

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT
(VOLUME 7)**

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA
UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

89th Sitting

2 p.m.

Thursday, 26th February, 1976

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., Speaker

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent - on leave)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

(Absent - on leave)

Senior Ministers (9)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

(Absent - on leave)

*Cde. H. Greene,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Development

(Absent - on leave)

***Non-elected Minister**

- *Cde. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Absent - on leave)
- *Cde. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance (Absent)
- *Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Works and Housing (Absent - on leave)
- *Cde. G.A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
- *Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture (Absent)
- *Cde. C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development (Absent - on leave)
- *Cde F.R. Wills, S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Absent)

Ministers (5)

- Cde. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour
- Cde. S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture
- Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House
- *Cde O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health (Absent)
- *Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs

Ministers of State (9)

- Cde M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

***Non-elected Minister**

Cde. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of State - Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne) **(Absent)**

Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State - Regional (Rupununi) **(Absent)**

Cde. C.L. Nascimento,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister

Cde. M. Zahearuddeen, J.P.,
Minister of State - Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara) **(Absent)**

Cde. K.B. Bancroft,
Minister of State - Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro)

*Cde. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection **(Absent)**

*Cde. A. Salim,
Minister of State - Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice) **(Absent)**

*Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael,
Minister of State - Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (9)

Cde. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of National Development

Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing

Cde. M.M. Ackman,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Office of the Prime Minister
and Government Chief Whip

* **Non-elected Minister**

Cde. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education and Social Development

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary
Office of the Prime Minister **(Absent - on leave)**

Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

Other Members (16)

Cde. J.N. Aaron

Cde. L.M. Branco

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler

Cde. J. Gill

Cde. W Hussain

Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh

Cde. K.M.E. Jonas

Cde. M. Nissar

(Absent - on leave)

Cde. L.E. Ramsahoye

Cde. J.G. Ramson

Cde. P.A. Rayman

Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

Cde. S.H. Suldhhu, M.S., J.P.

Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.

Cde. H.A. Taylor

Cde. L.E. Willems

(Absent)

Members of the Opposition - Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, Leader of the Opposition

Mrs. E. Da Silva

Officers

Clerk of the National Assembly - F.A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly - M.B. Henry, AMBIM

26.2.76

National Assembly

2.10 - 2.20 p.m.

2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

ELECTION OF PRESIDENT

Mr. Speaker: Comrades and hon, Members, on the occasion of the last Sitting of the National Assembly held on the 18th February, 1976, I informed you that the President had, by an Order, determined that a meeting of the National Assembly shall commence on Friday, 12, March, 1976, at 2.p.m., for the purpose of electing a President. I also informed you that Nomination Papers were required to be delivered to the Speaker at least fourteen days before the Presidential Election date, that is, not later than Thursday, 26th February, 1976, which is today.

I have, up to this time, received one Nomination paper which was delivered to me on Saturday, 21st February, 1976. That Nomination Paper has been signed by the Candidate and by more than three Elected Member of the National Assembly.

Leave to Members

Leave for today's Sitting has been granted to the Cde. Prime Minister, Cde Reid, Cde Hoyte, Cde, Jack, Cde, Naraine, Cde. Baird and Cde. Corbin.

I would wish to remind Members that there will be a meeting of the Guyana branch of the C.P.A. immediately after the Sitting of the Assembly is adjourned.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SPEAKER AND CDE. ACKMAN

The Speaker: Cde. Leader of the House

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Cde. Ramsaroop):

At the extent of appearing to be out of turn, as it were I wish to seek your leave to make a few congratulatory remarks following the two Honours which have been awarded to two Members of this National Assembly. It is a source of some pleasure, Cde. Speaker, to remark on the fact that since the last Sitting of this Chamber you have been the recipient of one of the most distinguished awards in the order of awards in Guyana, to wit, the Order of Roraima of Guyana (**Applause**) This Order, which was the subject of a Proclamation by His Excellency the President, ranks next to the Order of Excellence, the latter being the highest award in the land and I gleam from the *Official Gazette* that the Order of Roraima may be awarded to any citizen of Guyana who has rendered outstanding service to Guyana.

It is clear, Cde, Speaker, that you have rendered such service. This is the not the time for me to catalogue your very impressive record of public service in Guyana, but the journals of this House would be inadequate if I did not make some reference to some of them.

Speaking at a personal level, I am aware of your considerable talents as a Solicitor because I have had the good fortune and privilege of practising with you and against you when I practised at the bar. On one occasion, I felt the formidable array of your legal learning which was presented against me and from that occasion I always remembered that it was important to do one's homework whenever one was doing a case against you. But there are other areas of public life in which you have shone. It is public knowledge that you have rendered many years of admirable service as a Commissioner of the Public Service Commission. You have also served as a Councillor, engaging in Municipal politics, as it were, with distinction. It is public knowledge, too, that for a number of years you have headed an Indian Organisation of

considerable repute in Guyana, the Guyana Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha, as its President, and in that field of service you have made a significant contribution to the advancement of national and Indian culture in Guyana. Many of us have seen you perform in those areas but, indeed, all of us here today have seen you perform as presiding officer of this National Assembly, a task that you have discharged at all times with evenness of temper, with great command of knowledge of the rules of this House, with equipoise and with excellence. I am certain that Members would wish to join with me in congratulating you, Cde. Speaker, upon the receipt of this distinguished honour which has been awarded to you consequent upon the proclamation. **(Applause)**

In this vain, may I take the opportunity, too, on behalf Members of this House and myself to extend congratulations to another Member who has been in receipt of this Cacique Crown of Honour for political services and I refer to no other person than our dear Cde. Margaret Ackman. **(Applause)** That Cde. Ackman has been in receipt of this award is no surprise to many of us. Indeed, it comes in this train of another distinguished award she received earlier in the year being named "Woman of the Year". For 1975. **(Applause)**

Here again, I think it might be accurate to say that Cde Ackman's services have become a household word, as it were, in Guyana today. I understand that the award given to her is for outstanding political services and no one will gainsay the fact that within the last fifteen years, before this Government came into office, Cde. Ackman rendered starling political service of the highest quality to justify this award. But, she has manifested other qualities too and it would be amiss if I were not to refer to some of them. Those of us, who know her, know that she is a woman of great humanity, she is a woman of great humility, she is a woman of great industry and she is a woman of great courage. It is very hard today, in the hurly burly of political life, to find a person possessing all those qualities wrapped up in one and I think those who have considered giving Cde. Ackman an award must have been intensely conscious of the fact that she possesses these qualities.

On behalf of the members of this House I think that it is incumbent upon me to extend to her congratulations for the award that she has richly merited. Cde Speaker those are the remarks I wish to make. (**Applause**)

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker I would like to add my congratulations and those of my Party to your good self and to the hon. Member Miss Margaret Ackman, dear Maggie as we know her, in the occasion of the respective National Honours. In my opinion the award of these Honours transcends party politics and my I say that in my opinion, and in the opinion of my Party, these Hoours to your good self and to Miss Maggie Ackman are indeed richly deserved. (**Applause**) Again our heartfelt congratulations . Thank you, sir.

Mr. Speaker: Cde. Leader of the House, hon. Leader of the Opposition, I wish to thank you most sincerely for the warm congratulation you have extended to me. I want to let know that part of the citation was in respect of my services in this Assembly. As a result, I think that you also share in this high honour for were it not for your assistance and co-operation perhaps my services would not have been so outstanding as to merit this Award. I would also like to take this opportunity of congratulating Cde. Ackman on her sterling services in the political field. Thank you very much indeed. (**Applause**)

Cde Ackman: Cde. Speaker, hon. Members, I must take this opportunity to say thank you for the kind sentiments expressed here today on my behalf. I want you to know, however, that whatever I am you have made me; whatever I have achieved, you have achieved, therefore on the road together we go and whatever joys there are to be had at the top of the ladder I hope that we all will be able to enjoy together.

Cde. Speaker, may I congratulate you. It is indeed a joy knowing that my dear Speaker has been able to achieve on the highest Awards in the Land, and one so richly deserved and I

myself feel very honoured to know that I have been one to share on that list on which my Speaker has been named. On behalf of myself I say thank you a lot to all concerned. (Applause)

PUBLIC BUSINESS
BILLS - SECOND READING
PUBLIC CORPORATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1976

A Bill intituled

“An Act to amend the Public Corporation Act and to
make a consequential Amendment to the Rice Marketing Act”

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, there are three small printing errors which I will like to have corrected. On page 4, section 4 for (b) substitute (d). On page 5 section 6 subsection (b) kindly delete “by the renumbering of sub-section (5)” as subsection (6). And on page 7, 54 (a) first line” other provisions” delete (s) in the word “Provisions.” Cde. Minister of Trade.

The Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Cde. King): Cde. Speaker I beg to move that the Public Corporation (Amendment) Bill No. 5 of 1976 be now read a second time.

The Bill before this House is one which seeks to rationalise GUYSTAC or rather, more correctly stated, the Guyana State Corporation, to make certain changes in the structure arising from the undertakings or acquisition of other enterprises and also to make provision for restructuring the Public corporations themselves. And there is also Cde. Speaker, a consequential amendment to section 4 of the Rice Marketing Act.

The Guyana State Corporation was established in October 1971 mainly to secure the co-ordination of certain functions of public corporations and other corporate bodies. At that time

there were only nine corporations with a total fixed capital of \$80 million (G) and employing about 3,000 persons. By December, 1975, some five years after the establishment of the corporation, the number rose to 23 with a total capital of \$405 million and a work force in excess of 10,000 persons. It is anticipated that by June 1976 the fixed assets will amount to \$473 million.

