These are fiscal prudence, development and growth. Development as a process can be sustained efficiently and optimally by astute allocation, utilisation, deployment and management of our scarce resources. In short, fiscal prudence must become a norm for our development efforts and for the implementation of our projects and programmes. Public accountability is thus the corner stone around which our system of local democracy must be built.

Now, what are some of the things which will be put in place in the regions to entrench this principle of public accountability. There are measures which are intended to create a new partnership between officials and people and their local democratic organs. For example, all corporations or official agencies operating within the regions, municipalities or local authorities, including Amerindian Councils, are now requested to sensitise the local government authorities well in advance of any programmes or activities which are programmed to take place within their boundaries. In this way, the local centres of democratic power can interrelate sensibly with their residents regarding matters taking place or planned within their localities. This move seeks to remove the problems encountered when agencies operating within the localities have carried out work or have sought to put in place projects without the people in the area being either apprised or involved in what has been taking place. Officials must now be imbued with the idea of planning with people and keeping them informed at every stage of the development process.

It is for this reason that municipalities and local authorities in conjunction with residents in the areas are now required to submit monthly reports to their Regional Democratic Councils on the following matters. I will list a few of them:

- (1) the performance of public agencies in their localities, and contiguous to their localities, whether by way of delivery of services, execution of projects, activities or programmes;
- (2) The satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance of public officials within their localities, whether these be officials of the Regional Democratic Councils, of the non-regionalised Ministries or of public corporations;
- (3) Areas of perceived wastage and recommended courses of action for their elimination or, at least, reduction;
- (4) A list of irritants and recommended courses of action for their amelioration by the relevant agencies.

Furthermore, all departments of the Regional Democratic Councils, as well as the non-regionalised Ministries and corporations, operating within the regions, are similarly requested to submit to the Regional Chairmen the following information

- (a) The inventory of public assets and their phased programme for maintenance and rehabilitation in 1966;
- (b) Areas of perceived waste and programmes for their rectification within stated time-prints;
- (c) A list of administrative irritants and phased programmes for remedial action.

In the case of public corporations and non-regionalised Ministries, these programmes should be submitted to their headquarters and the approved programmes will then be submitted to the Regional Chairman and it is expected that the information submitted by the municipalities and local authorities, after consultation with people in their localities, together with that submitted by the departmental heads of the Regional Democratic Councils and the non-regionalised Ministries and corporations would then be integrated into a comprehensive programme to be monitored at the monthly meeting of the Management Committee of the region and this Management Committee of the region, which is due to monitor, comprises the Regional Democratic Councils, the Ministries and Corporation representatives within the region. So that is part of the structure that is being set up this year to effect greater effectiveness of the system.

During the recently concluded General Council of the People's National Congress, the Leader of the Party highlighted five strategic areas which are



expected not only to inform these programmes, but to influence them significantly. These five areas of emphasis, by way of reminding our colleagues, are:

- (1) national discipline;
- (2) the protection and preservation of national assets;
- (3) public transport;
- (4) the state sector in which corporations must be catalysts for development;
- (5) the cost of food and other basic items.

Dealing with these five areas of special emphasis the Leader/President, Cde. H.D. Hoyte, underscored the indomitable will which people and officials, working together, must demonstrate for us to transform the state of mere survival, which the stringencies of the International Economic Order imposes on developing countries like Guyana, into a state of economic dynamism. He exhorted us to remain steadfast to our national objectives but to recognise that, while our objectives remain constant, strategies and tactics for their attainment must be subject to change and should not be regarded as being static or inflexible. The role of innovation and imagination must be firmly recognised and commitment developed in our national ranks for bold new initiatives.

It is for this reason that our system of local democracy exists so that we can capitalise on the potential role of the socio-economic, cultural and voluntary organisations of our people to participate more effectively and actively in local, regional and national development. Our primary concern and institutional links must be to encourage the individual and the local initiative of our people.

(Cdo. Chandisingh continues)

1986-05-06

National Assembly

15:25 - 15:35 hrs

15:25 hrs

So that their efforts talents and creativity can be incorporated into a continuing effort to establish vibrant centres of community life and initiative for the satisfaction of the people growing material culturally and intellectual requirement, as well as the development of their personalities, the all round development of their personalities and socialist relations in our society. The system is a integral part of our development strategy and a vital aspect of our indogenous brand of independent administration. The system seeks to establish a dynamic relationship between our ideology and its inherent system of economic and social planning on the one hand and the potential of our people and their active participation in promoting self-reliance and releasing their productive energy within a democratic institutional framework for the total development of our nation. Cdo. Speaker, taken together with our continuing and stepped up efforts in the areas of workers education, ideological orientation, and all the other formal and informal measures and programmes for human resources development mobilisation and motivation, I expect in the coming period that the process of involvement of the people there will be more development.

Finally, Cdo. Speaker, I would like to observe that the upsurge and optimism of our people notwithstanding continuing difficulties <sup>there is</sup> an alertness has been well founded by the Guyanese people. They have come a long way in the past 20 years having growing in maturity and wisdom. Cdo. Speaker, they have now expanded opportunities, contribution and continued projection. Together we will stand up for Guyana even if resolutely. Applause.

15:25 hrs

The Speaker: Cde. Ali.

Cde. M. Ali: Cde. Speaker, the privilege is ours to debate the speech which was presented in this August body on Friday 28th February, 1986. Before I go on I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the hon. Minister of Finance, Cde. Carl Greenidge. /Applause./

Cde. Speaker, in 1971, the Government announced a policy objective of self-sufficiency in food for Guyana so as to move away from being a traditional importer of food supply. This was followed by the banning of a range of imported products where local products could serve as substitutes. Cde. Speaker, massive investment was put into the agricultural sector for increased production through the diversification of agriculture. Since 1964 Cde. Speaker, when the Government assumed office many millions were spent towards agricultural development. The General agricultural policy for the 1970-1979 period was concerned with achieving self-sufficiency in goods required for feeding and clothing the nation, increasing the volume of variety of export goods, establishing co-operative production systems in livestock, and creating greater employment opportunities.

Cde. Speaker, during the seventies the diversification of agriculture resulted in increased production and the introduction of cotton, corn and a number of other produce which replaced imported goods of similar types. The seventies also saw an increase in the production of traditional export-crops such as rice and sugar. The processing of a range of produce such as cotton and oil-palm also occurred.

Cde. Speaker, in an effort to increase production, incentive schemes were introduced for farmers who benefitted from duty-free importation of agricultural machinery, to loans and grants. They also benefitted from the pest control units created to control and curb diseases that attacked seedlings and plants. During this period, Cde. Speaker, the Government spent millions of dollars on sea-defence, river defence, pumps, drainage and irrigation, roads, and training facilities. Also many millions were allocated for developing more than 250,000 acres of farming areas such as Black Bush Polder, MMA and Tapacuma.

In dealing with research, Cde. Speaker, the Ministry of Agriculture conducted extensive research in livestock and various crops with a view to improving production methods and efficiency in the industry.

1986-03-06

15:25-15:35 hrs

Between 1970 and 1979, Cde. Speaker, many million were invested by the Central Government on drainage and irrigation and sea defence and river defences. Most of the land which will benefit will be land used for agricultural development. These include Tapacuma 57,000 acres, Black Bush Polder 50,000 acres, M.M.A. 150,000 acres, Boeraserie 11,000 acres, Vergenoegen/Bonasika 32,000 acres. Cde. Speaker, land is also being maximized through intensification of cultivation based on land improvement and improved husbandry practices. Remarkable progress was made, Cde. Speaker, in the intensification of paddy cultivation and other crops. With respect to paddy the national average paddy yields increased during the seventies from ten bags per acre to twenty-two bags per acre involving about 300,000 acres of land.

In dealing with the target for 1985, Cde. Speaker, the total acreage targeted for 1985 was 220,500 acres and the amount sown was 203,246 acres giving a yield of 4,096,398 – 140 lbs bags of paddy with an average of 21.6 bags per acre for the first and second crop.

In dealing with the target for 1986, Cde. Speaker, it is expected that 244,220 acres of land will be put under cultivation and when harvested will produce a yield of 194,000 tons of rice. From this Cde. Speaker, we note that there is an increase of 378,86 tons of rice as against the first and second crop of 1985.

**National Assembly**

**15:35 hrs**

Cde. Speaker, from this crop we saw an increase of 378,86 tons of rice from the 1985 first and second crops.

Highlighting on the 1986 first and second crops, the Government will spend millions of dollars on repairing dams, kokers, bridges, canals and sluices which will increase and assist in this crop. Also, Nari-Guyana Libya Company and Guysuco will be coming together to produce a better seedling. The Government of Guyana will be receiving from the G.D.R. twelve combines which will help in the harvesting of rice.

Looking at the Budget Speech, page 31, it states:

"The Rice Industry was restructuring during 1985 along the lines authorised by the 1984 Rice Bill and three new corporate entities were established with effect from August 1, 1985, viz. – Guyana Rice Milling and Marketing Authority, Guyana Rice Export Board, and the National Paddy and Rice Grading Centre. With the establishment of these entities, a great deal of work has been done on improving, revising, restructuring and establishing new systems in some cases, of the accounting, marketing, quality control, market information and domestic distribution systems."

A little bit on Guysuco. Guysuco which remains our largest net earner of foreign exchange had a challenging and successful year. Production increased marginally to 243,000 tons from 241,861 tons in 1984. But more importantly, productivity registered a sharp increase and the yield of sugar per acre was the best since 1979. Despite the fact that the world sugar price touched a new low, good progress was made in turning around the Corporation financially. In 1985, the operating loss was reduced dramatically to \$77,6M from \$119.7M in 1983 and \$102.2M in 1984. Better productivity, increased efficiency and strict control of expenditure all helped in this achievement.

The central Government, Cde. Speaker, believes in helping those who help themselves and it has therefore been decided to increase the Government's equity in Guysuco by \$368.6 million thereby reducing the heavy interest burden which has tended to distort Guysuco's income and expenditure account. Guysuco also believes that the home market must generate some part of the additional funds needed to equip and diversify the sugar industry and the Corporation is therefore authorizing an increase of 7 cents per pound in the local price of sugar with immediate effect. This will leave the local price still well below prices in our sister Caricom states.

Cde. Speaker, 1986 will be a decisive year in Guysuco's continuing efforts to reshape, rationalise and diversify the sugar industry to meet circumstances as they exist today. These circumstances are very different to what they were a decade ago. In marketing, whereas in 1944 Guyana enjoyed a Commonwealth Sugar Agreement quota of 190,000 tons in the E.E.C. and the sugar market in the U.S.A. has shrunk so drastically, our quota there has been reduced to a mere 18,000 tons. This loss of 100,000 tons of sugar quota has completely changed the marketing outlook and had made it essential to tailor production more closely to what remains of our remunerative outlets.

**1986-03-06**

**15:35 – 15:45 hrs**

Cde. Speaker, hand in hand with the shrinking of our sugar quotas has gone a decline in the pool of labour available for planting and harvesting cane. Mechanisation which the industry has been investigating and gradually introducing has not kept pace with the decline in available labour. The declining market and the reduced labour force have led to a situation in which our country neither requires nor can service the acreage of cane and the factory capacity it required and could service a decade ago, and because field and factory capacity got out of line with the ability to service that capacity and the remunerative outlets for it, the industry has incurred substantial deficits in the last few years now. Good progress has been made in analysing what needs to be done and a start made to implement the steps that are necessary. Guysuco will be aiming to reshape the industry so that a smaller crop is harvested and processed during the best weather opportunity days and sold in markets subject to the least possible extent to the usually very depressed world sugar price. At the same time, all unutilized and underutilized assets, all inefficient assets and all uneconomic assets will come under careful scrutiny as part of Guysuco's effort to complete the reversal of its financial fortunes.

It is perhaps fortunate that in the same period when market opportunities in sugar price have been shrinking, the opportunities to diversify both within and outside the industry have been multiplying. Guysuco will be stepping up its diversification activities in 1986. A pre-feasibility study for a project to generate energy from surplus bagasse has been completed and dairy operations at Rosehall and Uitvlugt are to be enlarged and a dairy farm is to be established on the coast.

