

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 2]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE FIRST ^{PARLIAMENT} ~~NATIONAL~~
~~ASSEMBLY~~ OF GUYANA ~~CONSTITUTED~~ UNDER THE CONSTITUTION
OF GUYANA.

3rd Sitting

Friday 11th August 1967

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2.00p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Present:

• His Honour the Deputy Speaker, Mr. R. C. Tello
Members of the Government
• *Ministers*

The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.,

— *Prime Minister*

Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid,

— *Minister of Trade*

The Honourable N. J. Bissember,

— *Minister for Parliamentary
Affairs (Leader of the
House)*

The Honourable R. E. Checks

— *Minister of Local Govern-
ment*

The Honourable E. F. Corrcia

— *Minister of Communica-
tions*

The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin

— *Minister of Education*

The Honourable C. M. L. John

— *Minister of Home Affairs*

The Honourable R. J. Jordan

— *Minister of Agriculture and
Natural Resources*

The Honourable W. O. R. Kendal, C.B.E., J.P.,

– *Minister of Health and
Housing*

The Honourable C. A. Merriman, J.P.,

– *Minister of Labour and Social
Security*

The Honourable M. F. Singh

– *Minister of Works and Hydraulics*

The Honourable M. W. Carter

– *Minister of Information*

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. D. B. DeGroot

– *Parliamentary Secretary, Prime
Minister's Office*

Mr. G. Bowman

– *Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry
of Agriculture and Natural Re-
sources*

Mr. O. E. Clarke

– *Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry
of Education*

Mr. P. Duncan

– *Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry
of Local Government*

Mr. J. G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.,

– *Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry
of Works and Hydraulics*

Mr. C. V. Too-Chung

– *Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry
of Finance*

Other Members

Mr. W. A. Blair

Mr. J. Budhoo

Mr. M. Kasim

Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley

Mr. D. Mahraj

Mr. H. Prashad J.P.

Rev. A. B. Trotman

Mr. H. M. S. Wharton J.P.

Members of the Opposition

Dr. C. B. Jagan
Mr. A. Chase
Mr. B. H. Benn
Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.
Mr. C. V. Nunes
Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye
Mr. E. M. G. Wilson
Mr. M. Hamid, J.P.
Mr. J. R. S. Luck
Mr. D. C. Jagan
Mr. H. Lall
Mr. Mooner Khan, J.P.
Mr. L. Linde
Mr. R. D. Persaud, J.P.
Mr. M. N. Poonai
Mr. M. Bhagwan
Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F. A. Narain
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M. B. Henry

Leader of the Opposition

Absent

The Honourable P. S. d'Aguiar
Minister of Finance

— *on leave*

The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.,
Attorney-General and Minister of State

— *on leave*

Mr. W. G. Carrington
Mr. T. A. Sarcho
Mr. Y. Ally
Mr. M. N. Poonai
Mr. E. M. Stoby
Mr. S. M. Saffee

— *on leave*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE
SPEAKER**

Leave to Member

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Member Mr. Deoroo Mahraj is excused from today's sitting.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS
MOTION**

**DEBATE ON THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S
ADDRESS**

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly direct that an expression of its sincere appreciation and thanks be conveyed to His Excellency the Governor-General for the Gracious Speech addressed to the Assembly on the occasion of the Opening of the Second Session of the First Parliament of Guyana under the Constitution of Guyana, on Tuesday, 8th August, 1967." - [Rev. Trotman.]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When the Adjournment was taken last evening the hon. Member Mr Luck was speaking. He may continue to do so.

Mr. Luck: Thank you very much. Last evening I had been examining two previous Throne Speeches presented to this House by this Government, for, in the Throne Speech, a Government expresses its intentions for the coming year.

The entire Speech delivered by His Excellency Sir Richard Luyt on the 29th March, 1965, represents a list of things which remain to be done to this day. The Government stated its intentions through the mouth of the Governor. Those intentions, stated on the 29th March, 1965, have to this day not been carried out under nearly every item, as has been demonstrated last evening. This is also true with respect to the Throne Speech delivered by His Royal

Highness the Duke of Kent on the 26th May, 1966. One wonders, vague and vacuous as this Throne Speech is, whether this Government intends to carry out any of the promises made here, though they are not many.

Take the question of land. There is a demagogic passage appearing on page 4 of the Throne Speech. This is sheer demagogy having regard to the performance of this Government. Here the Government promises:

"Steps will be taken, legislative and otherwise, aimed at wiping out the abuses, especially with respect to exorbitant rentals and resumption of possession, which now exist in the relationship of landlord and tenant."

Yet on the 31st December, 1964, at the first meeting of this Parliament, seven years after this Government was in the wilderness, preparing, one would assume, for the high responsibilities of governing this country, the then Minister of Health and Housing (Mr. Bissember) had this to say:

"May I also indicate to this House that this Government intends to look into the Rent Restriction legislation in the very near future so that the entire effect and application of the Rent Restriction Ordinance may be made a permanent bit of legislation for the future governing or control of landlord and tenant in this country."