Under the GUYSTAC model, the Vice President is *ipso facto* Chairman of all 23 enterprises and as many other enterprises as may be added to its number, a situation which is beyond the capacity of any human person regardless of his or her capacity or ability. But even then, what is more significant is that in the attempt to perform those duties and functions, nothing but frustration could result.

As the objectives of this Bill suggest or indicate, the expanding scope of the Guyana state corporations and GUYSTAC has demanded a remodeling of the structure so that GUYSTAC can adequately cope with the added responsibility of a large public sector.

This Bill seeks to rationalise, to restructure or to remodel GUYSTAC and its corporations but it would be wrong of me to suggest that the remodeling or the restructuring in itself could create efficiency and the dynamism which my Party and the Government seeks to introduce, that it would provide the progress and success which forms and which is demanded in our thrust and drive towards socialism.

2.30 p.m.

It also requires the dedication, in fact, the reorientation of those who manage and those who work within the corporations. For indeed, even though the structure may be remodelled unless the people who work the structure, unless the people who work within the framework of GUYSTAC are prepared to alter their outlook, are prepared to come in line with the new

philosophy and thrust of this Party and Government then the restructuring will have no success whatever.

We trust that in the new remodelled GUYSTAC those who manage and those who serve will cease to inculcate, will cease to mimic their predecessors who functioned under a capitalist economy and within a capitalist society when profit was the only motivating force, and that management and worker alike will recognise the thrust of our socialist policy, will recognise the implications and ramifications of the Declaration of Sophia, that they will give service equal to none whether within or without the borders of Guyana, and that management will recognise employees as people, will recognise employees as human beings, and treat them accordingly.

Cde. Speaker, the pre-eminent position afforded the public sector in this country ensures a steady and balanced growth. “Balanced” in its national and social context implies a dynamic balance of production, consumption and also equitable distribution. For example, in 1976 , revenue from the state-owned corporations has been projected to reach \$407 million; expenditure will amount to \$370 million, leaving what we trust, a surplus of \$37 million. Tax payment is expected to amount to some \$18 million and it is significant to note that nearly \$35 million of the committed expenditure, for example 10 per cent, will be spent on salaries and wages for the group this year. This amount is exclusive of fringe benefits in pensions, in medical expenses, in scholarships for employees’ children, and also free and full-time courses at the University of Guyana.

Again, in 1976, nearly \$80 million will be invested newly in the enterprises, the heaviest expenditure being that in the Electricity Corporation and the productive sectors of forestry and agriculture. The funds for investment will be met by the corporation out of their own resources and also from foreign agencies.

The last five years have witnessed considerable improvement in the operations of the enterprises. But it would be wrong for me to represent to this House that we are entirely satisfied with the performance, because we look for nothing else but excellence, we look for nothing else but perfection, and even though progress has been made we are still concerned about the improvements which have to be made.

But before commenting further on that aspect, let me mention some of the improvements which are evident to this House and also in our citizens. Industrial relations have been stabilised resulting in better employer/employee relations and consequently higher productivity. We can claim even in relation to other sectors that our industrial relations have been comparatively smooth. These relations have broken down on certain issues, for example, Christmas bonuses. The Guyana State Corporation, and let me say to this House emphatically, can see no rationale, can see no reason for Christmas bonuses to be paid to any employee of a public corporation. That is not to say that we do not regard Christmas. Speaking for myself, I shall worship on Christmas so long as God gives me breath. But the Christ child does not have to be worshiped in abundance of liquor and surplus and abundance of food. He himself taught us a lesson in humility in being born in a stable and being a reflection to this world of the simplicity that life ought to be and consequently we can see no rationale in it. This is, in fact, linked with our colonial past when our imperial masters paid us 11 months' salary throughout the year and sought to put a plaster on the sore by giving us an extra month's salary and a pat on the back. In other words, what they were doing was making up for their insufficiencies and inadequate salaries and wages. We believe that when we settle down and sit down to negotiate our wages that we arrive at a fair and just wage and that all of our people must be justly dealt with. Therefore the need for a rationale for a Christmas bonus cannot be accepted.

Whenever, let me say that this Party in Government is indeed concerned about productivity and production, and the Guyana State Corporation will not be opposed at any time in our history to sitting down and discussing an incentive bonus which will result in increased

productivity and produce a greater production but not where a situation exist for some to sit back and recline, for others to work tirelessly and then seek to get a bonus by sitting behind the table. That we will not uphold.

I should also like to invite this House to recognise that participative management through the installation of workers on the Boards of the enterprises has not only begun but in fact become workers sitting on the management boards. This process will be intensified during 1976 and, consequently, we hope that more than 50 percent of our corporations will have worker-participation or, in fact, participative management.

2.40 p.m.

Another area of progress which has not reach its state of perfection is that of our accounting and financial reporting. For some years, we recognised that our financial reports were not submitted to this House within a reasonable time and within a time which is in keeping with modern management practices and efficiency. But, I am pleased to report that four of the twenty-three enterprises are now completing their 1974 in addition to their 1975 accounts. All others are up to date and will be presenting the 1975 reports to this House before June 1976.

There is for course a peculiar problem with the External Trade Bureau which was started, admittedly, under very difficult circumstance but I am satisfied that sufficient work has been done to enable this Corporation to have its report completed within six months and I am further satisfied that, except for the early years of its existence, the project surpluses and results will be as anticipated.

The debate on this Bill also provides me with the opportunity to explain the role and the objective of public enterprises, a rule and objective so often misunderstood and so often misquoted at various levels of our society. Put in a nutshell the enterprise, must produce for the

people of Guyana, an efficient, outstanding and satisfactory service at the least possible cost. Thus, in effect, means that goods and services must be offered, as far as it is technically possible to the entire nation and must not have any constraints in giving service to one community or one town as opposed to the remote areas of our country. An example of this is that we are taking electricity throughout the length and breadth of the entire populated parts of our country and also public transport, pure water, telecommunications, the sale and distribution of food, agricultural products and machinery and agricultural parts.

Secondly, the provision of goods and services must not be constrained by the capitalist measure of a good return on capital. Some months ago I made what was subsequently regarded as a dramatic, in fact traumatic, statement when I said that profit is not the only means of measuring efficiency. I am aware that that statement was not only attacked but it was analysed, criticised and in some cases opened and put to question. But let me say that I have no apology to repeat in this House that profit as the only means of measurement to a successful enterprise in a capitalist point of view and can never be accepted in this socialist society or by this Party and Government, for indeed there are many areas in which efficiency must be given, in which satisfactory services must be provided regardless of the situation and consequences of surpluses and deficits or, as the capitalists would like to style it "profit and/or loss".

Having said that, Cde. Speaker, let it be also understood that the Guyana State Corporation cannot contribute to a philosophy in which all of our Corporation, in which all of our enterprises can operate at a loss throughout all of their existence. There are times when some of them will continue to make a loss throughout their existence; there are times when some of them will make a loss for part of their existence. All of these results must be based on the effect of the need to meet the consumers' demand and also the constraints placed upon us in providing those services which seek to improve the quality of life of our citizens and to enhance or to increase our social thrust.

I am also provided an opportunity to explain that the enterprises, because they are owned by the State, must of necessity tailor their objectives to coincide with the objectives of the Party, the People's National Congress, and our Government. We are, in fact, carrying out the Party and Government's objectives in feeding the nation and our Party in doing so has recognised that the state corporations must be geared, must be remodelled, must be re-structured to carry out these functions. For example, the Guyana Marketing Corporation is being expanded to store and distribute the farmers' product. It is useless for us to speak about increasing our agricultural production without increasing and providing the means of distribution. This is being done through the state corporations to ensure that the food so produced reach our citizens at the lowest possible price.

It should be noted that the Guyana Marine Foods Corporation provided the Guyana Marketing Corporation and the New Amsterdam Fish Plant with an excess of 2 million pounds of fish which were sold at prices in keeping with the ability of our citizens to pay. It should also be noted that the Guyana Agricultural Products Corporation, in growing corn for the manufacture of stockfeed, has in fact contributed greatly in 1975 and will continue even greater in 1976 towards the conservation of our foreign reserves when we hope to reduce the imports of corn by nearly two and a half million pound. In other words, the GUYSTAC group is aiming for total development of the nation and this must be recognised and be understood to be working within the objectives and the framework of our Party, the Government and more particularly in the terms of the Declaration of Sophia.

Let us also, Cde. Speaker, strike a note and perhaps observe in this House today the fallacy which has so often been preached and enunciated that the private enterprises, be they industrial or trading or agricultural could only be operated or managed by those who we god blessed with certain type of birth or born in a particular country with certain expertise and that the Government employees were not capable of producing the same results. In other words, private business has been ordained in some areas as being more efficient than those in the public

sector. This statement has been openly proved to be false in that all of the corporations which we have taken over have shown a more improved result than with their former owners.

2.50 p.m.

The Guyana State Corporation must operate a complex number of corporations. For example, we have within our scope and within our orbit the mass media and it is clear that the role of the mass media in a developing society on the road to socialism must expand beyond the mere communication of information. It must also include active and positive support for the development, not only in the physical sense but also in human terms, in helping to reinforce national identity and it must help to stimulate its readers to be part of that development process.