Guysuco's activities in Aquaculture and in growing rice and legumes are being stepped up. Work has also begun to find alternative uses for the large acreage which will have to be taken out of cane cultivation over the next two years. The reshaping of the industry should have very little, if any, adverse implications for employment. Even a reshaped and more tightly organised industry may well continue to be short of many skills by 1987/1988.

15:45 hrs.

(Cde. M. Ally continues)

It must be remembered too that GuySUco's own diversification, together with the many new developments taking place in the economy as a whole, will lead to increased employment opportunities in this period and GuySUco will be discussing their plans with the Unions operating in the industry.

Cde. Speaker, at the end of the day the objective is an industry reshaped to meet new realities in the sugar market, rationalised to achieve operating surpluses and diversified to accommodate technological opportunities. Thank you.

The Speaker: Cde. Bovell-Drakes.

Cde. J. Bovell-Drakes: Cde. Speaker, this honourable House was exposed to a splendid presentation on the performance of the economy for the year 1985, the foci for 1986 and also exposed to the specific assignments given to specific areas for 1986 by the Cde. Minister of Finance.

I take this opportunity to join my voice with those of the other members of the House to both congratulate the Honourable Minister on his fine presentation.

Cde. Speaker, debates have ensued on previous occasions, similar in nature to this one on the causes for the development of societies. A number of theories, propositions, hypotheses have been advanced. However, so far only that of the Marxist system have been very accurate in its primary cause for development of societies. The posit's position that development takes place as a result of man, his ability to understand and master the potentials of nature and using his knowledge, using the potential and the resources of nature to complete the first satisfaction of the needs of human beings. Those basic needs are Cde. Speaker, food, clothing, shelter, implements of production and means of production.

Article 14 of the constitution of this country provides the guide for our economic development and I quote from that constitution.

"The supreme goal of the economic system which is being established in the state is the fullest possible satisfaction of the people's growing material, cultural and intellectual requirements as well as the develop-

ment of this personality and their socialist relations in society".

This theme was predominant in the Cde. Minister's presentation. I wish to , , , the position Cde. Speaker, that the fulfillment of the objectives stated in article 14 of the constitution requires that this nation develops its capacity in a systematic study of nature and behaviour of the material and physical universe, based on observation, and experimentation. Additionally Cde. Speaker, it demands that we adopt and use the total knowledge and skills available to us. Consequently many units aimed at fulfilling these objectives have been developed. Of significance however, are two: (1) the Institute of Applied Science and Technology established in March 1980 and (2) the National Agricultural Research Institute, established by Bill #16 of 1984 and declared open by his Excellency Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham (deceased) on the 6th October, 1984. Generally speaking Cde. Speaker, both institutions have as their task, the removal of scourge of dependency which if allowed to persist will violently contain the degree of fulfillment of the object of the Economic Development of Guyana. Both are obligated to look at our resources, assess their potentials and devise methods and systems which would ensure their most beneficial use in the interest of enhancing the circumstances of life of the mass of people of this country.

If I may turn to the IAST Cde. Speaker, and indicate that so far there has been significant achievements to this institute in the area of alternative energy. In 1985 some twenty four biogas digesters were built through the work of the institute. Collaborating with Regional Democratic Councils these digesters have been providing energy for cooking. Cde. Speaker, the digester is used for refrigeration and incubation purposes. It is important to note that as we discuss this issue Cde. Speaker, it was circulating that the . . . . One of the benefits of the use of biogas digesters Cde. Speaker, is that not only will it be able to provide energy but also the . . . . person who controls the digester to use fertilisers which is high quality from the process of utilisation of the biogas system. They have also been able to provide solar crop driers . . . . on a number of occasions about the production of curry, most of the inputs were obtained from external sources. This solar crop



1986-03-06

15:45 - 15:55 hrs

drier allows this country to provide itself with all the things which are necessary for the production of curry through the use of solar crop driers. It is expected that in the future driers will be used to provide curry . . . with the other requirements which could be derived from other local produce. In the field of ceramic I think every member of this House Cde. Speaker is aware and perhaps is in possession of products which result from the experiment conducted by this institute and which is controlled by Vanceram.

**1986-03-06**

**15:55 – 16:00 hrs**

**National Assembly**

**15:55 hrs**

Other strains of production include production of floor tiles, sanitary ware, white body formulation which, according to some investigation, it was projected by an external source that the clay material we have in this country could not have been able to produce as a white body formulation. That achievement came about as a result of the application of our knowledge through the I.A.S.T. and we are now producing ceramic ware with a white body formulation.

We begin to produce two local glazes hitherto imported into this country. In the field of mineral science we have done work in terms of utilizing the local seashells which will be used in the production of glass. In addition, through the work of I.A.S.T. two grades of optical polishing material have been produced and are currently being used by different agencies with a high degree of success. In the field of natural products, we once boasted of the use of gloy imported from overseas. As a result of the work of I.A.S.T., we are in a position to produce and are producing, our own adhesives from a number of sources one of which is fisheries, the other cassava. The use of this adhesive, along with balata latex, is ideal for the production of cardboard cores and that is being used by SAPIL at the moment.

As a result of the work of I.A.S.T., we have been able to find a material which will be used as a replacement for imported foam which was used in the production of furniture. It is a combination of balata latex and coconut fibre. For the use of balata, too, the work of I.A.S.T. is at such an advanced stage that we are in a position to produce soles for shoes from a combination of balata latex. In addition to that, the I.A.S.T. has been able to produce resin from balata, which is an important input in the production of paint and experimentation is going on. They are currently using the products from the use of resin from balata introducing a corrosive paint and some of it has been used as ... The other has been used for marking the traffic signs for road users.

If I may turn to the National Agricultural Research Institute, specifically the Institute is to plan, develop and implement research that is designed to produce technologies and systems required to achieve and maintain national self-sufficiency and export capacities in food and fibre. The work of this Institute basically is to produce seed material which is relevant to the circumstances of this country. In the production of rice, work is being done and is in an advanced stage of producing high quality seed. The production of this type of seed will take into account the peculiarity of the environment, climate conditions and the need for efficient output. Seed farms are involved in a production programme to provide sufficient quantities of these seed to contribute to the increased production of rice.

**1986-03-06**

**15:55 – 16:00 hrs**

In the area of GUYSSUCO production, work is being conducted by N.A.R.I. in production of suitable livestock meal using products such as sorghum and soya. In addition to the use of ... plan to provide ourselves with edible oil, work is being done to produce soya in large quantities in order to be able to extract edible oil and the residue which results from the process will be used in the livestock industry as the meal for livestock.

If I may just project briefly –

The Speaker: You will have to return after 4 o'clock to project that. It is now 4 o'clock and we will take the suspension until 4:30.

Sitting suspended at 16:00 hrs.

1986-03-06

16:30 – 16:35 hrs

16:30 hrs

On resumption –

The Speaker: Cde. Bovell-Drakes, five minutes more.

Cde. Bovell-Drakes: Thank you very much, Cde. Speaker. I was trying to give projections for 1986. In 1986 the I.A.S.T. will be working on the production of cassava starch to replace imported starch for the use of the textile mills. They will be conducting work on the production of indigenous flours. This will be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, N.A.R.I. and current users of indigenous flours. They will improve ceramic body preparation to the level at which a plant preparing raw materials from the ceramic industry, both domestically and in CARICOM can be developed. They will develop capability in the further use of balata. These are just two of the important projections for I.A.S.T. For N.A.R.I. there will be conducted work to generate and test technology of eleven primary and secondary groups of crops of economic importance to supply the domestic market as well as the export market – rice, coconuts, corn, sorghum, peanuts being included.

In animal husbandry, there will be work to intensify research into beef and dairy cattle, sheep and goats, hog and poultry production which will contribute substantially to the feeding programme of this country. In terms of genetic resources and technology control N.A.R.I. will do work to collect, introduce and produce new cultivars, enrich the gene pool of each of these species and develop resistance to pests and diseases as well as ensure that they are responsive to the environmental conditions of this country.

I think the foregoing stimulates interest of all in this Assembly in the work of I.A.S.T. and N.A.R.I. Suffice it to say that all that has been said earlier only represents the beginning of a process of recognizing ..... and using resources for the benefit of the people of this country. Both Institutions expect to deepen the level of their contributions to the fulfilment of article 14 of the Constitution and to avail ourselves of opportunities for the full use of our capabilities. The year 1986, with its budgetary theme "Conservation for Growth and Development" must give further inputs to this drive. One is assured of the unconditional support of this Assembly for the work now being developed by these two institutions. The work of the scientists of these two institutions gives credence to the observation of the Minister of Finance on page 2 of the Budget Speeches.

"There can be no doubt that the greatest and most important virtue instilled in this nation by our Founder Leader is the attainment of self-confidence. A capacity to face our task secure in the knowledge that as a nation we are equal to any task."

I think the I.A.S.T. /Applause/

The Speaker: Cde. Bovell-Drakes, I think your time is up. Cde. Ferosé Mohamed.

16:35 hrs**(Cde. Feroze Mohamed)**

Cde. Speaker, it is my opinion that the Budget Speech does not exude confidence and optimism in the future as I had expected. In fact, I think the speech is more reflective of the general negativism and feelings of pessimism already permeate the entire country. The presentation by the Cde. Minister of Finance cannot inspire people in our country today nor give hope. the Minister spoke about the silver lining but in my opinion that silver lining is not in the distant future, and indeed it is obscured by economic dark clouds which will grow darker. The speech promises continuing difficulties, and prospects for allocation are not bright. The speech offers a bleak period ahead.

The Cde. Minister of Finance also referred extensively to the proposals and ideas contained in the 1985 Budget Speech. No doubt this is to show continuity between this year and last year. I too looked at the 1985 Budget Speech and I was surprised to find that in certain areas there are certain major differences between the 1985 and 1986 Budget Speech. In a one year span two Budget Speeches were delivered in this Assembly by the same Minister, belonging to the very Government, but it appears in a certain sense that the speeches were coming from two different Governments. There is some degree of inconsistency and I would venture that there would be some areas of political opportunism expressed. In 1985, the Budget Speech was replete with notions of socialism, socialist orientations, social thrust and the Cde. Minister even launched into a broad-side of strong critique of bourgeois individualism nurtured within the education system. This is 1986 and they seem to be back-peddalling. There was simply one passing remark to the question of socialism in the beginning, and that remark was left hanging unsupported, by the teller and thrust of the emphasis of 1986 Budget Speech. In this speech the Government seems to be more interested and more concerned in the state of relations with the multilateral financial institutions. Now they seem to be more concerned with the involvement of the foreign/private agencies in our economy, more involved in the reduction of the State sector. It seems to be clear, that the suggestion of a change in direction is in the making. If this is correct and the course is about to be changed then we warn once again that there are many pitfalls in a changed course. Such a course in the long run can jeopardize political and economic independence. In the Budget Speech it was calculated that certain measures were needed to lift ..... But at the same time whilst experimenting with these measures simultaneously, perhaps unwittingly, you may also be opening the doors to neo-colonialism. The conditions exist for us to be ensnared within the neocolonialist grasp. There is economic instability and decline. The Government has created an invidious climate for themselves. The Government is undemocratic, unpopular, the composition Constitution

of the Government itself and the composition of the Government all of these factors create the base whereby if we are not careful then we can be entrapped in the grips of the powerful imperialists, controlled financial institutions and relations with which we have been so worried and concerned about at this moment. If that happens then we are fearful that we will be setting out on a path which eventually will lead to policies becoming increasingly opportunistic and even pre-imperialist and even reactionary.

On page two of the Budget Speech the Minister said and I quote:

"Today some 77.2 percent of school aged youths is enrolled in schools. Similarly, adult literacy has been sustained at over 90 percent in recent years."