This solemn promise was made at the very first sitting of Parliament on the 31st December, 1964, and from 1964 to this day nothing has been done. Rents have spiralled to an alarming degree and it is shocking to see the number of dispossessions which take place under the authority of this Government.

There was, as is well known, a magistrate in the Rent Assessors Court who used to give time for the payment of rent. Protests were made by the landlord class and that magistrate was duly removed for sitting in

Luck
(MR. LUCK)

the Rent Assessment and a magistrate more suited to the wishes - one should have thought - of the breed of gentlemen opposite, is now there. He gives to poor tenants who are in arrears of rent no time at all to pay. You either pay or get out. That has been the pattern of this Government.

Last evening I spoke on education at some length and there is one matter which I should like to mention to this House. Of all the scandalous matters - and there are many - which appertain to education in this country, there is no greater scandal than the receipt of fees at public schools Members opposite - and I can call names - pay fees to headmasters in public primary schools, where education is supposed to be free, so that special attention may be given to their children. The gentleman opposite can afford to do this.

The general practice throughout the schools of this country is that teachers extort fees under the guise of extra lessons and the number of children taking these extra lessons exceeds fifty in a class. It has become such an abominable racket that parents are constrained to pay tuition fees for their children and request that those children be excused attendance from such tuition lessons. These parents are wise and do not wish their children to be too hard pressed. They know that it imposes too big a strain on their children. The net result is that many of these allegedly free primary schools are being run for the personal profit of the teacher of the Common Entrance class.

I hope that the Minister will indicate in her White Paper that, in future, teachers in Government primary schools will not be allowed to hold classes after school. I want this to be clearly understood: I do not object to a teacher assisting, for reward, a child who is in need of some extra lessons or extra tuition. What I strongly object to, and what is clearly reprehensible, is the fact that

money is being extorted from parents so that their children may get into the Common Entrance Class.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Luck

For this reason alone they are paying the headmaster of the primary school in Main Street ten dollars a month as fees for extra lessons. Fifty children attend in shifts.

May I say that no one can defend this practice. This practice has been condemned by the Guyana Union of Teachers but what is this Government doing about it? Not only the wealthy people pay for extra lessons; everybody has to pay and what happens next? The result of the Common Entrance Examination, to which I have already alluded, prove that the children of the poorer classes do not have a fair chance at this examination and children from the rural areas are being grossly discriminated against. Not only the results prove this, but an examination of the work done at the Common Entrance Examination proves the standard of work in most of the rural primary schools is abominable.

I leave education to turn to one other item and that concerns finance. It is true that the Government financial proposals are normally contained on the Budget Speech, but one would have expected in this Throne Speech some reference to the workings of the Guyana Central Bank and since it is being proposed to amend the Estates Duties Ordinance, one would have expected some affirmation by this Government that it intends to pursue relentlessly, those wealthy persons who seem able - not seem, who are escaping the tax gatherer's net.

I am sorry the hon Minister of Finance is not here. I understand that the estates of many of his wealthy friends have been grossly undervalued, that years have elapsed since the declarations were made but nothing is being done. Perhaps somebody is hoping that somebody falls dead and nothing will happen and Austin Princess or a jeep here and there will wipe out the sordid affair. Millions are involved in this matter. I

shudder to think that this Government proposes to amend this Ordinance. I would have expected it to assert that it intended to pursue, with some diligence, the matter of those persons who died and did not pay a fair share into the country's revenue.

Another matter I would have expected a firm reference to is the Auditor's Report for 1965. Surely, the Auditor's Report for 1965 has revealed a scandalous state of affairs in the management of the country's finances and one would have expected in the Throne Speech, coming immediately after the Auditor's Report, some promise that millions of dollars would not be spent without covering vouchers. Three million dollars were spent without covering vouchers and one would have hoped that a decent Government would have promised solemnly to this House and to the Nation, that it would have exercised stricter control so that these rackets that go on everywhere would cease.

Finally, I wish to make a personal statement on a matter which arose in a very loud aside between the hon. the Prime Minister and the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

With the full knowledge that the Congress of my Party, the Party of which I have the honour to be Vice Chairman, takes place within a week, the hon. Prime Minister leaned forward and in a loud aside, indicated to the hon. Leader of the Opposition some opinion which may cast some aspersions as to personal position ~~of~~ the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the hon. Prime Minister was not speaking and he was not on his feet, it would not be recorded as a part of his speech. If we were to reply to everything spoken here, we would go on for generations. I am suggesting that you take up this matter with the hon. Prime Minister in his office. I am only making a suggestion.

Mr. Luck: May I express the hope that loud and damaging asides be not allowed in this Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: They are not allowed. If you should hear them, bring them to my attention.

Mr. Luck: Thank you.

Mr. Khan: I have read the Throne Speech delivered by His Excellency the Governor-General and when I look at the aspect that concerns agriculture, and on reading further in conjunction with the previous Throne Speeches, and even a little further, looking at the Development Programme, I have come to the conclusion as any other person would, that that aspect of the speech is completely empty.