What then must be our objective? What then must be the rationale in running the mass media? What is the key or the measurement to the success of such an enterprise? Must it be profit? Must it only be by surplus? I venture to suggest that the efficiency of such an enterprise cannot be measured merely by the result which would determine that it made a profit. What we are more concerned about in the management of such a corporation or enterprise is that the people should receive the news with the type of content and information and communication which informs them with regard to the Government's thrust and Government's policy at the lowest possible price. Under the capitalist system and capitalist-owned mass media, where profit was the only criteria, that could not be achieved and, therefore, one must examine seriously the various corporations to determine the measurement of efficiency and also the objectives most desired by the nation.

Cde Speaker, may I say that I have cited a number of improvements. I have cited a number of progressive measures which have been taken by the Guyana State Corporation but I also should like to reiterate that this Government is far from satisfied that we have done well enough.

There are many cases in which the services and the other products provided by the corporations will need to be improved. This requires tolerance and understanding by both sides, by all parties concerned, by those who manage, by those who work, and by those who use the services of the corporations. For example, I am aware that there are many criticism made with regard to light bills, telephone bills, telephone connections, and understandably so. But what are the facts? The fact is that the Telecommunication Corporation which, in fact, records 20,000 connections receives less than 100 complaints per month which is fractionally marginal when related to the number of connections. It receives about 80 calls per month with regard to faulty connection, that is, 100 complaints of faulty bills and 80 complaints with regard to faulty connections. By any standard in the world, this is efficient, but it is not good enough for Guyana.

We are aware that other countries in the Caribbean and Surinam fare more worse but we ask is that those who use these services, and those to whom the products supplied must, in many cases, be tolerant during the transitional period and recognise the constraints imposed upon many young corporations.

I have so often heard that Guyana Gajraj, for example, does not operate as efficiently as another very large enterprise, which enterprise is shortly to be nationalised. What is often overlooked and what is not often known is that that enterprise, in a certain department, made losses for three years before any significant profit was recognised and, also that that enterprise has been in existence for nearly a century and has spent more than \$200 million in training its staff. All that these things mean is that an infant cannot partake of plantains, that you cannot expect a horse-drawn cart to run a race with an auto mobile. **(Interruption)**

I am aware of the excitement which plantains normally cause but I was referring to the digestibility of plantains *per se* in the stomach of an infant. The point I was making is that in their infancy there must be a certain degree of tolerance, a certain degree of understanding

towards these corporations because there are constraints in management, there are constraints in experienced workers, and what is significant is that we must improve year by year.

In closing, let me say that my party and the Government are not satisfied with the performance and we shall shortly be appointing a Committee with specific terms of reference to examine certain areas of the corporations. That Committee will be fully representative. It will have members of the ruling party on it; it will have members of the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement; it will have members of the Consumers' Association; it will have members from the University of Guyana and it will have representative from the business community.

What we need to find out is the correct diagnosis, is, if in fact, there are ills in any of these corporations. And since none of the corporations have anything to conceal, that Committee will be examining all of the operations from time to time with a view to improving their efficiency and improving the quality of service to the people of this nation.

Question proposed.

3 p.m.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Singh): Mr. Speaker, we are dealing here with legislation which will affect the structure, the control and the management of all state corporations and business undertakings. Since these at present cover the entire length and breadth of industry, trade and commerce in Guyana, to my mind it is necessary for us to take a look at the entire Guyana scene as regards industry, trade and commerce. Let me say at the inception that some of my remarks will be critical. But, as Leader of the Opposition, I have a duty to be constructively critical of the Government. Moreover, I feel that I am speaking for thousands of Guyanese of whom are, indeed P.N.C. members who have come to me and

expressed their concern within recent times about the direction in which the Government is going with respect to the field of industry, trade and commerce. **(Interruption)**

I want, perhaps, to tell the hacklers on the other side that they must understand that I am not standing here to politicise but generally to pin-point areas of dissatisfaction to the Government so that, if possible, that dissatisfaction could be removed.

Let me say also that we, on this side of the House, believe in the ownership and control of our natural resources. We believe in putting an end to foreign domination in our country. But in carrying out this belief, we feel that we must be careful to safeguard, to the very utmost, the freedoms, the rights and the liberties of the Guyanese people.

We believe in the localisation of ownership of the important aspects of our economy, but localisation and nationalisation are two different things. Already, one newspaper in Trinidad has said that nationalisation, as practised in Guyana, has so far not resulted in localisation in terms of being in the hands of Guyana but in state ownership. To quote their words, “state ownership and oligarchic bureaucratic monster.” Within recent times, the Government has been nationalising and taking over more and more private businesses. At present, the Government has almost complete control over all aspects of what had been known before as the private sector. With the take-over of the Bookers complex, that control will, in fact, be complete.

Let me remind Members, before anyone goes and start saying something, that in view of the agreement which has already been reached between Bookers and the Government, I have already called upon all Guyanese to do whatever is necessary to make the take-over a success. Otherwise, all of us in Guyana will suffer. Let us realise, at the same time, that after the take-over Government will control approximately 90 percent of the work force in Guyana. It would have taken over not only foreign businesses but also local businesses. We remember H. B. Gajraj & Co., Wrefords and Sankar. Those were local businesses.

What also have they done? By the method of licensing now practised in Guyana, by the operation of the Ministry of Trade and by the operations of the External Trade Bureau, the Government has in fact a complete stranglehold on the entire private sector. The method is very simple. Unless you get a license you cannot import. So, if the Government does not give you a licence you cannot import, you cannot carry on a business and you will eventually have to go out of operation. It is as simple as that.

These are the dangers, these are the areas in which the rights of the Guyanese citizens need to be protected and this is what is worrying so many of us in Guyana today. The situation is very succinctly summarised by a columnist in the Times Newspapers of Monday, February 16, 1976. I read from this newspaper, which is written in the English Language, from the second column of the article under the Heading “Counting the Cost of Spendthrift Government” it states:

“In a social democracy it is right to place in the hands of the state enough collective power to correct the imbalances, distortions and inequities of private enterprise.”

It is right to do that and I agree with them.

“But the initiative (except in the basic public utilities) should remain in the hands of the individuals. If it does not, we shall inexorably and irretrievably drift into the grey, oppressive and cruel world, familiar to those who live under fascist or communist political systems, in which the government is the master and citizen is the servant and often the slave.

Adam Smith once wrote that “it is the highest impertinence and presumption, therefore, in kings and ministers, to pretend to watch over the economy or private

people.... They are themselves always, and without any exception, the greatest spendthrifts in the society”.

That is, to my mind, a very good summary of the situation.

What is the result of all of this? Some time ago, we heard in this same honourable House - and the Government admitted it - that his Government, the P.N.C. Government, was advertising in foreign newspapers in the Western world, inviting foreigners to come to Guyana and invest in Guyana. Government cannot gainsay that. Indeed, some people did answer the advertisements. They came here investing the chances of investment in a paper pulp factory, in a glass factory and in certain other schemes. But has anything tangible come out of this. The answer is No.

To my mind, the Government must have realised and must have accepted that it was necessary, for Guyana to progress, to have a private enterprise sector, to have foreign capitalists come inside here and invest in the country. The Government did lay down some restrictions but it did invite, in those advertisements foreign capitalists to come into the country. What is the purpose of inviting foreign capitalists to come into the country and when they do come here and have a look at the total situation, see the state of affairs and realise Government's total control of the private sector, they are scared away. What is the good of the advertisement? They are wasted.

The policy of the Government is such that when foreign private enterprises come in to investigate, it is scared away. We may as well scrap the advertisements. One hon. Minister of State says we are still advertising. I advise that the Government should stop advertising because no foreign investor in his right senses, looking at what is happening in Guyana, will ever come and invest in Guyana. Let us stop the advertisements.

3.10 p.m.

Sir, in the past the Government has made a lot of statements that there is room for the private sector, that the private sector will be allowed to exist. But what is in fact the situation obtaining in the country? We are at the present moment left with only a very few of what we may call big businesses, a few medium size businesses and a lot of small businesses. They all want, at this present time, a definitive statement from the Government as to their future.

The factual situation is very much different from the statement Government makes that the private sector will be allowed to exist. We see that the private sector is being strangled. The private sector is not allowed to exist as it used to exist in the past because of the Government's restrictions. Let us therefore tell these people what their future is. They are demanding it; they want to know. It is only right that Government should stop making the bald statement that the private sector will be allowed to exist and make a definitive, a positive and a detailed statement as to the future of the private sector. What is Government's policy? Will it take over the remaining big businesses? What about the small businesses? What will be their future? There are a few foreign companies still operating here. There are some CARICOM businesses operating here, businesses that have their ownership predominantly in the CARICOM countries. What about those? Will they also be nationalised? Will they be give licences to import?

Let us understand that after the take-over of Bookers, the Government will be in every conceivable field of private enterprise, in shipping, in import/export business, in all the local industries, in buying and selling. It will be in the motor car industry, in the spare parts industry, in the heavy duty equipment industry.

Is the Government, to protect its own operations, denying licences to others? Will it tell them: "We deny you licences, but you can buy from us; we will sell to you buy we will give you at a wholesale price of 10 percent less than the retail price and therefore you will have to operate

within a margin of 10 percent. Ten percent will have to meet all your overheads and allow your profits.”