Personally I do not see that as something for them to pat themselves on their backs about. My own interpretation is that 32.6 percent of our school-aged youths are not enrolled at this moment. That figure to my mind is alarming especially since over the years the Government has always projected themselves as being so extremely concerned about education and education was said to be a gem in their crown. In this age and in the times we live I would say something ought to be done to ensure that all our school-aged youths should be enrolled in school. However, such statistics by themselves does not offer a clear picture on the real situation that exists in our school. We have to take into account other factors. One factor I wish to draw attention to is the drop-out rate. In recent years it has become a phenomenon and the possibility are at this moment that this would escalate in the coming period. Apart from the drop-out rate there is absenteeism. Here too the proportion is reaching an alarming stage. Drop out and absenteeism are no doubt the consequences of the deteriorating economic situation in many families, families who can ill afford the cost of education. Drop outs and absenteeism too no doubt are consequences of the absence or deterioration of school related facilities.

16:45 hrs

(Cde. Mohamed continues)

It will not be something rare these days to find that many youths have grown disillusioned with schools, preferring to walk the streets and idle their youth away. Many parents see education as too expensive and burdensome, preferring their children to be more gainfully employed in the light of the economic difficulties that they must face. When to these factors are added lowering the quality of instruction at all levels of <sup>our</sup> education system; the perennial problems of availability; the adequate supply of text books, exercise books and science equipment; the moral decline expressed in truancy, delinquency, drug abuse, disrespect and general indiscipline; drop in education standards at all levels; poor and embarrassing examination results. Then the actual situation of our education system will be better understood.

The Minister claims that they have been able to sustain a 90 per cent literacy level. This is questionable in the present circumstances. That apart, however, certainly this level of literacy rate cannot be sustained in the coming year. I submit that we have lost the pride of place we once held, particularly in the mid-1960s in terms of the high literacy rate in Guyana. Education is sliding downwards. Any scientific objective investigation of that will show not the 90 per cent literacy level, but in fact it will bring out that what we are producing more and more are semi-literates in this country.

For the second consecutive year the Minister referred to the brain-drain problem. The question is so grave that I think it warrants the attention it was given. As patriots, we on this side of the Assembly are also concerned about the diminishing numbers of our intelligentsia and the loss of our trained, talented and qualified persons. We are even more concerned when we realise the effects on the economic, social and cultural life of our country. They are telling, even calamitous. But the question is what and who are responsible. Blame cannot be apportioned to the inviting greener pastures of overseas, and we do not subscribe to the view that those who go abroad are anti-national. We contend, <sup>on</sup> and/the final count the Government must accept full responsibility, blame and condemnation for the brain-drain, draining our country of an important resource. People are running away largely because of Government's policies, Government's

1986-03-06

16:45 - 16:55 hrs

attitude to these people, the many hardships they and their families must face; poor salaries, bad working conditions, lack of job security and job satisfaction, discriminatory practices. There I think lies the root of the problem of brain-drain.

One sector that is particularly affected is the sector of education. Teachers keep leaving our shores. They go to other lands where their skills and talents and their abilities are better appreciated and where they are accordingly remunerated for their performances. I must remark that apparently our tertiary education and establishments seem to be doing a good job in preparing people to be exported much better than the productive sector. What is the consequence, with so many teachers leaving the system? The system is not properly serviced. No wonder nowadays one of the major problems within the education system is the grave shortage of teachers. In addition, there is also a strong turnover of teachers. In one secondary school on the Corentyne, for example, investigation showed that between 1980 and 1985 out of a staff of 36, only 6 of the original staff members remain in that school. Thirty left the teaching profession, many of them overseas, many in the sister Caribbean countries.

Not only are there the problems of shortage of staff and staff turnover, but who are replacing them? Primarily, under-qualified teachers. I know you have in this Assembly many people who are in the field of education. I do not have to go on to explain the effect on the learning process of the young people. But, Cde. Speaker, despite the Government's recognition of this sad problem, what is disappointing and erksome is its apparent unconcern and helplessness in resolving this matter. It allows the disaffection to continue within the system.

Let us look at some of the irritants and areas of disaffection, things that prompt and motivate teachers to leave. There is an on-going problem of dissatisfaction with salaries, the structure and the amount. Recently, we have been hearing more and more about the late payment of teachers. That problem keeps coming up. Particularly, it is acute in the hinterland areas where, apart from the fact that teachers do not get their pay on time, they are saddled with other problems like lack of housing, high cost of living. Many who go there to teach reluctantly have to do other activities to maintain themselves in the



1986-07-06

16:45 - 16:55 hrs

hinterland region. The filling of vacancies and promotion are other problems in the system that drive teachers away from the system and our country and prevent intellectual from giving their talents for development. In the Official Gazette of November 1985, there are literal pages of vacancies in primary and secondary schools. It is not unique for 1985. We had it in 1983, 1984 and 1985. What is wrong with the Ministry and those who have the authority to run the education system and why is it that we are unable to fill vacancies, creating difficulties for our teachers year after year and then we come here crying about the problem of brain-drain and its effects.

Moreover, as the Government becomes more unpopular, schools become areas where they draw audience from and particularly rely on teachers and students to supply their audience. These teachers under duress are called to perform activities far removed from their vocation. When you take these things into account we cannot be surprised that many opt out of our system, out of Guyana and go to other lands where they have security and they have satisfaction.

I think from both sides of the Assembly there is the admittance that Guyana is a crisis country. No matter where you look, a crisis situation steers back at you; economic, social, political, transport, fuel. It is all over the place.

16:55 hrs

(Cde. F. Mohamed continues)

That crisis in all the different areas of social endeavours are not being resolved. The crisis is deepening. Situations is approaching desperation levels. In fact, today in our society desperation, frustration, anxieties, tension, pressures - are the factors that shape peoples outlook and their personality and if you are to turn our attention to the problem of transportation one would well understand why such negative feelings have arisen and persists and prevail. In this House often before many voices have been raised on the question of transportation, the inadequate facilities throughout the country. I myself on several occasions have raised the question of transportation, particularly as it relates to school children and teachers. Its effects on the education system and the attendance harassment teachers and students must face. Although this problem have been raised over several years, really and truly it has never been really tackled, now the problem has moved into a new dimension. In the direction we are presently sailing one can well expect that any time now the ship will run aground. Faced with fuel shortage the transportation/<sup>system</sup> is crumbling. Everything, everyone virtually is affected including the education system. Students and teachers are stranded on the road as they cannot get to school or work. School attendance has fallen, naturally punctuality cannot be expected in the circumstances. Discipline is affected. Fares when transportation is available have climbed out of the reach of students and teachers alike. Instead of being in the classroom, many students can now be found in the kerosine line. Even the preparation of meals are affected. All types of educational programmes and activities will suffer. They will either be dis-continued, limited or cancelled. Clearly, the fuel crisis has a serious and adverse impact on the education system. The learning process has been irreparably disrupted. One crisis creating another. Yes, millions will be spent on education once again but today one must ask how many will benefit if these conditions persists. The schools go in generation, I must say and you will admit has entered a sad period.

A sight from the impact on education. We all recognise no doubt that we are at a critical stage with respect to transportation generally, so crucial to our all-round development and welfare. Air, water and road transportation have been plagued by severe difficulties. Amerindians, people travelling to the hinterland areas are stranded. The other day the steamer going to the North West District

had to come back to Port Georgetown because it developed problems mid ocean. Times like these, with the difficulties reaching the levels they are, they offer the greatest criticism of this Government's shortsightedness when they decided to discontinue and dismantle the rail transport system and at the same time to do away with private buses in this country. The budget speech says the Government proposes to permit more privately owned cars and minibuses now that the G.T.S.L. has failed hopelessly to alleviate the problems of transportation but I wonder whether it is the solution or it is any solution. If you cannot find fuel, you cannot get as the Prime Minister earlier said the things to run the vehicles why bring them into the country in the first place. I am afraid that that is not the answer and I do not think the Government or the Minister really paid much attention to how to solve this transportation problem.

One cannot speak of education without looking at the accommodation available for those who will have to enjoy the benefits of education and go to school. Often and over years, it has been raised in this House about the physical problems and the physical conditions that exist throughout the country. We cannot live now that nothing was done to resolve these problems. Schools are in a state of disrepair, many schools do not have proper water supply, sanitary facilities for many do not exist. Toilets do not exist. There is the perpetual shortage of furniture. Some schools are in an extremely bad shape, namely for example, Graham Hall Primary and the Richmond Hill Primary in Leguan. Now in these conditions we understand that regions will take over the education system. I want to feel that the regions at the moment are less equipped, ill-equipped and unprepared to take on the responsibilities of education. True, many regions have been doing this before and in spite of the fact that regions have been taking on this responsibility, I cannot say that much was accomplished in bettering the physical conditions of many schools.

The Speaker: Cde. Mohamed, how long more do you want?

Cde. Mohamed: Two minutes more. The regions can only perform if it can get the support of the people. Unfortunately the problem of this Government is it does not have people and therefore, from that aspect, the undemocratic character of the regions today, I am sure they will not be able to perform their duties properly and fully and I do not think that they will be able to better the conditions or take on the responsibility of education.

There are many programmes, subject areas that have been introduced over

recent years in the education curriculum. Agricultural education, community high school programmes, career guidance, work study, industrial arts programme, adult education, science education. There are many a sad commentary one can make on each one of those subject areas or programmes. They are not doing well. Much of the experiments around them have failed. Government is unable to sustain these programmes and I think the time has come for us to have another look and to begin seriously at this moment to think about in a realistic way an education reform for Guyana and finally Cde. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity of just making and emphasising the point made by the first speaker on this side Cde. Collymore about the housing problem and say as he did that it was rather significant that no mention was made about this question.

Cde. Mohamed continues

1986-03-06

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:05 - 17:15 hrs

17:05 hrs

I say, as he did, that it was rather significant that no mention was made about this question. Rents today are soaring, consuming between 30 and 40 per cent of the worker's salary. We still have squatting areas. All the promises made by the Government in the 1972 - 1976 Development Programme about housing have not been kept. The Government promised 65,000 units. Up to 1976 we had only 7,000 units and now we are hearing nothing about the question of the housing situation. The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund cannot help because it is giving workers \$15,000 to build houses. What house can be built with \$15,000, when building prices are so high today? That is why there is a problem. When we take all these factors into consideration it is clear to me that one cannot be hopeful that in the coming year or in the near future, the Budget Statement presented by the Minister will show that the Government is taking the correct measure on the correct course or the right path to solve the many problem that affect Guyanese people, our youths and students.

The Speaker: Cde. Burnham.

The Vice President, Education and Social Development and Deputy Prime Minister (Cde. Burnham): Cde. Speaker, before I address my mind to the subject of my presentation I would like to add my congratulations to the others which have gone before on the frank and competent and imaginative presentation of the national Budget for 1986 by the Minister of Finance. I want before I make my presentation, however, to note that the last speaker in the Minority Party thrived on crisis. Only under conditions of crisis do they seem to be able to wax warm and I cannot but wonder whether that is not the reason why they go about creating crises and exacerbating difficulties that are understandable.

I also want to make mention of the fact that he indicated that we were about to make some change in direction. I am wondering why it took him so long to recognise that he was right in the first place. I would also want to say that to speak about a brain drain and to direct those remarks to the People's National Congress Government alone is to bury one's head in the sand and not to realise that in every country in the Caribbean and outside of it there has been a brain drain. It merely indicates the difficulties of the situation in our world where there are richer countries and poorer countries and naturally citizens of poorer countries gravitate to the richer countries.

To go back to my presentation. In this year of the tenth anniversary

1986-03-06

17:05 – 17:15 hrs

of Free Education and the twentieth of Independence, Fortune has dictated that I should speak for the first time in this Assembly in defence of the investment our Government has made in the area of human resource development and training, which the Minister of Finance spoke about. I looked for guidance to bestir my mind in the wee hours of this morning when I was preparing my presentation and it came sure enough. It came in the form of a statement made at the Third Session of the First Supreme Congress of the People in December 1984. It reads thus:

"One of the most important, if not the most important of supporting services in our thrust forward, is Education. A significant percentage of the national budget is expended on Education and in spite of the well-known financial and economic problems the Government has not resiled from its commitment to free education from nursery to university. The important role of teachers has been recognised in several ways, including a special salary adjustment upward in 1982. But one may ask whether the nation is getting its money's worth. Is the whole system sensitive to and sufficiently supportive of the national thrust?"