2.30 p.m.

The Leader of the Opposition had already referred to the Table which indicates the gross domestic product, and he showed where in this particular sector, agriculture, there has been a fall instead of a rise. My colleague, the hon. Mr. Benn went into greater details and pointed out to this honourable House some of the main reasons for this. I should like to add that this Government has paid, is paying and will continue to pay only lipservice to agriculture in Guyana. Hon. Ministers have said from time to time, inside this House and outside, that they believe agricultural development can play an important role in our economy. But, to say that agricultural development can play an important role is not going to make it play that important role. This must be followed consistently with every action of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Last evening, the Minister of Agriculture took pains to explain to this House what progress has been made in relation to the new strain of paddy which has recently been developed by Mr. Pawar. But the one important aspect that the Minister failed to disclose is what it will cost the farmer to produce one acre of this new strain. It is but logical. If you are going to tell the farmers in Guyana that Blue Belle strain is the answer to their problem, by all means you must tell them, from the experiments you have

[MR. KHAN]

carried out, what it is going to cost them to produce one acre of this Blue Belle paddy. The hon. Minister deliberately failed to disclose this information because he knows the cost has been exorbitant and so, uneconomical. I ask the hon. Minister or one of his colleagues to let this hon. House know whether it is not true that to produce one acre of the Blue Belle paddy is going to cost time-and-a-half more than the present cost of one acre paddy.

We have been privileged to have a very able person in the form of Mr. Pawar to help us, and we are grateful to the United Nations for this. Mr. Pawar's advice in this respect must not be followed in part. The experiments which Mr. Pawar had carried out at Mon. Repos, in developing the strain, must not be pursued halfway if results are to be seen. This is where I concur with my colleagues that this Government can claim very little if any credit, in so far as increased agricultural production is concerned.

I recall that in early June representations were made to the Ministry of Agriculture, and it was pointed out that because of the heavy rains and floods many farmers had lost almost everything, and it was only but fair and reasonable that the Ministry of Agriculture should render some form of assistance to the farmers. A clear proposal was put before the Ministry that, if it were not possible to make seed paddy available freely, then this should be done on a longterm credit basis. The latter proposal was accepted and when the Rice Producers Association representatives went with the farmers to receive the pure line seed paddy at Cane Grove, it was most shocking and disgusting to find that not a single bag of that paddy could have been made available to the farmers. What happened? Those who were in charge of the expansion service - I do not know under whose guidance from the Ministry of Agriculture - carried out a treatment of the paddy. They fumigated all the paddy in bulk, and shortly after the

fumigation process was over they covered all the paddy with plastic and the plastic remained there until the day when we went with the farmers.

2.40 p.m.

When we asked the agricultural representative, "Have you issued any of the seedlings to farmers?" he said, "Yes, they have been issued they were sold for cash." We then asked, "Can you tell us what were the results from these farmers?" and he said, "Farmers are complaining that they are only getting 20 to 25 per cent germination."

When we complained to the Ministry of Agriculture that this was happening all over the country, not only on the East Coast but on the Essequibo Coast as well, the Ministry paid no attention to our complaint. The complaint was dismissed as a falsehood. We asked further if the officials of the Ministry were able to discern the reason why there was only 20 to 25 per cent germination and we were told that the experts could not discern the cause. But those who have a knowledge of agriculture and who understand when and how paddy is to be treated know immediately what was responsible for it. The mere fact that all this paddy was fumigated in bulk, that a plastic cover was put over it and allowed to remain there, raised a heat which killed the embryo of the seeds. I hope that my hon. Friend, the hon. Minister of Agriculture, has learnt a lesson.

As a result, the country has suffered a loss because all that paddy had to sold at half its price as stock feed. This is only one aspect of the bad management which permeates the whole Ministry of Agriculture. So far as rice is concerned, we have told them before, and we are bold enough to say again, that the reorganisation policy will fail not only because of bad management. There is another aspect to this. Mr. Pawar has been here for nearly a year and has developed the strain. One would have imagined that the Government would have followed the lines along which Mr. Pawar carried out the experiment at Mon Repos. Instead,

what has the Government done? The Minister of Agriculture sought to hand some of the blue belle seed to his friends first of all. I do not see Mr. Deeroop Mahraj here, but on the Essequibo Coast it was Mr. Deeroop Mahraj who was given the bluebelle seed. The experiment on the Essequibo Coast has failed miserably. As the hon. Minister (Mr. Jordan) mentioned yesterday, this experiment was also carried out in the Abary area. We know in whose place it was carried out - that of Mr. Jules Perreira. What has happened? The experiment on Mr. Jules Perreira's plot will also fail because of its factor. The bluebelle strain has been planted in the centre of the cultivation owned by Mr. Jules Perreira and the whole Mahaicony area is infested with blast disease. The whole Abary area also is infested with blast disease and all sorts of other diseases. What is going to happen when the 'bluebelle' strain gets under way and the blast disease attacks the neighbouring field? I am sure that Mr. Jules Perreira is going to pay strict attention to fumigation, application of fertilisers and so on, on this particular plot which carries the bluebelle strain. When the blast attacks both sides of the bluebelle strain Mr. Jules Perreira will have to think - as he was doing the other day - of bringing an aeroplane to spray the whole place.