It is only fair to tell them what the position is. I am not attempting to disrupt Government's policy. I am merely asking, on behalf of all the people who operate in the private sector of this country, for a detailed statement to be made so that they can know what their future will be. They must know in what direction they can go, whether they must get out of business or go to farming. This is a laudable thing, a very good thing but they must know. Don't just strangle them and freeze them out without telling them anything. Let them know so that they can plan their future. If they are CARICOM Companies or if they are overseas companies they can tell their principals what is the writing on the wall. That is all we are asking for.

Shortly before I left home to come here today, a small businessman, an importer of spare parts telephoned me and said that for some time his small agency has not been able to obtain from the Ministry of Trade a single licence for the importation of spare parts. He said that at first they were asking questions like: “Are you the representative of some firm? Are you importers of motor vehicles? What is the make and all the rest of it. And then at another stage they were referred to Guyana Gajraj and other Government agencies. But now, nothing as all has happened, no licences have come back to them. They understand that they will be required to buy from the Government agencies who will be the sole importers of spare parts. At the present moment, Guyana Gajraj for example, give them a 10 percent discount for wholesale purchases. They told me that they cannot operate on a margin of 10 per cent. They say that they will have to close down.

They learn this through indirect channels. That is not fair. Let them learn it from the mouth of the Minister. Let him tell them what the position is so that they can make whatever arrangements they would like to make as alternative to earning their living as importers and retailers of spare parts. I suppose that Government's justification for all of this will be that the

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businesses were making super profits and their mark-up was very, very great indeed, that they were capitalist sharks taking advantage of the poor Guyanese people. If that is the reasoning then I ask the question: How is it that an individual wanting to buy a car cannot buy that car from Guyana Gajraj at a significantly cheaper price than he can buy it from a non-Governmental agency that sells cars in Guyana? The price of a car from Guyana Gajraj, taking into consideration the make and horse power of the car, is comparable with the price at any one of the car agents in Guyana.

If you say that these people were terrible capitalist sharks making super profits, how come your Government agency is not able to sell at a significantly cheaper price? Who then is making the super profit? Who then is drawing and sucking the life blood, as is said, of the Guyanese people?

That is not the only problem in the area of spare parts. I have a friend who, only a year ago, bought a Mitsubishi wagon. He went to Guyana Gajraj the other day for spare parts. There were none. I understand again that the prices of spare parts there - and I am taking only one agency - are no cheaper than at the other private-sector importers and retailers. of spare parts.

3.20 p.m.

How then can we say that, because Government has taken over these areas of private enterprise, it has brought down prices and brought down the cost of living? We hear all the propaganda. It is not true - and that is why we would like a policy statement from the Government. We need it. Private enterprise, the private sector needs it, and needs it very urgently. Again I appeal to the Minister to let us have this, let us have not only the future of the company as regards the taking over or nationalisation by the Government, but also their future as regards the availability to them of licences to import goods to carry on their businesses. Both aspects of this we went into.

Now dealing with the substantive legislation. We are trying by this measure, as the hon. Minister said, to reorganise the management of corporations and Government-controlled bodies. To my mind what we need is an entire re-assessment of the situation and action accordingly. Let us start by looking at the Public Corporation Act and if we are to start at the beginning I think an appropriate beginning would be at the time when the Public Corporations Act was first introduced and debated in this honourable house and that was in October, 1962. Let us look at what the hon. Prime Minister, who was then Leader of the Opposition had to say during that debate in this Parliament. I quote from the Parliamentary Debates, Official Report, Volume 1, 51st Sitting, Wednesday, 10th October, 1962, the third paragraph in column 3539. Mr. Burnham said:

“But these corporations are going to be entire creatures of the Government - entire Government bodies - and the people who serve on them are going to be hand-picked. We have had our experiences with corporations like the Electricity Corporation, the Credit Corporation, the Rice Marketing Board and the Public Service Commission, and we have seen that in these cases political appointments have been the order of the day rather than appointments on the basis of quality, experience and ability. In fact, I have read such a criticism of the Rice Development Corporation.”

I need not read more than that. It gives us an insight into the feeling which was prevalent at the time, an insight into the mind of the hon. Prime Minister, then Leader of the Opposition, at the time when this Bill was debated in Parliament in 1962.

Is the position very different today? If it is not, we must make it different. Let us look at what appears to be the position today. The boards of the various corporations are comprised mainly of staff of the Corporations. The public has very little say in the management of the corporations. The Boards' decision, the large, reflect the party's will and the party's desires; approval of any measure is normally influenced by one person, discussions on most matters are

normally very limited and sometimes these are matters of vital importance. There are, as far as I can gather, by and large, party members on the various boards. Even the few workers' representatives who are elected are elected on the basis of the party bias. (**Cde Carrington: "Where did you get that from?"**) that is a fact of life which we all recognise. There are few workers' representatives - I think the hon. Minister said there are representatives on the Board of three of the twenty-three corporations.

Another aspect which I can perhaps mention is this: I think that the term of office of all the Boards except the Boards for the National Engineering Corporation, the Rice Marketing Board and the Guyana Trading Corporation expired on 31st of last month so it does appear that if they are operating they must be operating illegally.

As regards the staff, some of whom are on the Boards, they are all hand-picked. But what is more tragic is that party politics is so rampant that the attempts to dismiss someone for inefficiency, for rudeness, for blatant refusal to carry out instructions fail. I should not call names but it is known - as I said I am bringing these things to the attention of the Minister not to politicize but that the situation can be remedied. In cases where there have been dismissals, the persons, being good party boys, have been able to go to Minister and be reinstated [**Cde. Field-Ridley: "Not true."**] The Hon Minister has nothing to do with the Corporations. It is significant that a Minister who has nothing to do with corporations is shouting "Not true." Perhaps she has something to do with them. That in itself reveals that the Minister who answers is not even connected with the corporations.

Managers have got to the stage where they will not take disciplinary action unless they get instructions from above. It is not true that the staff is recruited through Congress Place? [**Interruption**] Let me say for the benefit of those who have been most vehement in denying this, that these problems were recognised by no less a person than the Prime Minister himself. He recognised the veracity of what I am saying. He recognised them in his address as Leader of the

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People's National Congress at the 14th Annual Delegates Conference of the Party on the 18th April 1971, at Queen's College, Georgetown. It can be found in his address "To Own Guyana" what did the hon Prime Minister say in 1971? I know this will not be reported in the newspapers as the red telephone will ring so at least let it be heard in Parliament.

3.30 p.m.

Mr Speaker, I will read what is said here:

"The Public Corporations also are not sufficiently responsive to the objectives of the time. I have set up a new Ministry - that of Public Corporations. Its first task is, with the aid of experts, to advise in legislation aimed at streamlining those undertakings, except Bauxite, in which Government has total or majority holdings. They have to be reorganised to achieve efficiency and accountability. There has to be a recognisable rationale and system and these businesses, for businesses they are, have got to be co-ordinated internally and as between each other.

In addition there will be instituted a holding corporation which will hold Government's equity on behalf of Government in all of the other corporations. This will be the major co-ordinating agency and overall policy planner, which I propose to immunise from politics or political patronage."

He recognised that that was existing and he said he proposed to immunise it from politics and political patronage. And, what also did he say? He said:

"A great deal of cleaning up and redirection is necessary and it shall be done. As the public sector expands we have got to ensure its efficiency and financial success at all costs. We cannot throw the people's money and resources to the winds."

He does not say “efficiency” alone. He said “efficiency and financial success at all costs.” He did not rule out the profit motive. I ask the question, sir.... **[Interruption]**

The Speaker: Comrades, please allow the Leader of the Opposition to proposed.

Mr. Singh: Sir, I share the concern expressed by the hon. Prime Minister in that address and I ask the question: have we succeeded in preventing the people’s money and resources from being thrown to the wind? In the public corporations, are we throwing the people’s money and resources to the wind? If the hon. Minister does not know, I will tell him that if a detailed examination of the public corporations were to be made it would be seen that in some of the corporations and Government enterprises donations are being made to things like steel bands. This should be done by the Ministry of Information and Culture which has the funds to do it. Let us not burden the funds of the corporations and Government enterprises with such things. Moreover, employees in the corporations are being used for Party activities. Let us allow these corporations to operate efficiently and not burden them with such responsibilities.

Design and Graphics which comes under the Ministry of Information and Culture puts out advertisements and does not even consult the corporations and companies. The officers insert the advertisements in the papers and merely bill the corporations and companies who have to pay. There is generally poor financial control in respect of these corporations and companies. The overdrafts are running to the tune of approximately \$49 million or thereabouts. The National Insurance investment in the Guyana Government to meet current expenditure is over 70 million. I understand that there are very many complaints that in order to confine the payments-out to the receipts of profit from investment, there is a policy to try to curtail rather than to liberalise benefits and, of course, we know that all the corporations and companies are being audited by one firm and there has been doubt expressed as to the thoroughness and accuracy of these audits.

At the present moment, there is a security force being run by GUYSTAC and yet things are being lost with regular frequency. I understand that these losses amount to much as \$2 million per year. Trucks with goods in them disappear from outside the Guyana Marketing Corporation. Wire ropes, equipment, stock and soon have disappeared from Guyana Gajraj. No one knows anything. Not only that, not one word is seen in the Press about these disappearances. No publicity is given to these incidents. In spite of what the hon. Minister has said, I question whether the corporations and companies have in fact been paying their way apart from Guyana Gajraj.

It is recognised by the Government that the situation is unsatisfactory and to hon. Minister did say so while trying to justify, of course, the faults which he pin-pointed but if we are to do a proper job of this reorganisation which we are now embarking upon then we must dispassionately examine each corporation and see what are the faults.