Let us delete the phrase "in our thrust forward" and replace it by "in moving our nation forward," the words of our President Cde. Desmond Hoyte, and let us similarly delete "1982" and replace it by "1985" and I submit it would be completely relevant and valid today. Further, I venture to say, without any claim to clairvoyance, that if we delete "in spite of the well-known financial and economic problems," it would be equally relevant and valid ten years from now. Such is the profundity and the timelessness of that statement that it needs no accreditation, yet I am sure that all in this Assembly must realise that the statement was made by our Founder/Leader the late President and I submit it in all humility as my guide.

Cde. Speaker, the relationship between Education and the development of any nation is fundamental; and it is vital both in the horizontal and vertical integration of our total developmental effort. No investment in it, therefore, can be too much. We and, I am sure my friends across the floor, will be ad idem on the inadequacy of the funds made available this year, but our circumstances force upon us the understanding they deserve. My task, therefore, is to ensure that the anticipated performance of the central Ministry and its regional institutions in the context of this national budget reflects our ability to effect development within our means and to produce qualitative and quantitative returns upon our investments. It is to our credit that compared with the sum of \$11.7 million spent on Education in 1964 when the People's National Congress Government came into office, the amount expected to be spent this year is \$165.9 million. [Applause] And, as the Ministry of Finance reported, in 1965 65 out of every 100 children were attending school and today 77 out of 100 attend school, a difference amounting to some 90,000 children. That cannot be wished away.

In 1976 Government assumed full responsibility for and control of education and every citizen now enjoys the constitutional right to free education from nursery to university as well as at non-formal places where opportunities are provided for education and training but, by virtue of this right, that citizen also has to develop within him the responsibility for making a contribution to the

**1986-03-06**

**17:05 – 17:15 hrs**

economic, social and cultural advancement of this country's socialist thrust – I repeat "socialist thrust" considering that our Member of the Minority Party is still afraid that we have to use the word "now" – commensurate with the level of knowledge, skills and ideological orientation he has acquired.

The tasks are clearly envisaged in a programme of educational reforms which emphasise:

1. improvement at the teacher education level.
2. improvement in administrative and supervisory skills.
3. strengthening of institutions at all levels in the educational system and
4. innovations in curriculum development processes.

Cde. Speaker, with regard to the reorganisation of the teacher education system, there is need to remind this Assembly that three years ago all teacher education facilities in Georgetown, namely, the Lilian Dewar College, the Cyril Potter College, the In-Service Teacher-Training Programme and the Nursery Education Programme, were moved to the Turkeyen Teacher Education Complex in order to rationalise and maximise scarce professional, material and financial resources.

17:15 hrs

During 1985 this process of rationalisation was taken a step further by the integration of the four teacher education programmes under one central administration. The resulting economic benefit has been a saving in administrative overhead expenses and the optimisation of the use of lectures across all programme offerings. From this reorganisation there is expected to emerge also relative standardisation of criteria for selection of student teachers and certification of trained teachers.

All student-teachers will now spend between forty and sixty percent of each week actually teaching in schools under the supervision of trained and experienced co-operating teachers. It is intended that through the use of co-operating teachers the systemic link between school and training institution will be maintained and developed. Greater involvement of the Faculty of Education in the University of Guyana in the field of teacher training is also being promoted.

In its attempt to provide equitable, if not equal, opportunities for all, the Ministry has embarked upon and will continue its programme of upgrading courses for Hinterland and Coastland teachers which is unique in many ways. It is vocational and residential, and conducted in three phases spanning a one-year period and involved distance learning and Micro-Teaching materials and techniques. At the end of the last phase teachers will write examinations, success at which, will make them eligible for entry into the formal teacher education programme. The course instructors comprise tutors from the existing teacher education institutions, competent practising teachers and nominees of the Guyana Teachers Union.

With regard to the improvement in administrative and supervisory skills the major emphases this year will be in the area of strengthening regional capabilities by providing specialised professional assistance to Regional Education Officers and their staffs and by upgrading the quality of supervision in schools.

Cde. Speaker, I would wish to digress at this point to remind the Assembly of the initiative taken in June 1982 to implement the policy of Regionalism with respect to the delivery of education. Decentralism or Regionalism and the delegation of central authority as conceptualized serves to bring about improvement in the administration and supervision of schools taking that authority, as it does, closer to those to whom education is being delivered and thereby promoting greater local involvement and support. To effect the regionalization of education, the Ministry's personnel structure has had to be re-organised as officers were needed to operate the new regional structures. Some such arrangements have proved beneficial to the system as some officers returned to districts from which they came; others broke down with the registration of officers unable or unwilling to be relocated. In most cases, however, the response by Regional Democratic Councils has been heartening as members continue to work in close collaboration and in harmony with the Ministries representatives in the delivery of education.



1986-03-06

17:15 – 17:25 hrs

The key role in maintaining the parity of educational services in the ten regions of Guyana is that of the Regional Education Officer, the District Education Officer or Supervisor, the School's Welfare Officer and, of course, the School Administration.

These are, as it were, the middle level managers and advisors who turn policy into practice, convert plans into action programmes and evaluate the impact of those programmes. The ministry is only too well aware of some cases, some of lack of relevant skills, others of inefficiency, incompetence and derogation of duty, and for this reason improvement in the system and quality of middle-level administration and supervision is being emphasised. Some Regional Chairmen have already urged consideration of the matter of shifting of responsibility for various types of decisions and actions from the centre to the region and from upper to lower levels of personnel, and for the determination of educational policy based upon the peculiar needs of individual regions. Some of these responsibilities have already been shifted and discussions are continuing with respect to others now being carried out by the Teaching Service Commission. In the meantime existing reporting and monitoring mechanisms are being reviewed with the intention of making them more supportive and evaluative. With this in mind also and using the model of business management, the Ministry is working towards the introduction of a school inspectorate manned by a team of educational quality-controllers at all levels of the learning-teaching process, capable of examining and analysing the "product" which may be reports, books, behaviours and physical facilities, and recommending appropriate remedial or disciplinary measures. This innovation will be implemented within well-defined administrative structures that will facilitate optimal-co-ordination of efforts.

The strengthening of institutions in the educational system must of necessity involve the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of the physical environment in which children learn – With the expansion of the schools in the Georgetown area, the Regional Administration is responsible for the construction and rehabilitation of school buildings. In spite of this however, the Ministry of Education still holds overall responsibility for the quality and efficiency of the education system throughout the country. Because of this it must ensure that the physical facilities in which learning takes place must conform to a certain specified standards. It is, therefore, necessary for the Ministry to monitor, on an on-going basis, the condition of school buildings throughout the country.

**1986-03-06**

**17:15 – 17:25 hrs**

Positive steps have been taken to establish a unit capable of effectively grappling with this problem of maintenance and rehabilitation of the one hundred and twenty-five schools in Georgetown. Staff with relevant expertise has been recruited for the first time to carry out tasks related to inspection, preparation of quantity of surveys and related work programmes. This unit will also be expected to render assistance to and monitor the work of the Regions.

With regard to the School Furniture Programme, the Ministry in its endeavour to improve school facilities has also embarked on a programme for providing adequate furniture to schools. This programme which is organised by the Pre-Vocational Education Unit involves Practical Instruction Centres and those Community High Schools which specialise in Industrial Arts. Out of school youth also participate after normal school hours and at weekends. They receive a small stipend. The first batch of contracts has been given out for the construction of over a thousand sets of furniture. Inherent in the import of this programme is a socialization function whereby appropriate habits of self-reliance are developed in students enabling them to apply theoretical knowledge in practical and businesslike situations and to generate funds at the same time.

17:25 hrs

(Cde. Burnham continues)

The calculated benefit of this programme is that furniture will be built at much reduced cost.

I come now to curriculum development which impinges on the education, training and orientation of all categories of recipients - the low achievers, the average student, the exceptionally bright and the handicapped. It is concerned primarily with the co-ordinated approach to change-initiating, as well as reflecting change. In our education system, change is imperative and involves more than curriculum renewal, expansion and revision. Curriculum reform and innovation are crucial as our educators grapple with the task of bringing curricula in line with the thrust, self-reliance and socialist development involved in our task of nation-building. Our race against time and the present shortage of human, material and financial resource demands that careful attention be given to defining objectives, identifying priorities, setting targets and adopting strategies to achieve these. Further, since much of the change must be fundamental, our policies, structures and mechanisms must be re-examined and improved upon. It is with such considerations in mind, that the Ministry will embark on the following curriculum initiatives.

Vertical Integration

In its efforts to further improve the quality of education offered in the school system the Ministry has been directing its attention to the vertical integration of the school curricula of the three levels, namely, nursery, primary and secondary. This form of integration will guarantee curriculum continuity from one level to the other. As a consequence, the programmes planned for the nursery level would cater for the developmental needs of those pupils and equip them with the skills necessary for them to cope, with as little difficulty as possible with the programme offered in the preparatory classes of the primary schools. Similarly, co-ordination between the primary and secondary levels will ensure that at the end of their primary school experience, the pupils will enter secondary school with the knowledge and skills which would allow them to adjust easily to the demands of the new programmes and the unfamiliar environment.

Generally, emphasis is placed on the need for teachers to complete the programme requirements of each class level and consequently those of each of the three broader levels - nursery, primary and secondary, to allow for smooth transition without undue difficulty. The outcome of the satisfaction of such a need will ensure that the students possess the knowledge and skills necessary for them to build on in the succeeding levels. In this way, the students would be able to develop and to achieve in keeping with their individual capabilities and be able to cope with the excitement of acquiring new knowledge and skills.

Establishment of Local Subject Committees among

Owing to the shortage of specialist officers to supervise the instructional programmes in the different subject areas, it has become essential to organise teachers to form local subject committees. The objectives of this exercise are:

- (a) To enhance the co-ordination of strategies for teaching the various subjects;
- (b) To encourage research in and development of materials to be utilised in the instructional process;
- (c) To facilitate feedback and evaluation for the improvement of teaching and learning.

It is expected that the expertise of skilled, experienced teachers will be shared on an organised basis, with their less able colleagues, thereby improving the quality of teaching<sup>in</sup> the schools.

In the secondary schools, as a consequence of the comparatively low performance of students, including Guyanese students, at external examinations of English language, the Ministry of Education introduced a Grammar-based approach to the teaching of English during 1985. To accomplish this task, a project aimed at improving the competence of Secondary School English teachers in the teaching of grammar was launched during the August vacation, 1985.

In the primary schools, with effect from the beginning of the 1985-1986 school year, grammar was introduced as a discrete subject of the curriculum and time-table of all primary schools. In this regard, Regional Education Officers were given specific instructions and guidelines to implement this directive. Included is a regular monitoring of the programmes of schools and constant feedback to make the plans a reality.

The Teacher Training Institutions have also introduced grammar in their English programmes in order to ensure that the teacher-trainees get the correct exposure to the teaching of grammar when they graduate and so join the teachers in the system to grapple with this important task.

The feedback received at the end of the first term of implementation has indeed been heartening and, it is envisaged that the results of the English Language examinations would begin to improve progressively every year.

At the primary school level, there is to be increased emphasis on reading. The ability to read has been recognised as the democratic right of all citizens. With the rapid advances in the fields of technology and science and in education generally, we depend on printed matter for increased knowledge. To function effectively in helping to build a self-reliant nation, our youth must be literate. Everyone must be given an opportunity to develop his potential. In our classrooms, it would be ideal if failure could be obviated, but as this is not always possible, reading problems need to be diagnosed and corrective measures adopted early.

measures reading curriculum incorporates strategies for helping the weak reader. Skills and abilities necessary for enabling students to become independent readers and for developing self concepts are emphasized in the programmes. Materials produced by the Curriculum Development Centre reflect our ideology and sociological influences and cultural experiences. And while being instructional and informative, the materials aim at inculcating desirable attitudes, habits and values. But we are determined to overcome the difficulties inherent in our situation of economic stringency by training teachers in all areas to meet the demands of the rapid increase in school places over the past decade.