I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Mr. Jordan) this question: When you spray the plot affected by the blast disease where do you expect the disease to go? [Mr. Jordan: "into the Creek."] No wonder we cannot make any progress. The blast disease will certainly overtake the neighbouring field. Mr. Pawar himself tells us that this strain of paddy should never be grown where Jharanga was previously grown or the blast disease will affect it. Mr. Jules Perreira's cultivation will certainly suffer a great setback.

The third place that the hon. Minister mentioned was on the Corentyne on Dr. Fraser's estate. All the soil experts have proved that this area has a very high salt

content while Dr. Fraser would like to carry out this experiment he told us at a meeting at the East Indian Cricket Club that he had to treat the soil on the plot where he is carrying out the experiment and he treated it according to the advice given by Mr. Pawar. What is going to happen here? Perhaps Dr. Fraser may be a fortunate individual because he will be able to get the Sugar Producers Association to feed him with sweet water.

2.50 p.m.

If, at the appropriate stage, Dr. Fraser does not get a sufficient supply of sweet water, then that cultivation is going to fail because Mr. Pawar has made it very very clear to the farmers that the Blue Belle strain cannot stand up to our weather conditions unless it is supplemented with all these other factors: sweet water, adequate drainage and irrigation to let the water go out when it should go out and to take in the water when it should be taken in, and unless the fertilisers are applied at the correct time. [Mr. Jordan: "What is wrong with that?"]

The Minister asks what is wrong with that. A lot is wrong with that. I ask the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources to tell us in how many acres in Guyana do we have adequate drainage and irrigation facilities. Is it not true that nearly 70% of the total acreage of rice lands cultivated in this country do not have adequate drainage and irrigation control? What, therefore, are you going to do? This is the attitude which permeates the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and which has been responsible for no improvement; I will come to that just now.

What appears in the Economic Survey of Guyana conflicts with what appears in the Report of the Ministry of Agriculture for the year 1966. We have always supported and we will continue to support the Ministry of Agriculture in any measure which will benefit the farmer. Over the years, the experimental station has been able to produce two very useful strains... 6044 and

[MR. KHAN]

6047. Number 79 and D 110 have already proved the test in Guyana; they stood up to all weather conditions which we faced from time to time.

I do not want the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources to think that I am saying that pure line Blue Belle seed is not a good strain. *[Interruption by Mr. Jordan.]* Agriculture in Guyana will go down more and more because of the arrogance which you, as Minister of Agriculture, tried to establish in the Ministry of Agriculture. The exercise of power and arrogance will never bring about improvement, and the quicker you understand that that is the basic weakness in the Ministry of Agriculture, the better it would be.

Yesterday the Minister told us that there has been an increase from 1,900 lbs. to 4,000 lbs. per acre. [Mr. Budhoo: "That is true."] Another hon. Member says that that is true. This shows that both of them have not studied production figures in Guyana. Apparently, the hon. Minister does not know that, in certain areas in this country - in Leguan, Wakenaam, Hogg Island, on the Essequibo Coast from Suddie downwards, on the Corentyne, except in the Black Bush Polder which the hon. Member Mr. Budhoo knows very well - you can produce nearly 4,000 lbs. to the acre from the ordinary D 110 and 6044. But when it comes to the whole of West Abary production is 1,600 lbs. to 1,900 lbs. to the acre. The results of the experiment carried out at Mon Repos should not be used as the yardstick for measuring improvements throughout the rice industry.

This Government says that it believes in agriculture and that it has been doing a lot of things to improve the industry. But let us see what have been the results as indicated in the Report of the Rice Marketing Board. The hon. Minister of Trade (Dr. Reid) will no doubt wonder how it is that I have been able to obtain a copy of this Report, but

both the Reports of the R.M.B. for the periods 1964/1965 and 1965/1966 and the Report of the R.D.C. for the year ended August 1965 are out. Treat this House with some courtesy and have them circulated. Let all Members of the House get a clear picture of what is happening in the rice industry since this Government took over.

3.00 p.m.

In this you will be able to find the results of the experiments, the expansion service, the help given by the Ministry of Agriculture, and these are reflected in the quality of rice produced.

When the rice farmer's representatives took control of the Board in 1962, for that period they found that there was 14.2% super rice produced in this Country and in order to ensure greater returns to the farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture played its role very usefully and as a result, the production of super rice increased from 14.2% in 1961-1962 to 28.2% in the 1963-1964 period. What has happened since then? In 1964-1965, there has been a drop to 15.8%; in 1965-1966, a further drop to 15.6%. How, therefore, can the Government claim that there was improvement?

How, therefore, can the Government claim that there was improvement?