3.40 p.m.

I am glad to know, as the hon. Minister has said, that a committee has been formed to look into the matter with a view to re-organisation. For the benefit of that committee and, indeed, for the benefit of the government, I should like to say that each corporation has areas in which special attention can be paid.

With this in view, I should like to start by looking at perhaps the Guyana Airways Corporation. We did have some discussion on the Guyana Airways Corporation at the last Sitting of Parliament. I should like to reiterate what I said on that occasion and perhaps add one other aspect, that is, that it has come to my attention that some of the flights by Guyana Airways Corporation bring back staff without a manifest so that there is no record of it. It can be taken off the plane without any payment of air freight, duties or anything along those lines. I understand that a search has recently been made and some articles have been discovered. Now that this has been brought to the attention of the hon. Minister, I hope that this practice will be clamped down

on and will be discontinued, because if aeroplanes are bringing in goods without manifests, then the Airways Corporation is being robbed of revenue and the Guyana Government is being robbed of revenue in the line of duties, etc.

Let us have a look at the Guyana Agricultural Corporation. This is a corporation that is suppose to be producing peanut butter and things like tomato paste. Is it not a fact that the peanut butter produced becomes very hard after a very short time? Is it not a fact that the tomato paste becomes green after a few weeks on the shelves? These are areas that need to be looked into.

There are no canneries as yet for pineapples or orange juice in spite of all the talk we have been having. There are manufacturing plants in the Pomeroon, in the North West District, and in Essequibo. I understand they are buying but they are not producing. We have recently bought three starch mills from Brazil and they are now being set up. Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us what the position in respect of those starch mills is.

Another area where there is need for some investigation is in the pig-feeding scheme. The farmers are given feed and they have to sell their pigs to the G.M.C., who is supposed to repay to the Ministry of Agriculture the cost of the feed. This is how the scheme is suppose to work. The farmers go the Ministry of Agriculture. As long as the application is approved, they are given a slip to take delivery of the stockfeed from either the Rice Marketing Board stockfeed factory or the other stockfeed factory. They should then sell their pigs to the Guyana Marketing Corporation. The G.M.C. should deduct the cost of the stockfeed, albeit in instalments, and then pay it over to the Ministry of Agriculture.

What in fact is happening seems to be this. The pigs sometimes are never sold to the Guyana Marketing Corporation. If the pigs are sold to the Guyana Marketing Corporation, in some cases no deductions are made by the Guyana Marketing Corporation because they were not informed to make the deductions. There is some inefficiency somewhere along the line.

The third situation is one where the Guyana Marketing Corporation actually receives the pigs, makes the deductions, but does not in fact pay over the money to the Ministry of Agriculture, because its liquidity position is such - it is short of money - that it uses the money to meet its running expenses. The corporation turns over that money. The result is that there is a significant amount of money owing to the Ministry of Agriculture in respect of this stockfeed scheme.

3.50 p.m.

Another respect in which the Guyana Marketing Corporation has been inefficient is related to the storage and processing plant which Guyana Marketing Corporation started to set up at Plantation Farm in 1972. In 1973, G.M.C. signed a contract with Greenland Co-operatives Society and the building of this complex was started. It was clearly understood and written in that this complex was to be completed by October, 1974. What is the position?

Further, I understand that Greenland Co-operative Society is no longer doing the work. The contract is now assigned to Guyana Builders' Consortium but Greenland had already drawn down most of the monies in the contract. So, it was necessary for Guyana Marketing Corporation to find new funds to supply Guyana Builders' Consortium in order to continue the work. We would like to know what is happening in this area and what is being done in respect of the breach of contract by Greenland Co-operative Society. I understand that it is now only hauling sand or something along those lines. Surely, it should not be allowed to get away with this.

While this complex was planned to be completed in 1974, farmers were encouraged to increase their produce and they did so. Another result of this non-completion of this complex is that farmers are producing more, there is lack of storage and processing facilities and, as a result, the Guyana Marketing Corporation, which is committed to buy have to buy and dump. This is, of course, a waste and, in the final analysis, taxpayers' money is involved.

Let us look at the Guyana Transport Services, another Government Company. Is this being run efficiently in view of the fact that it is alleged that the Guyana Transport Services is losing, at the present moment, approximately \$80,000 per month after depreciation and taxes? I recollect that when the hon. Minister, Steve Naraine, opened the Crabwood Creek Bus Terminal last year he said that the Corentyne Bus Service was being replaced by a more efficient and an improved service - the Guyana Transport Services. There are complaints, in fact, that the buses are leaking when it rains, that the buses are dirty, they are filthy inside and the drivers and conductors and discourteous. In deed, there are some cases of the employees of the Guyana Transport Services slpping passengers and such like. They manhandle and abuse passengers.

Is the hon. Minister satisfied, also, that all the fares are being collected and paid over? One wonders whether this is not another Transport and Harbours Department. After all, most of the management staff was drawn from the old Transport and Harbours Department. As the hon. Minister has said, this is a throwback from the old colonial past. Is it that these people have brought their old colonial bad habits to the new enterprise? If that is so then we would have to remedy the situation. We would have to streamline the position. The Government will have to deal condignly with those who are at fault. My information is that the accident rate is very high. The greater part of the fleet is down in any one day and this, obviously, would result in a loss of thousands of dollars of revenue every month.

Another aspect that worries me is that these buses are covered by third party insurance. The old bus owners had to take out full coverage. Should these buses not be covered by full insurance? Why is it only third party? What is the requirement of the law in this respect? The public needs to be protected from any torts by the company in respect of the buses.

Turning to the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation, may I reiterate what I have always said in this honourable House? Will the Government please pay its bills to the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation? There is approximately \$3 million owing to the Guyana

Telecommunication Corporation. It is true that private people also owe in the vicinity of three-quarter of a million dollars but Government is the greatest offender in this respect. That is how the Corporation owes the Midlands Bank over \$12 million. If the Government pays up then there would be no need for the Corporation to owe that level of money to Midlands Bank. I think Cable and Wireless is owed as much as \$2 million by the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation. This is another area in which there can be some improvement.

I shall deal with the Guyana National Trading Corporation and the Guyana National Engineering Corporation together. One was formerly Sandbach Parker and the other was formerly Sprostons. Both of these corporations have travel offices attached to them. Both, after the take-over, continue to operate travel bureau. It is not time for the Government to streamline the operations here? Is there a necessity for the Guyana National Engineering Corporation to run a travel agency and for the Guyana Airways Corporation, also, to run a Travel agency and for the Guyana Airways Corporation, also, to run a travel agency? We are going to take over Bookers also has a travel agency. My recommendation is that we should get them together and streamline them., they may have branches just as the co-op Bank has branches throughout the country, but certainly there is no need to have three different sets of travel agencies. With different parent bodies. They do not have the same parent body. For example, why not let Guyana Airways Corporation operate these travel agencies or, at least some of them. I am not sure that there is need for all of them to operate in Guyana. We can use some of them, if not all, as branches of the Guyana Airways Corporation. This seems to me an area in which there can be some improvement.

If we turn to the area of shipping, here again Guyana National Engineering Corporation, formerly Sprostons, is involved in shipping. Guyana National Trading Corporation, formerly Sandbach Parker, is also involved in shipping. We read recently in the newspapers that the Transport and Harbours Department has acquire a vessel and is also in the shipping business. That makes three shipping agencies. Bookers is also in the shipping business and when we take over that company there will be four shipping concerns in the public sector.

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4.00 - 4.10 p.m.

If I may mention it Transport and Harbours certainly has no good record in this field. I remember that the “Ambrosio” after two or three sets of repairs, was eventually scrapped.

Why do we encourage the Transport and Harbours Department to operate in shipping branch? Why not combine them or at least put them all under one central agency and if you need to have branches in different places then set them up. At least combine our shipping services under one umbrella instead of these various entities.

In all these things I am merely trying to project and to recommend what the hon. Prime Minister himself recommended in 1961. My statements here are all in line and in keeping with what the hon. Prime minister said in his speech on the 18th April, 1971. And that is why I say it is good to have this dialogue so that we can adopt the recommendations of the Prime Minister fully and to good effect.

Going on to the Guyana Rice Board: I have dealt with one aspect, that is, the question of deduction of freight. I shall not repeat that. But there is another area in which the hon minister can direct his attention or, for the matter, the Committee. The rice sold for local consumption on the local market is, in fact, sold at a price cheaper than what is paid to the farmers. This is good. In effect, the Government is subsidising rice for the local consumption. But what is bad about it is that unscrupulous persons have been taking advantage of this state of affairs. I understand that some of the boys are hiding behind political patronage; they are in fact buying rice meant for local consumption and selling it back to the Rice Board at a higher price thereby earning for themselves profits which they have no right to be getting. It is illegal, it is wrong and that practice should be stamped out.

As an ancillary, may I say that within recent times my household has suffered from the shortage of rice on the local market. What has caused this I do not know but I do know that at one

stage we could not get other than broken white rice and this, to my mind, is unsatisfactory for a country which produces rice. This is another area in which action should be taken.

The Rice Action Committee is, by and large, made up of party boys. This is not fair. The rice farmers do not benefit from a politically oriented Rice Action Committee. They have little say on the Rice Board itself. The Rice Producers Association has no representation. One wonders whether the recognition of the Guyana Agricultural Workers Union will lead to recognition of the Rice Producers Association. At the present moment there is need to have more rice farmers representation in the rice industry as a whole.