Added to this, there is a difficulty that faces us in which specialised teachers are finding it hard to resist the attraction of higher salaries in the business enterprises. Perhaps as a tribute to the Ministry or to the teacher-training institution that business enterprises want the teachers so trained.

/Applausg/ It merely increases the challenge to provide more teachers. Those students who have succeeded, nonetheless, in attaining excellence for which our

schools have been renowned are to be congratulated. So, too, the teachers who, in the face of difficulties not of their making, have redoubled their efforts to deliver the best possible services to those in their care. Let me not be unmindful, however, of those students who might not have shone academically but who have attained excellence in service to their school and in their concern for their fellow students. But as we contemplate, however briefly here, the subject of excellence let us be cautious and aware of the danger of an educational system which is evaluated by examination alone, and of a concept of excellence based on the single criterion of successful examination performance and accumulation of high marks, of "As" or of "grade 1s." That is merely to aid and abet, unfortunately, the "cram shops" that are so unfortunately prevalent in our schools today.

We would encourage our teachers to strive rather to present to their students various criteria of excellence, and models of excellence they can conceptualise by which they may learn to judge themselves as they pace each other in pursuit of excellence the actual attainment of which may elude many a capable young person.

**National Assembly**

**17:35 hrs**

(Cde. V. Burnham continues)

In valiant pursuit of all forms of excellence the Ministry of Education in its programme for 1986 will among its special initiatives continue to broaden school curricula to cater for a wider range of interests, attitudes and needs. My colleague Cde. Bernard, Minister within the Ministry of Education will be dealing with these little later on, but I wish to make a brief mention of just three of these because of their peculiar significance. These are the establishment of the President's College for children of exceptional ability, the St. Barnabas Special School for slow learners, the promotion of Equal opportunities for girls and women in Technical and Vocational Education.

The President's College is an expression of our Government's concern that children should receive the type of education best suited to their abilities. Gifted children are special children and as such they are deserving of special services, as are our handicapped children who are also special, but in a different way. The services to the former, however, are intended to assure academic and technical preparation for leadership roles as well as the development of a high degree of socialist consciousness and behaviour. When we shall have provided ourselves with the means of delivering education of the best possible kind to all our children, there is no doubt that higher percentages will achieve excellence and more institutions will have to be found to provide the services for which these students will have qualified.

Because of social environment, psychological and in some cases physical factors, some students cannot cope with the pace of the normal programmes. Inevitably, they experience continued failure, frustration and disappointment, and either drop out of school or join the ranks of the unemployed or the street sellers or simply drift through school until it is time to leave. This project is an attempt to reserve this pattern and give the students an opportunity to experience success, to learn at their own rate, improve their self-concept and make school life attractive and meaningful, by providing stimulating activities and working in small groups. Each child is treated as an individual and works at his own pace. He can measure his success as he goes along. He does not have to compete, neither does he have to work under the strain of an examination. At the end of the three-year course, some will be able to re-enter the normal stream of the Secondary school to write external examinations, while others will pursue studies at vocational centres. The rest will be assisted to gain meaningful employment, including self-employment.

This school like the President's College is the first of its kind, and, it is hoped that, depending on its success, more schools of this kind will be established in the other regions of Guyana.

Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Girls and Woman in Technical and Vocational Education – The provision of free education from nursery to university level was aimed directly at increasing the accessibility to education regardless of sex, ethnic origin and socio-economic circumstances in order to eradicate all barriers to equality of educational opportunities.

However, an appraisal of the education system of 1982 and a survey in 1985 revealed that although no major barriers exist to deter women's entry into technical education and training, there is evidence of oblique, subtle and covert ways through which stereo-typing limits the education and status of women in Guyana. The majority of girls still tend to choose female-dominated electives even though they are exposed to the identical curricula as boys in the first three years of secondary school education. In an attempt to remove these barriers the Ministry of Education with the assistance of UNESCO has introduced a pilot project an Affirmative Action programme in two secondary schools (North Ruimveldt Secondary and Lodge Community High School). The major objectives of this pilot project are:

To expand and improve educational programmes and activities in pre-vocational education and career education in two secondary schools

To heighten parents', teachers' and students' awareness of those subtle barriers covert and overt, which limit girls' expectations, aspirations, choices and behaviours

To sharpen students' awareness of career possibilities and existing conditions in technical and vocational occupations.

To convince parents, teachers and employers of the need for changing attitudes towards girls' participation in non-traditional education and training

To help girls to discover their talent (if any), aptitudes and interest in technical and vocational education

No presentation on the delivery of education opportunity to all can be completed without mention of community participation. In this regard, the Ministry and all its outreach agencies will be making a determined effort to increase the level of such participation in the education system. With the introduction of the system of regionalisation, as has been mentioned, some of the responsibility for making decisions that affect the functioning of the school system has already passed to the Regional Authorities. As a consequence, communities and more especially the parents in families now have a greater opportunity to determine the quality of education offered in their schools. The level of involvement of the parents and other members of the community in the provision maintenance and development of the facilities of the school, and in the protection of these facilities in bound to make an impact on the type of service the school renders to the community.

It follows, therefore, that the school, the family and the community must work closely together to achieve their common objectives, among which must be an improvement in the quality of life in that community by virtue of the output of knowledge and skills by the school into the community.

The Speaker: Cde. Burnham, just a minute. If you are to continue, would someone kindly move an extension.

Cde. Thomas: Cde. Speaker, I wish to move that the Cde. Vice President be allowed to complete her address.

The Speaker: Is it agreed that an extension of fifteen minutes be given to Cde. Burnham?



Comrades and honourable members answered in the affirmative

Cde. Burnham: As the Government of the people plan and initiate change in the interest of the people, it behooves that same people in all the families, the neighbourhood and other social groups, the workers' groups and the Party groups to understand the nature of the collective and co-operative effort that they must continue to make so that there is evident consistency in the expectations they have for the child, in the rewards given and the punishments meted out to the child in whatever group he finds himself. For, all of these groups, not only families and schools contribute to the development of children's knowledge skills, values and behaviors. In pursuance of our important socialist thrust, no group can be closed shop, each is a dynamic part of the whole society. The Soviet Educator, Anton Semyonovich Makarenko in his book on education in the USSR puts most expressively the relation of the family to the total society.

He says: "Our family is an organic part of Soviet society, and every attempt it makes to build up its own experience independently of the moral demands of society is bound to result in a disproportion, discordant as an alarm bell. Our parents are not without authority either, but this authority is only the reflection of social authority.

17:45 hrs

In our country, the duty of a father towards his children is a particular form of duty towards society. It is as if our society says to parents, "You have joined together in good will and love, rejoice in your children and expect to go on rejoicing in them. That is your own personal affair and concerns your own personal happiness. But in this happy process you have given birth to new people. A time will come when these people will cease to be only a joy to you and become independent members of society. It is not at all a matter of indifference to society what kind of people they will be. In handing over to you a certain measure of social authority, the . . . State demands from you correct upbringing of future citizens."

Gde. Speaker, with your permission I would wish to direct my concluding remarks to this Assembly as well as to educators and students who have been given the opportunity to attend the educational institutions, over 800 or so, spread over the varied terrain of coastland, savannah, riverside and mountainous areas of our country, and even beyond, free of cost.

Undoubtedly, in the context of a developing Third World country under pressure of maintaining economic stability in the face of low-priced exports and high-cost imports and killing debt burdens, this has been no easy task but our Government is convinced that the resolution of attendant problems lies in our people's ability to make the fullest use of our human and natural resources and that can only be developed through a relevant educational system operated by practitioners loyal to their country and committed to its advancement. Many a developing Third World writer has conceptualised the commitment and the loyalty required but strangely, perhaps ironically, it is the words of an English poet, Walter Scott, in the "Lord of the Isles" that speak to my feelings and my concerns and I wish to recall them for the benefit of us all:

"Breathes there the man, with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land  
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd  
As home his foot steps he hath turn'd  
From wandering on a foreign strand!

If such there breathe, go, mark him well;  
For him no Minstrel raptures swell;  
High though his titles, proud his name,  
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;  
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,  
The wretch, concentred all in self,  
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,  
And, doubly dying, shall go down  
To the vile dust, from whence he sprang,  
Unwept, unhonour'd, and unsung." /Applause./

The Speaker: Cde. Prashad.

The Minister of Transport (Cde. Prashad): Ode. Speaker, I would like personally to add my congratulations to the Ode. Minister of Finance for his clear, lucid and detailed review of the financial position of the country and for his proposals for meeting the expenditure of Government as envisaged for 1986.

When I reported to Parliament last January on the performance<sup>of,</sup> and plans for, the transport sector, I drew attention to some of the difficulties being experienced in both the public and private sectors in the maintenance of their services in the prevailing conditions of financial stringency. I also indicated that because of the very essential nature of these services, those concerned in the operation and maintenance of these services would need to emphasise greater commitment and innovation than in the past.

To assist in these efforts, Government put in place various incentive schemes, such as higher salaries and wages for workers in the public sector and adequate fare increases for operators in the private sector. In addition, the allocation for these sectors in 1985 for the acquisition of new equipment and spare parts was set at a reasonably generous level.

I am happy to report that these measures have combined yield a significant improvement in the performance of the transport sector during the year under review. Increases in productivity and enhancement of the quality of service has been the major objective of those responsible for the administration of the sector. Although much remains to be done, I am satisfied that over the past year reasonable progress has been made toward achieving these objectives and that the foundation has been laid for continued acceleration of this process in the years ahead.

The main task was to improve the services provided by the G.T.S.L. and to encourage private operators to become more productive by using the facilities provided for them and by taking advantage of the opportunity to acquire vehicles with increased passenger capacity. Some success has attended these efforts. There has been moderate improvement in the rate of depletion in the G.T.S.L. fleet of vehicles. This change was due in large measure to new management systems introduced during the year and reflects creditably on the efforts of the engineering staff.

In 1985 the G.T.S.L. initiated a special School Bus service for the Ministry of Education with 24 medium-size buses which were a gift from Cuba. This

service, because of the subsidised level of fare, has proved, even in its experimental stage, to be a boon to children.

In response to the Government's effort to maintain fares at reasonable levels, private operators continue to acquire the more efficient mini-bus in place of the popular but expensive hire cars. Mini-buses have also been making a considerable contribution towards increasing the flow of traffic and relieving congestion during peak hours. With the continuation of the present trend, together with the planned acquisition of new buses in 1986 by G.T.S.L., the prospects are encouraging for an early solution to the problems of commuters.

The company played a key role in the establishment of the National Drivers College which is responsible for producing a special calibre of driver/mechanic. The College, which commenced operations in October 1985, was instituted because of the need to develop this type of skill within the company and within the entire public sector. The number of trainees enrolled at the outset was 37 and the course of training is expected to be of a duration of three months.

Emergency repairs to the vessels operating the G.T.S.L. ferry services were a priority task in this sector. In 1984, the Barbice and Essequibo ferries, because of the difficulties I referred to earlier, had expected some problems in maintaining their respective operating schedule. In early 1985, these problems were rectified and during the year the Transport and Harbours Department was able to maintain a reasonably reliable service on these routes.

(Cdo. Sooram Prashad continues)

1986-03-06

National Assembly

17:55 - 18:05 hrs

17:55 hrs

The age of the fleet and the difficulty of securing replacement parts, however, are still matters of great concern. I had previously indicated that technical assistance was being made available to commence a study for the rehabilitation and improvement of the ferry services. Whilst the ferry services on the Essequibo river were experiencing the difficulties I referred to earlier, a number of private operators started speed-boat services to the Essequibo Coast and Islands. Our initial concern was with the unauthorised nature and safety of these services; but the appropriate authorities have moved to correct the situation, and I am satisfied that these vessels have since adhered to the safety regulations. I recognise that these vessels are providing a service which in terms of speed and frequency cannot be matched at present by the Transport and Harbour Division. I would wish to say a little more on the maritime administration and on the role of the private operator in the provision of transport services when later on, I deal with the plans for 1986.