Improvement must be reflected in the figures because the Rice Marketing Board ultimately purchases all the rice produced in the country and I should like the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Minister of Agriculture to pay special attention to this matter because the more low-grade rice produced in this Country, the less we will earn for it outside of Guyana. This Report has disclosed more. The figures I gave only refer to parboiled rice. What is the position with regard to white rice?

In the corresponding period 1961-1962, white No. 1, which is the highest quality, was 10.1%. This rose in the 1963-1964 period to 61.1%. In the 1964-1965 period -

it was 24.1%. In the 1965-1966 period — 18.8%. Look at the drop.

I appeal to the hon. Minister of Agriculture and the whole Government. This is a bad indication of the state if the rice industry and this has come about because there has been no co-ordination between the Rice Marketing Board, the Rice Producers' association and the Expansion Service of the Ministry of Agriculture. This has also resulted from the fact that the attitude of the Ministry of Agriculture is one completely opposed to the promotion of or any progress in the rice industry.

We warn the Government that the situation is going to become worse in the coming period. [Mr. Wharton: "Why?"] My hon. Friend is asking me why. Rice production will fall by more than 40% for the 1967 Autumn crop, 40% of the total acreage cultivated in 1966. And this will mean a severe setback in the economic position of the farmer. Forty percent would mean a withdrawal from circulation of money from the pockets of the farmers to the tune of nearly \$14 million.

That is not all of the story. Mr. Wharton knows that in the whole of West Berbice and parts of the Corentyne, you cannot plant a Spring crop, therefore, for all those farm crop, therefore, for all those farmers who lost the Autumn 1967 crop, there will be no spring 1968 crop. Their only hope is for an Autumn 1968 crop.

I hope that the Government will take cognisance of this information and realise that from Autumn 1967, it will have to feed the population and carry many farmers until October 1968. [Mr. Budhoo: "Ninety days."] You do not know what you are talking about.

We are not criticising the Government because we want to criticise. We are criticising the Government in the hope that it will do some thing to improve the lot of the people. Let this be clear to all; for the P.N.C. and the P.P.P. fully agree that agriculture has played and can continue to play a vital role in the economy of the

country. Let the P.N.C. now translate this belief into action.

Another aspect which I should like to refer to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, is the proposal for the re-organisation and integration of the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Development Company. Already, the Rice Development Company has moved into the offices of the Rice Marketing Board and some experts, American and otherwise, have taken over the offices formerly occupied by the Rice Development Company. [An hon. Member: "C. I. A."]

We warn the Government that this move is not in the interest of the rice industry or the rice farmers. This move will bring additional hardships. The Government is creating a larger debt for the rice industry to pay. The rice producers will ultimately have to pay. This is unfair and unjustified.

In an answer to a question by my hon. Colleague, Mr. Hubbard, the hon. Prime Minister denied that there has been any further losses in the sales of rice through Connell, and despite the fact that time and again we made reference to this, there has always come from that side of the House that there have not been such enormous losses.

I am privileged to have here three Reports, 1964 - 1965 and 1965 - 1966 of the Rice Marketing Board and 1965 of the Rice Development Company. I will read from the first Report of the Rice Marketing Board, 1964 - 1965:

"The Accounts disclose that the operations of the Board during period under review resulted on a trading loss of \$3,961, 776.01 \$347,100.73 was expended on Grants and Aids to the Industry and there was thus a nett excess of Expenditure over Income of \$4,308,876.74."

I will read the last part again:

"... a nett excess of Expenditure over Income of \$4,308,876.74."

[MR. KHAN]

The accounts for the second year disclosed that the operations of the Board during the period under review resulted in a trading loss of \$2,720,729.89. \$154,910.07 was expended on grants and aids to the industry and there was thus a nett excess of expenditure over income of \$2,875,639.96. [Mr. Bissember: "Is that attributed to the Connell contract?"] [Mr. Ram Karran: "Attributed to rascality."]

I have not had the privilege of going into the 1966-1967 Report, but from the manner in which the Reports are now prepared - the writing up of their accounts - when the final figures are shown for this period we will see another important story being told. In the balance sheet, under CURRENT ASSETS - a very fancy phrase which has never been used before - these words appear: Stocks at the lower of cost and net realizable value. Perhaps Mr. Too-Chung can explain to his colleagues over there when the final figures come out, what that would mean.

The Rice Development Company has also suffered losses for the corresponding period. I have here the **Report of Directors and Statement of Accounts** of the Rice Development Company for the period ended 31st August, 1965. This is what is stated in the second paragraph:

"The Company, during the year under review, incurred a net loss of \$741,546...."

Although the Report is not out for 1966, my information which is very reliable is that it will show a loss of \$1.1 million.

I now come to the point of merging the two organisations, the Rice Development Company and the Rice Marketing Board. They have lost \$8.9 million, \$4.3 million from 1964-1965, \$2.3 million from 1965-1966 for the Rice Marketing Board, and \$1.8 million from 1964-1965 for the Rice Development Company. During the last Session, the Government took over the guarantee for the Rice Development Company and this stood at nearly \$4.1 million so that up to the period 1966, and

from thereon the indebtedness of this joint corporation shall commence with the fantastic sum of \$13 million leaving aside the losses that are likely to occur in both companies for the 1966-1967 period.