Moving to the Guyana Marine Foods, there is a bit of scandal here. They have over 50 trawlers; they bring fish which is given to the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation to be sold to the public. More often than not 50 percent of this fish has to be dumped through bad storage and bad handling and other areas. What is scandalous is that the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation sells fish at 35 cents per pound but the same fish sold by the Guyana Marketing Corporation is sold at the price between 60 cents and one dollar per pound. This is a fact. The Guyana Marketing Corporation does not sell fish at 35 cents per pound.

There is obviously an anomaly here. If it is going to be mixed fish sold by the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation let Guyana Marketing Corporation also sell mixed fish for 35 cents per pound. Why should one agency sell at 35 cents per pound and another agency sell at 60 cents to one dollar per pound? I say that the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation should not get into this area at all. We have the Guyana Marketing Corporation. If they do not have the facilities for selling, then give them the facilities. Let them have the same facilities that the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation now has. Let this ministry remain a Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation. Let the Guyana Marketing Corporation carry out its function, which is in line with the selling of fish. Why have two agencies selling at different prices?

It is even worse. This fish is sold at 35 cents per pound in Georgetown, and, as the hon. Minister has said the same kind of fish is sold through the New Amsterdam Fish Processors Limited at the same price as it which Guyana Marketing Corporation sells this fish. So why make fish one and fowl of the other. Why sell fish for 35 cents per pound in Georgetown and sell similar fish at the Guyana Marketing Corporation rate in New Amsterdam? Are the people in New Amsterdam different? Why the difference in price?

Another point I wish to bring out is that the New Amsterdam Fish Processors Limited is operating at a loss. In fact a majority of the Corporations are operating at a loss except Guyana Gajraj - and I shall deal with that in a moment. As regards Guyana Wresford Limited - according to press reports in 1974 there was a turnover of 2 3/4 million and a loss of \$130,000. There is heavy pilfering and bad management. And one wonders why this has been allowed to continue.

It was talking of servicing the community at least this Company should break even because any loss will have to be borne by the taxpayers generally. So it does not make any sense for them to say they are servicing the community and making a loss which the community has, in the final analysis, to make good.

4.10 p.m.

Now for Guyana Gajraj. It cannot be denied that the mark-up on big items like cars runs any where up to 50 percent and over. This mark-up on spare parts is tremendously high. It is in that vicinity also and even more on spare parts. It is because of this that this company shows much better results than most of the others. It can show a profit; it can have better results because the mark-up is so high indeed. But I say that even so the profits can be even higher at the present level. Of course the mark-up must come down. The corporation is showing profit now but if there were proper management, if there were a reduction in the rate of pilfering then I am sure the present profit would be even higher.

In the case of Guyana Printers Limited, how can it but make a profit when 95 per cent of its work is derived from the Government? As I said before, Designs and Graphic do the advertisements for all the Government companies, corporations and so on and the Government companies and corporations do not even know the details. They have a bill presented to them and they have to pay the bill. Anyone who takes a look at the newspapers would see that there is a significant amount of Government advertisements. When there is an occasion like the Republic Anniversary celebrations, one sees advertisements in the newspaper and the rates charged by Guyana Printers are much higher than charges by Guyana Lithographic Company. After the takeover of Bookers what will be the position? Will they continue separately or will there be merger? I recommend that the two printing establishments should be brought together, Guyana Printers Limited and Guyana Lithographic Company.

The next corporation I shall deal with is very akin to these, that is, the Guyana National Newspapers Limited. I take it that my criticisms will not appear in the newspapers. We look forward to more reporting in the Press of remarks by Opposition members that are not complimentary to the Government. There is far too much of a tendency these days to bring out in headline only those things that are complimentary to the Government and not those other things that may be critical and, I venture to say, constructively critical. Surely the amalgamation of Guyana Printers Limited and the Lithographic Company is something which is constructive. Is it not? I can say much more. I can say what I have learnt about allegations of press control which exists in respect of the Guyana National Newspapers Limited and its connections but I will not say this at the present moment. Suffice it to say that I implore that there should be more impartial reporting than there is at the present moment.

I should like to deal with the two agencies together. Guyana Forest Industries Corporation and Guyana Timbers: These are two timber organisations and both are running at a loss. Of course we have the propaganda that when Guyana Timbers was taken over it made a profit. The fact of the matter was that the C.D.C. asked the Government to take over Guyana Timbers and at

that time the C.D.C. had stocks and spares, it had timber prepared ready to go to market, it had paid all its overheads, all expenses such as rates and taxes. So many of these commitments are prepared, what else would you expect but a profit in such circumstances. What is the position now? Is it in fact making a profit? It is not. But the question is why should we have Guyana Forest Industries Corporation and Guyana Timbers? They are both in the same business. Why cannot we combine them and put them under one management, one control, one central agency. They are doing the same thing so why do we have to have two sets of personnel, two sets of jobs for the boys. I do wish the hon. Minister would have these two agencies combined.

The Small Industries Corporation owns the Radio factory, the brick factory at Coverden, it will take over the Clay Brick factory at Hubabu and also the bicycle factory, the textile mill, the mini-steel mill. I do not know how many of these industries are small but S.I.C. is giving loans and the allegation is that those loans are given out on the basis of party consideration. How else could we justify a loan to a woman to establish and run a laundry? Political considerations were brought to bear in respect of that. The Small Industries Corporation is in financial difficulties. It has no liquid capital left. What are we going to do in respect of this Corporation?

Turning to the National Insurance Scheme it has been suggested that all the capital intake from this national insurance scheme must be diverted to provide working capital for the Government. In fact, it is investment in the Government and the Government used it as day-to-day working capital except with old age pension it is suggested that the other benefits should be made from the profit from these investments. That to my mind should not be. If I am wrong the hon. Minister will tell them. In fact dealing with old age pensions the value of money has gone down since this scheme was established.

4.20 p.m.

One should consider also that there is need to streamline the pensionable age under N.I.S. which at the present moment is 65, I think. This should be lowered to sixty years. Let us bear in

mind that the retirement age for civil servants is generally fifty-five years though they can retire voluntarily at age fifty. Parliamentarians can retire at forty years because it is a hazardous occupation, I am told. If civil servants retire optionally at fifty or fifty five and Government servants in general retire at sixty, why should sixty five be pensionable age under the National Insurance Scheme?

To my mind, the pension should be reviewed also. If this Government claims that it is socialist then the State should contribute to decent living pensions for its senior citizens. In England, for example, the scheme funds are supplemented by state funds in order to provide pensions for people under the scheme. And, in fact, in the U.S.S.R. all pensions are non-contributable.

If I may make one other comparison, let me compare the benefits under N.I.S. with what is given out by the Guyana Public Service Union. Recently I read in the newspapers that the Guyana Public Service Union will now pay \$750 as a death benefit. That \$750 is in addition to other benefits such as dental, specialist, hospital and optical benefits, yet each civil servant pays only \$1.50 per month what does the National Insurance Scheme pay for what it is known as a funeral grant? It pays \$100. The Guyana Public Service Union pays \$750. Something must be wrong somewhere. Why is there such a great disparity?

With respect to the Guyana Electricity Corporation, the allegation is that there is a great pilfering of current in the Guyana Electricity Corporation and it is doubtful whether all the consumers are in fact being billed and are paying. There is great inefficiency in the administration. Also, if one takes a look at the Electricity Corporation personnel when they go out to do a job, one would realise that they walk around with a host of people. One man will pick up a shovel and dig a hole, another man will hold a post, one will connect the wire, another will do something else. While one man is working the others will all stand around and look on. It is also an accepted fact

that the Electricity Corporation personnel are the highest paid in the GUYSTAC group. In addition to that, they get free electricity. [A Comrade: “where did you get that from?”] Check it, that Corporation needs to be looked at very very carefully.

Turning now to the External Trade Bureau, I am glad that the hon. Minister brought out the fact that there has not been an audit report in respect to this External Trade Bureau for some time. What is very disturbing is that between five per cent and ten per cent is charged as a service charge. Why? Papers are stamped, they are posted abroad, but does that necessitate a charge of five to ten per cent? Is the Bureau really reasonable in charging as much as that for doing a bit of paper work? It is true that on milk and milk products there is no charge but specified foodstuffs are ordered by them. For example, the Bureau places orders for salt, onions, garlic, split peas, cheese, and if these come in damage an allocation is sent to merchants and they have to take delivery whether the goods are good or bad. If a merchant refuses, his name is removed from the list and he is not thereafter given any allocation of anything coming into the country through the E.T.B. That is the way in which it operated, sir.

If the goods are not up to standard the merchants will get back something only if there is an Insurance claim which is payable. Merchants have told me this and they are very bitter about it. Those whose names have been taken off the list are scared to complain because they know that the Government has the upper hand; it can, by the use of “big stick” methods, take their names off the list and effectively silence them. Sometimes goods are received short weight. In the last shipment of garlic the crates should have contained 22 lbs but my information is that the contents weighed only 18 pounds. The merchants paid the E.T.B. price of \$27.81 per case. The retail price per case is \$30.32 but, in respect of that case, if the merchant retails 18 pounds at the controlled price of \$1.53 per pound, he will get \$27.54. Therefore, he loses \$27.81 (which is the price he bought for) minus \$27.54 (which is the price he sold for), a loss of 27 cents. Bearing in mind that he has to add to that 27 cents the cost of transportation, wrapping, labour, customs clerks’ expenses and all other overheads, it is obviously a hardship on the merchants.