Cdo. Speaker, our investments in water transport have not been confined to Transport and Harbour Division. In November, 1985, 4 new wooden cargo vessels were commissioned into service to be used to transport farmers produce from the riverain areas to marketing centres in the regions. The vessels were constructed under a technical assistance programme funded by the Inter-American Development Bank and were built by Guyana National Engineering Corporation at a cost of approximately \$2.5 million Guyana dollars. They have a combined capacity of 95 tonnes and have been deployed on the Barima/Waini, Pomeroon, Essequibo and Demerara Rivers.

The improvement works at the Timheri International Airport partly financed by the Canadian International Development Agency have been continuing and members will have noted, inter alia, that we have acquired and begun to install a new set of runway lights which should improve the safety of operations at the Airport. In this connection, we also secured two modern fire fighting appliances and extinguishing agents. A standby generator has been procured and installed in order to boost the reliability of the electricity supply to the facilities there. The Civil Aviation Department also completed the construction of Lethem. This airstrip can now accommodate aircraft with payloads of up to 15 tons, a facility which will prove of immense value to the region until we are in the position to construct a road. This improvement

to the Lethem runway enables Guyana Airways Corporation to operate its DC-6 aircraft to provide a cargo service of some 12 tons per flight. Needless to say, the hinterland industries located in this area regard this facility as fulfilling a long-felt need.

Domestically, Guyana Airways Corporation continued to operate with one BE-74B and one Twin Otter aircraft and was therefore providing a limited number of scheduled services to the communities in the hinterland. Some communities, especially in the Mazaruni, where the airfields are restricted in length were dependent on the charter services provided by light aircraft operators. It is estimated that the Guyana Airways Corporation carried 90 per cent of the available traffic whilst the balance was lifted by private operators. The trend in recent years has been for private operators to carry a growing share of the traffic, and the Ministry has favourably responded to their representations for the importation of replacement aircraft since these were brought in at the owner's expense and again at no Foreign Exchange cost to the Central Bank.

Internationally, Guyana Airways Corporation carried some 50 per cent of the traffic to destinations in South America, the Caribbean and the United States. On the long haul to cities like New York, Toronto and London, passengers could not make a non-stop flight by any of the airlines serving Guyana during the year and in this sense, the level of service was lower than in previous years. The reduced number of airlines now operating into Guyana also caused some booking problems for passengers, whilst the limited baggage capacity of the operating aircraft has contributed to irritating delays in the receipt of those items.

During the year, however, the Government has acquired a new TU-154M aircraft. This is the first jet aircraft owned by Guyana capable of international passenger operations. Guyanese crews have been trained and will eventually fly this aircraft. This aircraft has the capacity to fly direct to New York, the densest long distance route. This service should be extremely popular with passengers who use this route. Apart from the long haul capability of the aircraft, it is fuel efficient and its purchase price and the terms of its purchase were very favourable. This will result in considerable savings of Foreign Exchange that would otherwise be spent on the lease of the existing aircraft.

hrs

As we are on the subject of Foreign Currency Savings in air transport, I must mention the effects of the Sale of Travel Tickets Act, 1985 which came into effect on November of last year. Members will recall that its main purpose was to compel persons not ordinarily resident in Guyana to purchase airline tickets for travel overseas in Foreign Currency. The Act is expected inter alia to curb the practice indulged in by many Guyanese residents overseas of purchasing their airline tickets in Guyana rather than in the country of their normal residence.

During the four months since the introduction of the Act, the airlines and travel agencies in Guyana collected approximately US\$70,000. But as I mentioned, even further savings should accrue to the economy through a greater number of persons purchasing return tickets from abroad. From our examination of the debts, we estimate that the annual foreign currency savings from the measure will be approximately \$US500,000.

National Assembly

18:05 hrs

(Cde. Seeram Prashad continues)

In keeping with the Government's policies of encouraging the private and co-operative sectors to play a greater role in providing economic goods and services, operators in these two sectors are being offered the opportunity to expand their activities in the area of bus transport services.

The policy of licensing mini buses has been successfully followed over the past three years and these vehicles are the most rapidly growing segment in public transport reflecting the popularity of this type of vehicle with the traveling public. In the main, these vehicles have been imported into the country at the expense of private individuals and without the provision of any foreign exchange expenditure by the Central Bank. The initiative taken by the private sector demonstrates a willingness to be creatively involved in the solution of problems and the ability of this sector, to mobilise funds and invest in areas that offer a reasonable return on investment. One of the characteristics of road transport operations is that entry conditions are not very restrictive and it requires a relatively small amount of capital for an individual to commence business. For this reason, these operations have always been an attractive field of investment for the private individual and small co-operatives. To the extent that we can encourage this form of enterprise in Guyana, we will be promoting selfhelp and self-employment and will also be freeing the resources of the state for investment in more complex undertakings.

The Government's commitment to a viable state transport enterprise still remains. In order that G.T.S.L. may fulfill this role, however, there is need for some restructuring of that Company and that process which was started last year is continuing. The Company will have to ensure year is continuing. The Company will have to ensure that the resources invested in it are better managed and in common with other state enterprises, it has been charged to eliminate the deficit on its operations. Some of the problems experienced by the Company were due to the inability to secure financing for the regular and adequate supply were due to the inability to secure financing for the regular and adequate supply of spares which had to be imported. It is intended to correct this situation by maintaining the fleet at a level consistent with the state's inability to procure these essential inputs in the light of its other pressing priorities. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Later in 1986 it is expected that the fleet will be augmented by 100 new buses.

In water transport, our efforts will be directed during 1986 at strengthening the maritime administration with a view to being able to implement policies and plans more effectively. Undoubtedly, there are certain weaknesses which have to be corrected if we are to develop a really efficient maritime sector. The training of more professionals in this field is one of the priority tasks for 1986 and the years immediately ahead. We have an undesirable situation where too many of the trained or experienced personnel have to be retained beyond the age of retirement because of the lack of qualified junior officers who could be used as replacements. This situation may have arisen from historic reasons such as inappropriate salary structure and the greater attraction of positions outside of T.&H.D.



1986-03-06

18:05 – 18:15 hrs

Nevertheless, it is a weakness which has to be corrected without further delay. The second area for attention is the separation of the operating and regulatory functions of the department. The rationale for this is simple. At present, the department performs dual functions; it operates shipping services but it also administers the laws governing the operation of such services. In the best of worlds, it would be difficult to reconcile the two roles.

Where, as in the present case, there are numerous constraints on operations, the tendency will be to concentrate on operations to the neglect of the regulatory administration.

The law under which T. & H.D. was established and still operates may need to be revised. A new maritime code has been drafted and is now with the law office.

Hopefully, it might be enacted this year. It envisages the establishment of a Maritime Administration and the regulatory functions now being carried out by T. & H.D. will be vested in that Administration. With the separation of these functions, the Department will be able to concentrate its efforts on the operation of the shipping services.

Active study is being given to the further rationalisation of services in which one authority will be responsible for the development of the ports and the works relating thereto, such as dredging.

The principal projects which will be carried out during the year are the study on the rehabilitation and improvement of the three ferry services at the river crossings at Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo; the reconditioning of vessels; the rehabilitation of Wakenaam stelling. The study mentioned above will identify thereas for priority investment in the services over the period 1987 to 1989.

Cde. Speaker, over the past two years considerable work has been done in air transport. Much still remains to be done, but in 1986 we would like to put the emphasis on road transport and water transport. Nevertheless, there are a few tasks and projects in air transport in which we propose to address our attention during the year:

- (i) the elimination of the deficit on G.A.C.'s domestic operations through a combination of stricter expenditure control and a modest increase in fares;
- (ii) the further improvement of the international services in order to offer the public higher levels of service;
- (iii) commencement of a new passenger outgoing areas at Timehri so as to ease the congestion at the check-in counters and the department lounge and to facilitate the retrieval of incoming passenger baggages for which purpose a baggage conveyor system will soon be installed at a cost of G\$550,000;

- (iv) installation of a new well at Timchri to ensure the continuous supply of water;
- (v) the commencement of a new runway at Aishalton.

The proposals I have outlined will move us a stage further in the development of the transport system in this country. They have taken into consideration the very objective conditions of today where we have to make efficient use of the resources available and to encourage individual initiative. In this sector, with the possible exception of the air transport mode, private enterprise has traditionally played a leading role in the provision of services. The state's traditional role has been regulatory but it has always maintained a limited service mainly to support development efforts. In the early 1970's when conditions were more favourable, the state's services were rapidly expanded. There have been constraints against this rapid expansion which we have ignored for too long. Realistically, we must now contract those services and bring them within manageable proportions, but we must not lose sight of the original goal - the improvement of people's welfare. If this can be better achieved by a smaller and more efficient state transport sector at this stage whilst other activities expand, then I think no one can complain.

It is generally admitted that it is not the respective size of the sectors which is important, but rather the efficiency with which the services are performed.

18:15 hrs

( Cde. Seeram Prashad continues)

What we are attempting to do is to create the conditions for operators in each of the three sectors to perform efficiently and to let enterprise, initiative and efficiency determine respective market shares. The objective conditions will determine whether we give greater or less incentive to any of the sectors but each must aim, at all times, to be efficient.

It is no secret that the European Economic Community will assist in the establishment of the Guyana/Suriname Ferry. The works are envisaged to be carried out in two phases. Phase one consists of five kilometres of road on the Guyana side along with bridges and culverts and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilometre of road on the Suriname side. It also includes earthworks on the sites on both sides of the river.

Phase two consists of the mooring facilities, terminal buildings and the provision of the ship, lighting, water, telephone, etc. The ship will take 21 cars and 150 passengers seated, and another 100 in vehicles. The journey will take about 20 minutes.

A Contractor for Phase 1 has been selected, and it is expected that the works will commence in the first half of 1986, and that the service should be operational by June, 1988. The total cost is estimated to be ECUS12.2M.

Cde. Speaker, I trust this outline will give you an insight into the policies and an overview of our endeavours, past and future, in the transport sector.

The Speaker: Mr. Abraham.

Mr. M. A. Abraham: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that the budget presentation of 1986 brings on optimism, but does this optimism exist in the homes of the Guyanese housewives. Mr. Speaker, especially for those housewives in the North West area where it is difficult to come by a cake of soap, where it is so difficult to come by a file, a file that you use for farming, for sharpening your cutlass. I understand that St. Ignatius in the Rupununi you can get a six inch file for \$56.50. Mr. Speaker, that is not surprising. There is a little store down in Regent Street where you can get that same file for \$48.50. When farmers and housewives are faced with such a situation Sir, one wonders where is this optimism that the budget speaks about. What about those fellows out there? I passed earlier today and there were about two miles on either side, two miles coming, two miles going of cars lined up there for fuel. Some of them were there all night last night. Mr. Speaker, when I left Lethem yesterday there were about three hundred people waiting to be brought out of Lethem to Georgetown, mostly hucksters. The Minister of Transport would know that for the past four or five days the aircraft was laid up for maintenance and we hope that very soon that bottle neck at Lethem would be .... I would like to ask Sir, whether it is possible for the Tupolev that the Minister so proudly spoke about could not at least fortnightly service be given to Lethem, with such a brand new airstrip there. I think we should give it a try and so help those Guyanese people, those hucksters, sometimes we tend to call them the bloodsuckers of Guyanese but they have been performing for the past years though we admit that the price of the things that they bring into the country are very exorbitant, but nevertheless they have been providing drugs that could not come in normally and there is great complaint. Quite a lot of people have come to me and said Abraham what is the position here, we have been here laid up in Lethem for fourteen days, fifteen days, we cannot come out. We have seen people come in two days ago and three days and they have gotten on the flight and we cannot get on. Mr. Speaker, surely something could be wrong with the GAC personnel in Lethem where people are complaining and cannot get to come out and yet

someone is given that opportunity.

The Speaker: Mr. Abraham, do not want to stop you, we are dealing with the Government's policy. When the time comes for that we will deal with that. It is the Government's policy we are discussing now.