In this very House we had to approve repayment at the rate of 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ % interest per annum. When you calculate interest on all these amounts piling up from time to time, and add it to the initial stage when the corporation will move off, I want to ask a very straight question: "Whom do you expect to pay for all of this? Do you expect to come to this House and ask the taxpayers to pay for these loans? This is not expected to happen, therefore, the only conclusion that we can come to is that the loss will have to be borne by the farmers.

This year there will be a short fall of production as I hinted earlier, which means that the cost of operation will rise in both the R.M.B. and the R.D.C. and this would mean a further burden on the already heavy burden which is placed on these two organisations, and ultimately on the backs of the farmers at the initial stage.

It is clearly stated in the Report by the British consultants who came here, Urwick Orr & Partners that, during the period when the rice producers were in majority control they showed profits in their operation. The Government, therefore, should not integrate the two bankrupt organisations. Make them profitable first and then integrate them! By that time, it is hoped that the various experiments that are to be carried out in the field will bear some fruit and production may justify the integration of the two organisations.

3.20 p.m.

We know that despite all the reports which have been made from time to time the only report which this Government is guided by is the one recommended by Fredrick Johnson. More and more we see American consultants coming in. Perhaps the hon. Member Mr. Wharton would be good enough to enlighten the Prime Minister about what

happened when Americans came here in the years 1923, and 1924. The record shows that in the years 1923, 1924, the Americans came here and went up on the East Coast and saw a place called No. 27 and said, "What a beautiful place to plant rice." They went home and made all the necessary representations. They returned and the production of rice was undertaken in a big way. At the same time there was a change in the weather cycle and adverse weather conditions set in. The Yankees had to pack up and clear out. They left everything - production, machinery and everything and cleared out.

When they came here in 1960 they saw beautiful weather conditions and wrote a lot of fancy reports. One was by Johnson, but in all the reports they failed to recognise two basic factors that affect our agricultural land. Those two factors are: first, we do not have adequate drainage and irrigation control and secondly, weather conditions operate on a six-year cycle. Experience has shown that this is correct for in 1923 and 1924 when they came here that was the period when two-thirds of the year was wet and one-third dry. At the time of reaping the cycle had changed and automatically production went down so that today No. 27 is known as Yankee Square.

We warn the Government that the same thing is going to happen. In 1967 we see indications of what is likely to happen. I have had the privilege of going and seeing for myself what is happening to farmers in Mahaica, Mahaicony and Abary right through to Ithaca. I have seen all the backlands and I again make the statement, now that the Prime Minister is here, that we should ensure that sufficient rice is retained in our territory to feed our people right through until October, 1968.

There is one other aspect to which I wish to refer. We had to pass in this Assembly a fantastic sum to pay to an American firm. [Interruptions.] I have to refer to it again, because it is really getting very disgusting. A sum of nearly \$258,000 was paid to an

American firm, Connell Rice and Sugar Company. I wish to refer to one particular aspect of the Agreement between the Government and the Rice Marketing Board, on the one hand, and this Company. I quote from page 3, paragraph 12:

"The Agent will arrange for the training of personnel selected by the Government, after consultation with the Board, in the world marketing function, in particular with respect to marketing intelligence, storage and handling, insect prevention and control, shipping terms and forms of payment."

This is all the reference I wish to make and I should like to ask the Government to name one individual who has been selected by this Government to undergo such training. I can make bold to say that not one thing has been done with respect to this aspect of the Agreement, for which we paid \$258,000 out of taxpayers' money. When the British experts came here, Urwick, Orr and Partners, they recommended certain things to which there is a slight reference in this Throne Speech. I quote from page 6:

"As a first step, the Boards of the two Corporations have been largely harmonised by dual membership appointments and an agreement has been negotiated and concluded with the United States Agency for International Development as a result of which the Government has been able to retain the services of consultants to advise on the longterm reorganisation of the industry."

We now have to pay more for part of these services. We have expended \$258,000. We are continuing to pay more and more for these services. As we move on more and more contradictions are going to rise, because the Americans want to achieve one thing in Guyana and that is to ensure that they have a firm hold on the rice industry of the country. They are doing everything in

[MR. KHAN]

the interim to destroy our good relationship and our traditional markets in the West Indies.

They brought back Peter Bayley to help them to reorganise the Rice Marketing Board. There is a strike right now at the Board. The workers are saying that it is a waste of money to bring Bayley. The Government continues to spend money foolishly and to act in conspiracy. And what is happening to our traditional export markets in the West Indies? Up to 1964, Jamaica normally took 16,000 tons of bulk rice from us.

3.30 p.m.

Let the Minister of Trade (Dr. Reid) tell this House if this is not true for 1965/1966. The figure has dropped from 16,000 tons to about 10,000 tons. We have lost practically 6,000 tons of our bulk rice trade with Jamaica. [Mr. Merriman: "What about Cuba?"] Do not worry about that; you know what happened with Cuba. When it comes to package rice, this has always been on the decline.