The last shipment of salt sold by the E.T.B. was at \$12.94 per bag. The merchants had to pay 30 cents per bag as well as transportation, wrapping and of course, there must be something for spillage, custom clerks' fees and so on. The controlled wholesale price was \$13.75 per bag, that is, a profit of 81 cents per bag. This obviously cannot compensate the merchant when one takes into consideration that if he sells it by the pound, every pound has to be wrapped and there are general overhead expenses. This needs to be examined.

4.30 p.m.

The same sort of thing obtains with peas and split peas. These are items which are being sold by the merchants at a loss because of wrapping and overhead expenses. They cannot charge for paper: if the peas are put in paper bag, that has to be their expense. My information is that the price of paper bags should be controlled, and I urge the Minister to look into the possibility also of allowing a small charge for paper supplied on the sale of these items.

Obviously, some will be in a better position than others. Some may use all kinds of paper; other may use good quality paper; some may use paper bags, and others may use ordinary paper. If you put a nominal price on paper and paper bags and, of course, control the price, it would, to my mind, operate in favour of the consumer without discriminating against the retailer also.

The E.T.B. was set up in 1970. It became a corporation under GUYSTAC in 1973. We are perturbed that we have seen no financial report. We look forward to the early presentation of this, as promised by the hon. Minister, particularly because of the rumours we hear that the E.T.B. seems to be unaware of the stocks that it has and the value of those stocks.

I have come more or less to the end but if I may just supplement what I said about the Guyana Marketing Corporation. There is one aspect which one needs to talk about. Sugar and flour. They are both sold by the Corporation. Flour is sold ex mill at \$15.59 per 100 pound bag. The wholesaler pays 30 cents per bag to transport it from the East Bank to Georgetown. The controlled price is \$15.80 per bag so if we take it in the 30 cents per bag for the cost of transportation to the retailer, he makes nothing at all, and he loses, when one takes into consideration overheads such as labour, bill books, wrapping paper, and so on. There is a suggestion that the last shipment of flour could have been sold by the Guyana Marketing Corporation for less than the current price.

In respect of sugar, the merchants pay \$14.51 per bag of 250 pounds. The price includes transportation from the sugar estates to the wholesaler but the controlled price of sugar is \$14.50 per bag wholesale. Therefore there can be no profit wholesale. It will have to be retailed.

What is the retail position? Sugar is retailed at two pounds for 13 cents, that is, 125 parcels at 13 cents each bag brings in \$16.25, but let us bear in mind that the retailer has to pay, for example, if he is in country area, approximately \$1 per bag for transportation from the wholesaler. If we are to take into consideration that he buys the paper bags at five cents per bag for each two pounds that he wraps, bearing in mind that the average amount that the average housewife in the country would buy is two pounds, we will have a situation where the retailer will be supplying \$6.25 for paper bags on that bag of sugar. His expenses would be \$14.40 for the 250 pound bag of sugar. He would have to add to that \$1 for transportation and \$6.25 approximately for paper bags. That would make a total of \$21.75, on the assumption that he is selling in quantities of two pounds in two-pound bags.

I admit there can be a bigger amount sold, but if we take that quantity, we will see that the retailer will lose to the extent of \$5.50 per bag; it will be an expense of \$21.75 and he would have had to pay \$14.51 had he bought from Bookers. He would lose as much as \$5.50 per bag if

he sells it that way. This needs looking into because I am certain the hon. Minister would not like to know that the retailers are out of pocket as a result of the sale of these essential commodities. Perhaps, as I said, the price of paper and paper bags can be controlled and a small price could be put on the sale of these commodities.

I have gone at length through all of these. I want to make one comment on the legislation proper, and if one looks at the proposed legislation one will see that it is stated on page 4 clause5:

“Section 15 of the Principal Act is hereby amended in the following respects -

(a) by the substitution of the following paragraphs for paragraphs (a) and (d), respectively, of subsection (2) -

‘(a) The Executive Chairman assigned responsibility for the corporation under section 3(3) and he shall be the Chairman of the Corporation.’”

Paragraph (d) is the one I want to look at. The provision of (d) section 15 of the present Laws of Guyana states.

“A corporation established under section 46 consists of -

(d) a representative (other than a person who is a member of corporation by virtue of paragraph (c) selected by persons employed by the corporation from among themselves in such manner as may be prescribed by rules made by the Minister assigned responsibility or labour;”.

So that it makes provision for a workers’ representative selected by themselves under rules prescribed by the hon. Minister of Labour. That is being altered now. The new provision is that

workers' representative would be appointed by the President of the Guystac. The provision reads: "one person appointed by the President of the Guyana State Corporation from among persons employed by the Corporation.

Why this change? Why are we changing the existing provision which says that the workers must select a person under rules in the manner prescribed by the Minister of Labour? Why not continue allowing the workers to select their representative? Why is it necessary to change the position for the President of Guystac to hand-pick the workers representative? If we are talking about workers' participation and workers' representation, we should stick to what we have and allow the workers to choose their representative instead of hand-picking somebody to be the workers' representative. Those are my general comments.

I want to reiterate that all I have said in an attempt to help streamline the operations of the Guystac companies as is envisaged in the proposed legislation, but ancillary to that, I should like the Government to give us a statement as to the future of the private sector. I would also wish the hon. Minister to bear in mind my comments generally about streamlining the corporation.

4.40 p.m.

Cde. King (replying): Cde. Speaker, obviously the hon. Leader of the Opposition has not taken the trouble to keep abreast of current events in Guyana current declarations but has rather entered into the semantics of getting second, third and forth-handed information in which he seeks to malign the various state corporations that are, in fact, trying to do an extremely good job under very difficult conditions.

May I first of all reply to the whole question of the private sector and remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that no less a person than the Cde. Prime Minister of this country made the situation abundantly clear as Saturday, 10th January, 1976. Was not the hon. Leader of the Opposition in Guyana or was he enjoying the pleasures of the Rhine or Lille, South of France.

Because, on that night in that very historic broadcast, the reply to the following question was given. The questioner asked:

“This brings us to another question. We have always described the Guyanese economy as being tri-sectoral, public, private and co-operative. To what extent in the future, Prime Minister, will the private sector have a role to play in Guyanese economy?”

Cde Speaker this was on the radio and the reply given was:

“As I have said repeatedly, the private sector has an important role to play. In many areas of distribution and even in cases of manufacture, the private investor will have an opportunity to make a contribution. I one is not or will say that there should be no private sector at all. I don't share the view because if the State, as the representative of the people has the paramountcy in matters financial, physical, monetary and economic, it could well regulate even the private sector to ensure that there is not that type of exploitation which is the hall mark of the capitalist system.”

Cde. Speaker, in all humility I wish to say to this House that I can add no further assurance that which was given by the Cde Leader and Cde. Prime Minister of this country.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition makes reference to the decline in foreign investment and suggests that, because of our action, foreign investment has declined. May I remind the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this country sponsored, heavily, the investment of foreign money and capital when, at great expense, we operated what was then known as the Guyana Development Corporation in which foreign investment was courted from 1963 to 1973. Could the hon. Leader of the Opposition tell this House what were the results of that vast and heave expenditure? Little or nothing came from it. Are we going to go and beg on bended knees to

seek the capital of other countries and to ask capitalists to invest in this country? Are we going to throw good money after bad money when for ten years we failed to attract capitalists? Cde. Speaker, it is clear that this country must develop from its own boot-straps, that we must be masters of our economy and take control of our resources to the benefit and good of the nation. This was clearly set out in the Declaration of Sophia and, surely, since the hon. Leader of the Opposition is quoting from the prime Minister's speech in 1971, he ought to have seen the Declaration which was made on the 14th December, 1974. Unless, of course, he reads five years later, which is perhaps the case. If in 1976 he is reading something said in 1971 there is every good chance that he will be reading this Declaration in 1978 or 1979. The situation has been clearly set out.

Let me now turn to the question of Guyanese investors. How could this Government and Party be accused of stifling local investors when we are advertising the resources of the Small Industries Corporation, when we are virtually begging Guyanese manufacturers to come forward and take advantage of loans, when we have set up a Corporation which is geared not only to give loans but with technical services to provide engineering service, marketing service and the like? The Guyanese who said that we are not encouraging the private investor in the fields of manufacture and industry must either be using a Nelson's eye or, perhaps, lack the width and wisdom of Solomon.

We cannot give assurance to people who are only prepared to continue in the field of shopkeeping, people who are only prepared to buy and sell and continue to exploit those of our nation, the consumers, unless they are prepared to put an element or input of manufacture into the economy.

Now, the hon. Leader of the Opposition refers to the system of licensing. Am I to understand that he is opposed to the principle of licensing? Am I to understand that he is asking this country to leave in the hands of the private sector or private businessmen the extent to which they will import? The simplest businessman, of whom I know he is well advised, will tell him

that he not only plans his revenue, but plans his expenditure. If this country is to maintain a balance of payment which is of an international level, then we must be concerned, we must be involved in controlling our imports.

More specifically, my good friend refers to spare parts. What he has not been advised is that for many years there are certain importers of spare parts who import spurious parts from manufacturers who, for competitive purposes, manufacture sub-standard spares and when those spares are used on machinery or vehicles under guarantee, the consumer or user of those vehicles invalidates the guarantee and cannot get any results or redress. Is the hon. Leader of the Opposition asking me to allow a situation like this to continue? Is he asking me to allow the importers to bring into this country spares and parts which could be detrimental not only to the economy but to the user?