Mr. Abraham: Thank you Sir, I appreciate your correction. We are talking now about the transportation system in the interior. I speak especially of that road from . . . to Shea. Sir, that road is a night mare. I would like to know whether Government intends to do any work on that road. The bridges, those bridges are in a terrible state of dis-repair. There is a very rough creek which could be a danger to life and limb. A creek about six or seven miles down at Aishalton. It would be very very good if Government could concentrate and spend some more money on fixing a good and decent bridge across that creek. Cde. M. Stephens over there will tell you more about it.

The next thing I speak about is the river cleaning exercise in the Maruka river. There used to be a time when Government provided employment for the Amerindians in Maruka and the people of Maruka used to have the benefit of a very clean river, passenger traffic to and from Maruka but now ever so regularly boats down, launches cannot go through the Maruka river, it is blocked by moca bush. It would be interesting to know whether Government does intend to spend some money this year on the river cleaning exercise in Maruka of the North West District.

Mr. Abraham continues

1986-07-06

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:25 - 18:55 hrs

18:25 hrs

In recent times there have been complaints of police brutality to people in the hinterland. I speak especially of the incident that took place at Moruca about two months ago where a gentleman named Anthony La Cruz was subjected to police brutality. I would like the Minister responsible for Home Affairs to investigate this matter and get the situation rectified. I was speaking to someone in the hall during the recess and he told me that he witnessed the incident that took place at Moruca in the North West District where the man La Cruz was brutally beaten by the police. I know that the police are doing their best to give protection to the people of this country but at the same time they could overstep their bounds and become cruel to people. The incident was covered in the Mirror newspaper. Sometimes the police tend to anger the people in the interior. I speak about the case in Karasabai recently where a police inspector had to go down to Karasabai to investigate a report that the Touchau there was not getting on too well with police officers. We hope that there will be a measure of relief and that there will be cordial relations between the police and people in the interior areas where they serve.

Turning to the field of education, Mr. Feroze Mohamed dealt with it at length. It was heartening to hear the reply given by the Hon. Vice President Burnham in which she explained the programme for education this year. It was, of course, very laudable, but I am referring to the conditions at St. Ignatius in the Rupununi. We have a students' hostel, a very beautiful building, put up by ladies many years ago. There is a complaint about the facilities there. St. Ignatius is the premier school in the Rupununi. There is also a complaint about the food situation there. Children are recruited from all over the Rupununi to go to that school. There is not enough meat served at the school, not enough farine. Then there is the question of accommodation. There are double bunks but they are all falling to pieces. Mattresses are torn and the bunks are just laid up on one side of the wall. I understand that there was an allocation to the tune of \$44,000 for revamping that hostel. Nobody seems to know what happened to that money. It would be interesting for some investigation to take place.

Mr. Mohamed also referred to the question of shortage of furniture in schools. I suppose that is the trend in all schools in Guyana. Our children are known to be writing on their knees in schools due to the lack of furniture. Over the years it is clear that the Government has been having great difficulty in maintaining

the free education system. One wonders whether we should not resort to the steps that were taken in Zambia and that Julius Nyerere took in Tanzania and lately Robert Mugabe. The schools were taken over, as the Government did here, and when they found they could not maintain them they gave them back to the Churches. Would this not be a step in the right direction? Government recently has been admitting to many failures. It is a good sign when, in humility, they admit to failures in different areas. One wonders why they do not call in the Churches and give back the schools as is being done in some countries in Africa.

We come now to the question of health. We all know that malaria has never been eradicated in this country. Malaria is on the increase. We want to know what is the latest update, what are the plans for keeping malaria at bay. We are grateful that Government has supplied the people of the Ruwumuni with three beautiful Brazilian vehicles. I am told that they were a gift from the Canadian Government. There needs to be an on-going programme of spraying house-to-house in the interior. Very soon the rainy season will be here and that is the time when we have to watch the situation and monitor it very carefully because during the rainy season mosquitoes tend to multiply and the incidence of malaria increases. In fact, there are only two of the four officers who should be in the malaria department in the area. Hundreds of slides will be of great help if we can get more microscopists to carry out the task of examining slides.

It is also distressing to note that some of the vehicles that were initially designed for use by the health department are now being used for other sectors of Government activities. I see one assigned to the Regional Chairman. I do not blame her for that. She needs to travel around. She has a lot of work to do, but does Government intend this year to acquire more vehicles to serve Region 9? Most of the vehicles there are in a state of disrepair, or, if not disrepair, they are not functioning. Some do not have lights, some do not have brakes. There was an incident about a month ago when on the way to Karasabai the Regional Information Officer, his driver and others came very close to toppling over when attempting to cross a very dangerous creek. The vehicle did not have brakes. It reversed and leaned to one side and some injuries were sustained, but not very heavy injuries.

Recently we had a very sad experience when an officer who served a very long time in the good colonial days lost his life when trying to repair the Kamarang River.



1986-03-06

18:25 – 18:35 hrs

We must pay credit to the hard-working Regional Chairman. She is trying to get things going. Due to the defectiveness of the tractor it came up on its rear wheels. The two wheels came back on the driver of the trailer and smashed him to death. This happened about a week ago.

18:35 hrs

Sir, we would really like to see in the area of transportation, in Region 9, definite improvement possibly spare parts. I am heartened to note that on page 12 of the Budget debate the middle of the last paragraph:

"The extensive destruction of buses operated by GTSL is perhaps the most vivid example of the consequences of the waste of national assets."

Mr. Speaker, I would be grateful if this kindly reminder could go into the hearts and minds of all the drivers of buses and government vehicles and national assets in this country. Our national assets are scarce, our vehicles in the Rupununi are scarce and we would like that these vehicles last for a long time. And unless our drivers take good care of those vehicles bearing in mind the roads are so bad, you cannot afford to be going at 50 and 60 miles per hour and still expect to maintain a vehicle in peak form. So, sir, with these few remarks I wish the Government well, I wish them success. We note with great relief that there is going to be greater concentration on the interest of the private sector. They are going to be more involved and stress on the individual initiative. Mr. Speaker, if this Government continues on a democratic course and there is genuine consultation at all levels I do not see why these proposals here cannot work. Applause.

The Speaker: Cde. Bernard.

The Minister within the Ministry of Education (Cde. Bernard):

Cde. Speaker, although it is easy to talk about brain drain, we sometimes forget that some of our best minds who do not go down the drain but remain in Guyana to serve. A fine example of such an example is our Minister of Finance and one example of his fine mind is his last Budget presentation in which he very accurately and very profoundly puts before this Assembly the programmes and plans that are recommended for 1986 and I would like to speak very briefly on the remarks we found on pages 2 and 3 of his Budget Speech where the Minister said:

"Education is a dimension of human resource development in which we can be justly proud of the significant progress that has been made over the years." and

"these indicators were not always so favourable. They are not the product of wishful thinking, but the outcome of careful attention to welfare considerations and astute political decision-making. They are a reflection of a conscious policy wherein highest priority was ascribed to human resource development."

Cde. Speaker, in non-oil producing underdeveloped countries the temptation to panic to deviate from primary objectives and to seek refuge from hard economic decisions in the negation of long term commitments is one which has

1986-03-06

18:35 - 18:45 hrs

attracted many governments whose economies are in difficulty similar to ours. There is often pressure to think of spending on investment in human resource sectors of education as alternative to investment in economic ventures and this is a mistaken belief that secondary priority to welfare matters is a clever strategy and at times of difficulty we could escape from our problems by slashing on welfare matters such as Education. But, Cde. Speaker, we could never accept such a position. We believe that sustainable economic development is only possible where we give high priority to investment in the education sector because we believe that sustainable economic development is a function of growth and development in the education system and in development of human resources. There are many ways of measuring that commitment. I will use for the sake of convenience the proportion of GLP allocated to the Education Sector and I chose carelessly and at random from some other underdeveloped countries. Let me take the percentage of GLP allocated to Education.

We find that the figures of 1981 were Guyana, 1.7 per cent; Kenya, 6.1 per cent; Sri Lanka 2.8 per cent, Costa Rica, 4.7 per cent; Barbados, 4.1 per cent; Trinidad and Tobago, 2.9 per cent and this compared with Guyana is 7.1 per cent. Cde. Speaker, we have also been able to achieve relatively high sectors of expenditure in education sectors and in capital spending in the education sector because we believe that National resource development is tied to the development. The Cde. Vice-President for Education and Social Development very clearly explained the education and management strategies we will use during 1986 to further re-organize and develop our education system. I would have liked to deal rather more briefly with the economic strategy and economic benefits. Some of the special projects which will come on stream during 1986 and which are on-going into 1986 as we see to re-organize and develop. We believe investments in education increases more productivity. We believe that acceleration of development depends upon acceleration in the growth of development of the education sector and we believe that all indices of development are positively correlated with the quality of spending and the quality of development in education. Therefore, Cde. Speaker, we do not pretend to apologise for the amount of resources that we put in the education system and we do not pretend to apologise for having an innovative and creative educational strategy.

1986-03-06

18:35 – 18:45 hrs

I notice that members of the Minority were very worried with the large numbers of educational experiments which were going on in our education system. I would only pause to point out that we do not apologise for being an innovative and a creative people. Cde. Speaker, we will continue to experiment, when our experiments work we will take pride in what we have done and when they do not work we will adopt new strategies in improving the Ministry of Education. /Applause/ Cde. Speaker, one of the important strategies which we will use in strengthening our education system is in consolidating and coordinating the management of education resources within that system and to that and we have recently declared open a centre for education resource development which is part of a UNSSCO major project in the field of education for the Latin American and Caribbean Region.

18:45 hrs

(Cde. Bernard continues)

This UNESCO/Latin America project highlighted three strategies in educational development. First of all, to ensure that by 1999 at the latest all children of school age receiving schooling are provided with a minimum of general education and, secondly, to eradicate literacy before the end of the century. Thirdly, to improve the quality and efficiency of educational systems by carrying out the necessary reforms.

We in Guyana have decided to put greater emphasis on the third strategy, that is the improving quality and efficiency. To that end we are re-modelling the entire educational system with a view improving the quality and efficiency of education in primary and secondary levels. The learning centre facility combines accessibility of materials and equipment with a dynamic process of instruction activity in a variety of forms.

The National Centre for Education and Resource Development will have under its umbrella a learning resource centre, the curriculum development centre, the maxim-size unit, the materials production unit, the broadcast to schools unit and the test development unit. The role of the centre is supportive of the thrust of improving the quality and efficiency of the system and some important activities in the centre will be facilitating and recording educational workshops and seminars, maintaining a central record of instructional materials, accumulating teacher resource materials in a systematic manner, providing demonstration programmes that articulate integration of teaching aids into the process of learning and facilitating the production of classroom sets of learning materials and teacher instruction manuals.

One of the problems that has beset our educational system and one which has beset many countries in similar economic straits is the high cost of imported science laboratory equipment. We have come to the conclusion that we cannot in the near future ever dream to afford all the equipment that we need for science teaching in our schools and in any case the degree of emphasis on practical laboratory teaching in our system has improved because of the emphasis being placed on this type of teaching

1986-03-06

18:45 - 18:55 hrs

laboratory teaching in our system has increased because of the emphasis being placed on this type of teaching in the Caribbean Examinations Council science examinations. Therefore, we have decided to adopt a strategy of innovation whereby we will set up a centre which will be primarily interested in designing and testing science equipment which are made from local materials. The building for this centre has already been identified and the centre will come on stream during 1986. We hope not only to save foreign exchange but to create in our system the capacity for designing appropriate teaching materials and extending this capacity so that in the very near future our importation of science equipment would be very limited indeed.