What is happening in the meantime? American rice is flooding the Jamaican market. When the agents of the Board in Jamaica, Commodity Service Company, saw what was happening, that Guyana was losing this big share of the market, they came up with the idea that the rice should be packed in polythene bags, so they sent down Mr. Peter Bayley and Mr. Matalou. Incidentally, I must explain that Commodity Service Company is a firm in Jamaica which is the agent of the R.M.B. and which firm employs Mr. Peter Bayley as an Executive Officer. This company recommended the purchase of a machine from the U.S.A. which cost the R.M.B. nearly \$50,000. The machine was set into motion and production started, but we find that our package rice trade has now gone down further to just 2,700 tons per annum. Let the Minister explain what went wrong.

This is a shame. It is not only happening in Jamaica but it is also happening in Barbados, Antigua and even Trinidad. Last year the Trinidad Government did not take up its full requirement. Check the figures and you will see that it did not take all the rice it normally takes. This year it is something like 13,500 tons behind hand. We ought not to sit down and allow this to continue to happen.

I suggest to the hon. Minister of Trade that it would be in the interest of Guyana to arrange very quickly the rice conference between Jamaica and Guyana as well as between Trinidad and Guyana and have the agreement concluded. There is no existing agreement at the moment. I hope that this conference would be held soon and so our position would be properly determined.

I should like to advise the hon. Minister of Trade to demand our full share of the Jamaican market. It is not a question of quality any more because we have been able to produce the quality required. It is not a question of packaging material any more because we have now got the rice packed into polythene bags, so there can be no excuse.

Mr Speaker, it is interesting to look at what has been disclosed in the Report of the Ministry of Agriculture as against what has been disclosed in the Economic Survey. One wonders whether this is the reason why there is so much confusion. The Economic Survey for the year 1966 was laid by the hon. Prime Minister at the same sitting when he denied that there were further losses. Perhaps he did not read it when he laid it because, at the same time, he was negating what he was saying. Let me deal with that point first. Page 12 of the Economic Survey states very clearly:

"Comparatively low prices for these sales were obtained in 1966 as in 1965; thus it is likely that the Board would return some loss on its transactions, which may be of the order of \$2.5 Mn. compared with \$4.3 Mn. in 1965."

The Report of the Rice Marketing Board confirms that it is not \$2.5 million, it is approximately \$2.8 million. Therefore, the point that the hon. Prime Minister made that there has not been further loss is now disproved, according to the very Report which he laid.

I come now to the point about contradictions. This is what is stated on page 11 of the Economic Survey:

"Rice production in 1966 exceeded the production for 1965. The Spring and Autumn crops have together yielded 280,000 tons of padi, estimated to provide about 180,000 tons of rice in 1966 compared with 165,000 tons in 1965."

The Economic Survey gives a figure of 180,000 tons of rice for 1966 but Table I of the Report of the Ministry of Agriculture gives a figure of 159,408 tons for 1966. One wonders whether the Economic Survey is correct or whether this Report is correct.

Let us look at the question of exports. This appears on page 11 of the Economic Survey:

"During the same period the Board disposed of approximately 104,400 tons of rice - 91,200 tons on the export market for \$21.2 Mn., . . ."

Table II of the Report of the Ministry of Agriculture states that the export of rice in 1966 was 83,214 tons valued \$19,137,131. Which is correct? Is the Economic Survey correct, or is the Report correct?

3.40 p.m.

When you look through the figures as they appear in the Economic Survey Report - it is for the period 1965; this Report has only come out a couple of days ago and it is the latest for the period - it is stated that for 1965, 91,200 tons were exported valued at \$21.2 million whereas the Report of the the Ministry of Agriculture shows for 1965, 99,231 tons valued at \$22,950,000.

Against a background of all this confusion there is a display by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Government of complete lack of respect for the views and

experience of the people in agriculture and unless this attitude stops, unless the Government stops its display of arrogance and vindictiveness, and changes its policy on agriculture, and realises that what we should do is try to foster and generate more and more agricultural production, help the farmers, give them guaranteed prices, give the farmers some measure of confidence that when they produce they will be able to dispose of their produce at remunerative prices, make the expansion services efficient to reach the farmers throughout the country, give them all the help on the technical basis, agriculture in Guyana will continue to suffer.

Finally, this Government must stop making more false promises. This whole speech, like the Throne Speeches before, is one of empty promises.

The Minister of Trade (Dr. Reid): Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were a few points made yesterday upon which I must first make some observations. Yesterday we heard that the co-operative movement was not as vigorous as it had been in the past. In recent months, it is for us to know what has happened.

Some time in 1963, there was an investigation into the co-operative movement by the last Government and there were certain recommendations put forward to that Government. One of these was that there should be a training institute.