4.50 p.m.

Let me say, to this House Cde. Speaker that I am unaware of the statement which the hon. Leader of the Opposition has made to this House in which he alleges that the Government is shortly to become the sole importer of spare parts. What this Government is investigating at the moment is the source of spare parts to ensure that parts of a very high standard come in to the country to sever the nation.

There have been serious statements made, Cde. Speaker, with regard to the prices and mark-up of one of our trading corporations. I think the hon. Leader actually said that Corporation a mark-up 50 percent has been made and continues to be made. I shall be indeed extremely happy if he will be my customer at that mark-up because Guyana Gajraj will do extremely better. For the information of this house, not only is that statement incorrect but I am authorised and I am satisfied to say that that Corporation does not make a mark-up of any size in excess of 20 per cent.

Turning now to the staff: He alleges that members are hand-picked and employees are dismissed, it seems, and re-instated. I should like to deal globally with this Cde. Speaker. Not only is this inaccurate and again, perhaps because of the bias of the mass media and the Government owned newspaper, maybe the hon. Leader of the Opposition does not read the Chronicle newspapers but continue in his colonial mentality to give a lot of confidence to the “Times”. He believes that reading the “times” is a lot more important than reading the local newspapers. But in the local newspapers, Cde. Speaker, all of the vacancies of any level of income is advertised. They are advertised and they are open to competition, a situation which was corrected in the light of the Prime Minister’s statement from which he quoted. No-one of a certain level of emoluments can enter the corporation unless he applies and unless he is examined by a committee. So why are we trying to give mis-directions? Why are we deliberately attempting to make false statements to this House? Why are we attempting to distort the true facts when it is abundantly clear to the public that these things are not in fact taking place?

I said in my opening statement on this Bill that there were some corporations which could not make a profit and I said also, Cde. Speaker, that we found it necessary to make profits. We must make surpluses because in the final analysis it is our education and our medical services and our various services that must be paid for by some of the surpluses that we may arise.

But I find it difficult to understand why the hon. Leader of the Opposition should seek to suggest that a car is one of those items on which our sale price should be less than anyone else’s. If he makes a comparison of milk or flour or some commodity that I will support that.

The other comment, Cde. Speaker, to which he refers is the question of the overdrafts being run by the corporation amounting to \$49 million. If, as I understand it, the businessmen of this country are advising the hon. Leader of the Opposition, they must give him correct advice. Surely they must give him accurate financial rates because when one relates an overdraft of \$94, as he says correctly against current assets of \$406 million and against current anticipated revenue

of \$407 million, \$49 million is, in fact a bagatelle and we shall be coming shortly to this House to seek authority to increase that overdraft.

Is he suggesting that any one of the more efficient capitalist countries can do better than this? It is impossible. In fact \$49 million overdraft is not a criticism, it is a credit for which I thank the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The second thing is that references were made to the security forces and some very fantastic figures, \$2 million, quoted as losses, that wire rope is disappearing and what have you.

From time to time, Cde, Speaker, the financial reports are laid before this House and Audit reports are attached thereto. I am sure that the hon. Member is aware that he has access to those reports. Any corporation losing \$2 million will not only show deficits or losses but it will be out of business in no time.

I should like now to answer the question on the cassava mills. These mills will be completed by June/July of this year and it is anticipated that the completion will coincide with the harvest of cassava subject, of course, to acts of God in which the weather may or may not be kind to us. If all goes well the blending should start by October.

I should also like to refer to the accusations made about the Guyana Agricultural Products Corporation, in respect of corn and black-eye peas. I said in my earlier statement that this Corporation had in fact contributed to the conservation of foreign currency and, in fact, not only have we produced the corn but we have corn now storing in dryers; we have corn which has been dried and in addition to that, the Guyana Marketing Corporation is completing a number of dryers which will be going into operation by the time the next harvest comes in.

The allegation that corn is going bad at the Transport and Harbours department is not true. Some of that corn went bad but not 2 million pounds. What we found necessary was to store the corn produced by the Guyana Agricultural Corporation and to use the corn from the small producers on a daily basis because of the moisture content. But let me say this to the House that that was one occasion on which the licensing system was not effectively worked because had it worked that would not have happened. But it proves the point that with proper licensing those surpluses and redundancies of produce will not occur.

It is difficult to answer all the points which were made but I have noted a number of the suggestions which have been put forward by my distinguished friend and would like to assure him that we will take note. However, this is one on which he commented on travel services or travel agencies. To speak of travel agencies, in fact, is to mention only one of the problems. Indeed, we are ending up with a series of duplication. Not only does the Guyana National engineering Corporation have a foundry but is also has a Hardware Division which must now be rationalised and moved into the Guyana National Trading Corporation that will be responsible for the hardware.

We also have serious duplication in our refrigeration services in several places. We have a publication of our electrical workshops. We have a very serious duplication in our automotives. He also referred to shipping and inadvertently overlooked the fact that we also have shipping at Guybau. The Bauxite Company also owns a ship. I wish to assure the House that what we are seeking to do is to rationalise the various enterprises, the various services which the corporations offer and also to improve them.

5 p.m.

There was, of course, the question of payment on rice as against payment for produce bought by the Guyana Marketing Corporation. This has to do with the whole system and structure of pricing. In the case of the Guyana Rice Marketing Board the price paid to the farmer

provides for transport to Georgetown and the fact that we have to send a vessel to Springlands indeed should suggest - and it should be appreciated - is an increased freight charge on the ship whereas the price charged to the farmers is based on a collection of that produce. After all, we are socialists, we are not capitalists, and if the pig dies on the way we can better bear the loss of that pig than the little farmer and consequently we have no apology to offer because we are dealing people; we are not dealing with profits only. The rice farmer is paid in the form of the price; he is given that freight on the price. Therefore that is the situation.

As I have already said in the case of the Small Industries Corporation, the Corporation is geared. It is at the disposal and service of anyone who is in need of industrial development and, insofar as we are concerned, a laundry had that element of industry in it because it is a service which must be provided to growing nation. No one in the private sector has taken any step to expand its laundry services and we must be conscious not only of the need to expand the economy but the need of people to improve their quality of life.

There was a question about the investment or use of funds by the National Insurance Scheme. How better can we invest our funds than in our own economy? Are we to assume that the Government of Great Britain or the Government of the United States will invest in one of our corporations we will give them shares if they want, in the Electricity Corporation or even in the G.M.C.? Where else can we invest our funds but in our own economy? If we have not got confidence in our economy then our whole hope is lost.

I conclude by saying that for us a new day has dawned. On the bright horizon lies the control of our own resources, the control of our imports and the control of our exports. I hope that the hon. Leader of the Opposition will be on the crest of that wave which takes us into a new way of life, a new economic strength, to which our people are entitled. [**Applause**]

Bill read a Second time.

26.2.76

National Assembly

5.00 – 5.10 p.m.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill read the Third time and passed as printed.

**SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH IN GUYANA
(INCORPORATION OF TRUSTEE) BILL 1976**

“A Bill intituled:

An Act to incorporate trustees to hold the property in Guyana of the Guyana
Conferences of Seventy-Day Adventist and for purposes connected therewith.”

[Cde. Ramsahoye]

Cde Ramsahoye: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that the Seventy-Day Adventist Church in Guyana Incorporation of Trustees Bill, 1976, be now read a Second time. This is a non-controversial Bill. The Seventy-Day Adventist movement is a Christian Protestant religious sect.

5.10 p.m.

The origin of it is usually accredited to an American Methodist, Mr. Miller, who preached the imminent second coming of Christ. For this reason they are known as “Adventists”. The main difference between the Christian religious sect and others perhaps lies in their more rigid adherence to the Old and New Testaments. For instance, they stick rigidly to the fourth commandment which informs us that the seventh day, the Sabbath day should be holy and, indeed, they do worship on the seventh day. They also stick rigidly to things like the food they

eat where the description is given in the Old Testament in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

The movement is now international. It has its headquarters in Washington and over two million followers. It operates two Universities, one in California and one in Michigan. The Guyana section of the Church was established in 1883 and from that time they have done work both on the coastlands and in the interior and at the present time they have fifty-nine churches, ten primary schools, one secondary school, a hospital. In addition, they operate welfare services.

As a result of all this activity, Cde. Speaker, there is quite a bit of property that the Seventy Day Adventists hold. Up to the present time, this property is being controlled by the headquarters in Washington who appoint trustees in Guyana or appoint people with power of attorney to operate on their behalf. What this present Bill seeks to do is to establish local trustees by which all property now vested in the headquarters in Washington and owned in Guyana will become vested in the trustees. As such, it is a very simple measure.

Finally, on the personal note, in piloting the Bill, I am happy to be of some assistance to the Seventh Day Adventist because I owe the deliverance of my first child, my elder daughter, to the hands of the Seventh Day Adventist doctor and were it not for the precipitate arrival of my second daughter, she would also have been born in that hospital. I wish, Cde. Speaker, to commend the Bill to the House.

Cde. Ramson seconded.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

26.2.76

National Assembly

5.10 – 5.20 p.m.

Bill reported without amendment.

Cde Ramsahoye: I beg to move that the Bill be read the Third time.

Cde Ramson seconded

Bill read the Third time and passed as printed

C.P.A MEETING

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, may I remind you that we will have a meeting of the Guyana Branch of the C.P.A. immediately after the adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: “That this National Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.”
[**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

Adjourned accordingly at 5.20 p.m.