Cde. Speaker, although we have placed emphasis on the primary and secondary systems and innovations in the primary and secondary systems, one of our major initiatives for 1986 will take place in the area of tertiary education. During 1986 significant improvements will occur at the tertiary level and there will be implemented a human resources training and development project which will be undertaken in conjunction with the Inter-American Development Bank. The project is ultimately aimed at increasing the number of skilled persons available for work in areas crucial to <sup>the</sup> socio-economic development of the country. This will be accomplished by firstly strengthening the faculties of agriculture, technology, natural sciences and education and the Department of Management of the University of Guyana. Secondly, by strengthening the country's free technical and vocational institutions, that is, the Government Technical Institute, the Guyana Industrial Training Centre and the New Amsterdam Technical Training Institute. Thirdly, by establishing a programme of scholarship loans for graduate level study abroad in specific priority areas not provided for by the University of Guyana. Strengthening of the University and the technical institutions will be effected through the improvement of the physical plan for the instructional support systems, that is, equipment, books etc., and by comprehensive staff development programmes for all four institutions. Additionally, the University of Guyana will benefit from a grant which will be directed at improving the planning, organisational and management structure at the university. This grant will also be used to foster curriculum

1986-05-06

18:45 - 18:55 hrs

improvement in all faculties of the University of Guyana so as to provide students with programmes of study needed for national economic development and offering good occupational prospects. The total cost of the programme is \$16 million U.S. and the bank/share, \$14.4 million, is 90 per cent of the cost and coming from the resources of the fund for special operations. In other words, the Government is obtaining the softest possible terms offered by the bank. It is important to note that in determining the dimension of the programme care was taken to ensure that the extra capacity generated at these institutions through this programme will not exceed the demands of placement institutions and that the additional skilled personnel generated can be absorbed into the labour market.

Cde. Speaker, one of the important aspects of our management and development strategy in education is the growth of participation and management at the regional and local levels. I notice that one speaker on the Minority side was unable to detect the shift of expenditure from central to regional Government and I hope that a closer study of the Estimates will enlighten him. We should observe that most of the emphasis on the repairs of buildings and the care of the infrastructure of the system has been transferred to the local level and we have found in the regions that people are taking this responsibility on with enthusiasm and we hope that this system develops. We will be able to recognise that people who live in the community have the greatest interest in seeing that the school's infrastructure is maintained and preserved. We have found that this is the most democratic and efficient way to use our limited resources for the maintenance of the infrastructure of the system.

If you look at the figures which we are allocating for 1986 you will find that in all the regions there is a small increase in the amount available both for current and capital spending in the school system. You will find that the figures range from \$1½ million in Regions like 7 and 8 to \$14 million, \$15 million, and \$16 million in Regions 4 and 6. You will also find that the ratio of spending in the regions both in the capital and in the current programmes is something like two to three. If we examine the capital programme in the central Ministry, we will find once again our central theme of maintaining investment in human resources and development is also being maintained. We have allocated \$1.5 million for spending on the repairs and maintenance of schools in the Georgetown area,

we have allocated \$½ million to be used to begin a project for a sports centre in Georgetown. We have allocated \$8 million for further capital work for the growth of the President's College. We have allocated nearly \$½ million for the completion of the New Amsterdam library facility. We have allocated over \$200,000 for financing and encouraging the school furniture project. In addition we are spending under the capital programme \$1.595 million largely in development of cultural participation at two levels. First of all, we are spending on the development of culture within the country through the now well established Guyfesta programme and, secondly, we are spending to participate in Caribbean focus 1986 the cultural and intellectual festival being run by Commonwealth Institute in London.





18:55 hrs

(Cde. D. Bernard continues)

Guyfesta Cde. Speaker, which will take place between March and July of this year will begin with regional festivals in seventeen centres beginning with Annai Lethem and Aishalton. In the regions practice sessions and workshops will be held with the winners to assist in improving their performance and presentation at the Cultural Centre in Georgetown in July. Guyfesta will continue in 1986 to provide opportunity for the recognition of new talents throughout Guyana and facing the possibility of further development and inclusion of new cultural themes in the presentation which are available to us.

Caribbean Focus, organised by the Commonwealth Institute in London is a highlight which is very important in the Caribbean. The Commonwealth Institute has in the past focused on Africa, India and Sri Lanka and has now chosen the Caribbean. All caribbean Governments have been asked to update and refurnish their permanent exhibitions at the Institute and to send temporary exhibits, Guyana providing four and to contribute to the programme of performing arts spread out between March and November.

Cde. Speaker, in the area of youth and sport development there are certain things which I feel we should highlight as they are very important. First of all, during 1986, Guyana will be hosting the Eight Conference of the Commonwealth Youth Affairs Council in May from the 10th to 14th. This conference will bring together Commonwealth Ministers and youth workers, and other people responsible for youth affairs to formulate policy and approve work programmes and plans for the Commonwealth Youth Programme for the next two years. In addition, Cde. Speaker, we intend to place emphasis on a programme to educate young people on the dangers of drug abuse and similar difficulties. The Department of Youth and Sports in collaboration with the Probation and Welfare Department and the committee for children's welfare will make efforts to sensitise parents on the ill effects of having their children on the road instead of in school and to arrest the problem of delinquency.

Cde. Speaker, it is interesting to take note of occurrences elsewhere. I have in front of me reports of activities of other peoples educational

systems faced with similar difficulties. Some highlights of 1985 in a neighbouring country. Hundreds of teachers were made redundant. One Teachers Training College was closed and some community college education programmes were abandoned. Several small primary schools will be closed. All teachers reaching retirement age will be retired. Temporary teachers with less than one year's service will be dismissed. Further seven hundred ancillary workers at secondary, technical, comprehensive and high schools as well as Teachers Colleges will be made redundant.

1986 in a sister caricom territory. Public schools are open to empty classes, parents are supporting teachers in their protest for more pay by keeping their children away from school. Another sister Caricom territory. Education Minister says that because of serious economic problems faced by the island, Government intends to abolish free education in the Universities and the colleges. Students may be asked to pay up to thirty percent of tuition fees. Cde. Speaker, I read these quotes because I want to highlight the fact that we in Guyana have a Government which is serious about its commitment to human resource development and we do not look on the education sector as something which can be butchered and savaged/ <sup>in response to</sup> the whims and fancies of people outside or in response to temporary pressures on our economic system. We have a commitment and I believe that we can only/ <sup>achieve</sup> the objectives that we set ourselves if our people are able to carry out the task which are necessary in the future and which are necessary to sustain the kind of development and the kind of society which we envisage.

Cde. Speaker, we believe that there are three important elements in the strategy for economic growth which can be support for the education system. We in the education system will be careful in our use of the resource being used in the schools and in the Central Ministry. We in the education system will be serious about strengthening the institutions which implement the education and we will be serious about making sure that the education service delivered to our students and our people will get maximun out of every dollar spent and we in education and we on the Government side will be serious about ensuring that we use our full ingenuity to find new ways of solving problems, new ways of using our resources, new ways of finding indigenus solutions to our educational and management problems. Cde. Speaker, we do not expect that we will find solutions by waving wands or by wishful thinking. We know that the fruits

of investment in education comes after a long gestation period and it requires seriousness and commitment to the task to continue to invest in the education system and to continue to be serious in the face of economic difficulty. Cde. Speaker, because we know that our plans and our systems and our strategies within the nation as a whole will produce the desired economic results we know that there is no way that we can sabotage those results by deviating from the strategy of human resource development that we have set ourselves. Cde. Speaker, a nation that is unable to develop its human resources is unable to develop anything and we in Guyana, we in this Government will continue in 1986 to be serious because we know that we have a moral obligation to our people, and that we have the ingenuity and the strength and the will to ensure that 1986 will be a highly successful year for education in Guyana.

The Speaker: Cde. Deen.

Cde. M. I. Deen: Cde. Speaker, permit me first to express my profound depth and gratitude, thanks and satisfaction. For one fact, I consider it an honour, a privilege and a distinction to be given this opportunity to make my first contribution to this honourable Chamber in the presence of honourable men and women of both sides of this House.

It is my fervent hope and I am led to believe that every member of this Chamber has a single minded objective, a paramount duty and that is to move this nation forward in conditions of perpetual peace, economic stability and social justice. Though refreshing and delightful it is for me to stand up in this august body for the first time. It may be apposite to point out that it is not the first time I am standing up for Guyana.

Cde. Speaker, the dawn of every new year is a time for introspection. As a rule, misgivings of the prospects of the future are preferred by hope and lingering despair gives way to optimism. In our special circumstances, today at this point of year it is discovered that there are some overhangings of 1985 into 1986. These overhangings are worthy of reflection.

Gde. Deen continues

1986-03-06

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

19:05 - 19:15 hrs

19:05 hrs

As a result, I crave your indulgence to bring to the attention of non. Members one or two of these overhangings which, in my considered opinion, will have a significant influence on our objectives in the ensuing year.

First, one of these overhangings happens to be the sad and untimely passing of our Founder/Leader and late President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, a man whose indefatigable efforts, wisdom, vision, charm, tolerance and dedication marked him as a true leader, a leader of excellence. His relentless pursuit for peace and unity, for Guyana's commitment to integration in the region, his hope for the oneness and togetherness of our people, eminently qualify him to be described as a shepherd of his people. [Applause.] It is with pride and satisfaction that I have noted that because of the astute leadership that he brought to bear upon our country, no more can it be said that Guyana is an indistinct form on a distant horizon. Guyana has surely come into sharp focus as a land of hope and she has certainly taken her place among nations of the world with whom we share common identity and goals.

Secondly - and I want to be very guarded about this - recent events have demonstrated most emphatically that this nation of ours has reached the age of political maturity. It has brought us into an era of perfection, continued peace and unity, creating conditions whereby we can build and develop the political, social and economic structures that are relative to our society.

It was with feeling that our President Gde. Hugh Desmond Hoyte on the 4th February, 1986, in this very Chamber noted that there has been a pervasive mood of optimism as we enter the year 1986. I have heard my friend across the room talk about pessimism. It is my intention to prove beyond the shadow of a doubt - and I walk about among all levels of Guyanese, the rank and file - that we are fast moving from a mood of optimism to a superabundance of optimism.

In this spirit, a dispassionate look at the 1986 Budget will pleasantly reveal that the architects, the Gde. Minister of Finance and his colleagues, should certainly be lauded for the bold but necessary initiative that they have taken to arrest and to halt adverse economic trends in our economy. Appropriate action is being taken to stimulate the policy for our national economy. Let me say, also, that it is with satisfaction that I have noted a marked departure from a purely academic approach in the formulation of the 1986 Budget. The Gde. Minister, in his wisdom, found it necessary to seek consultation and urge participation of

1986-03-06

19:05 - 19:15 hrs

all economic and social interests including the F.U.C. in the formulation of this important document.

I also want to congratulate the Cde. Minister of Finance and his colleagues for using as his guide the standard set by the leadership of the People's National Congress Government and that is, as a Government, to identify the issues, tell it as it is, articulate it to the people. I can assure you, Cde. Speaker, that the people in Guyana expect no less and stand ready to accept and to play their part in moving this country forward.

From a layman's point of view - I do not pretend to be an economist. I am an ordinary businessman and the Budget proposals, in my opinion, have been set in their proper perspective. Accordingly, Cde. Minister has dealt in detail with all aspects of our economy. They are to my mind six important issues in the Budget which I would like to bring to the attention of hon. Members for consideration in reading the Budget proposals outlined here:

- (1) the international economy;
- (2) the domestic economy;
- (3) the gains that we should protect in the interest of national stability;
- (4) the issues of adjustment;
- (5) action proposed in specific areas; and
- (6) fiscal measures.

Touching briefly on the international economy, it is a fact --

The Speaker: Cde. Deen, you have to be very brief indeed. You have only three minutes more.

Cde. Deen: This Budget speaks overwhelmingly of conservation and maximising / the use of what we have in order that we can achieve optimum growth and development. To successfully achieve this requires the support, co-operation and involvement of all concerned. Primarily, it needs an understanding of every Member of this Assembly of his or her responsibility. We need to remind ourselves that we have been given a mandate by the people and correspondingly we need to remind ourselves that we have a sacred duty to the people in this country. I therefore urge all Members participating in this Assembly to desist henceforth from selling Guyana short, to desist from joining external forces in destabilising this country and to desist from further maligning this country. Let us together place these proposals that have been put before us on a pedestal for a great economic takeover for Guyana.  
/Applause./

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Friday, 1986-03-07, at 14:00 hrs. /The Minister of Manpower, Housing and Environment./

Adjourned accordingly at 19:14 hrs.