All through 1963 nothing happened. All through 1964 nothing happened, and then in 1965, there was instituted in this country, the first training institute. Today, we see evidence of this in the district of Lodge where there is a building and where there are courses carried on by co-operative officers and others in training people in the co-operative way of life.

Moreover, there is in Essequibo, running right now, a course for co-operative officers and members of co-operative societies. Also in Berbice, in New Amsterdam, the same thing is happening.

[DR. REID]

It was during this short period of office that there was instituted at the Training College for Teachers, a co-operative course in the curriculum so that they too, would be aware of the importance of the co-operative movement and technicalities in preparing themselves to guide people.

We heard too, that the Guyana Marketing Corporation is not keeping floor basic prices for commodities. This, I think, was said by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. Yesterday, there were quotations from the Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture for the year 1966. I hope when I quote now, that hon. Members of the Opposition will not hide because the prices for agricultural products in this Report have been on the increase.

At page 90 of this Report, it is mentioned that in the case of plantains, farmers received an average of 5.4 cents per pound as compared with 4.3 cents per pound in 1965. Cassava - average price received by farmers increased from 3.4 cents in 1965 to 3.7 cents per pound in 1966. Yams and tannias - 5.8 cents per pound in 1965; in 1966 8.3 cents per pound.

For the following products, these are average floor prices:

Raw Coffee beans - 50.2 cents per pound
Cocoa beans - 28 cents per pound
Pumpkins - 4 cents per pound
Black-eye peas - 16.5 cents per pound
Corn - 6.2 cents per pound
Ginger - 42.2 cents per pound.

We note that the Guyana Marketing Corporation, even though it has basic floor prices, is always ensuring that it gives to the farmers the higher market prices whenever that is possible. This Corporation has been expanding its services and has already become a part of the community of this country. [Mr. Luck: "Whenever I go there, I leave in disgust."] We have organised this Corporation and more storage facilities are available.

3.50 p.m.

Those who would like to see evidence of this can pay a visit to the Guyana Marketing Corporation. Most of you will be surprised to see the changes that have taken place in recent months. This Corporation is now gearing itself to serve the entire community and to be an asset to our farmers.

It was mentioned that the Estimate for this Corporation was not increased. Well, it is good for us to note that it is not only the amount that is put in the Estimates that matters, but what happens at the Corporation itself. There used to be a tremendous amount of waste and in our endeavour to reduce this waste, we found it possible to carry on the Marketing Corporation without increasing the subsidy. As a matter of fact, if this line of action is carried on successfully, it is our hope that this Corporation would not even need a subsidy. This can be done and I am certain that this Corporation will be, within a short time, a viable institution in this community.

I know that my friends on the other side will be surprised to note what goes on at the Corporation and I invite them not to listen to what I am saying but to pay a visit to the Corporation. We are reorganising successfully. I think I have said enough on the points mentioned.

I move on. There is a Report of the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations for 1963. On page 12 of that Report this is what is mentioned about rice cultivation, notwithstanding what my hon. Friend is now saying:

"Rice cultivation is entirely unsatisfactory."

That was in 1963. We have noted that over the years there have been numerous Reports on rice. In our Throne Speech this is recorded:

"The rice industry is in the process of being reorganised from planting to marketing and a research centre will be set up."

It is significant to note that it is proposed that the two major rice corporations will be

unified and a substantial sum will be expended from public funds for the purpose of achieving greater productivity, higher quality of rice and lower production costs. I continue to quote:

“... Thus we shall be in a more favourable position to compete in world markets taking advantage of the world grain shortage and ensuring a better standard of living to our rice farmers, and a boost to the economy of the country.”

This decision has been arrived at after very careful consideration.

On the 2nd of October, 1966, the Prime Minister in a broadcast had this to say - and I quote:

“In some quarters it has been said that Government does not appreciate the problems facing the rice industry and lacks sympathy for the rice producers. The fact, however, is that my Government not only appreciates the problems but has been deeply concerned about the state of the industry and the lot of the producers. The producers are Guyanese, and this is a Government of all Guyana, the welfare of all whose citizens it is its duty to further. The rice industry is important to the economy of the country. If it prospers, Guyanese economy to that extent prospers; if it suffers Guyanese economy to that extent suffers.”

I mentioned before that over the past years there were several investigations and more investigations, more Reports, much talking and more talking. There were about 16 Reports. They are:

1952 - Reports of the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) committee.

1952 - The Production and Marketing of Rice.

1953 - Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance

1957 Report on Scheme of Compensation to Small Rice Millers.

1958 - The Rice Industry of British Guiana 1959 -

Special Case Report on Marketing of Rice in British Guiana

1959 - Development of Export Markets for British Guiana's rice.

1959 - Rice in British Guiana

1961 - Rice Storage Investigations.

1962 - Improvement of the Quality of Padi and Rice.

1962 - The Mahaicony- Abary Rice Development Scheme and MARDS Rice Factory.

1963 - Planning Agricultural Development.

1964 - Our Rice Industry.

1965 - An Appraisal of Rice Production and Marketing Problems in British Guiana.

1965 - A "New Look" for the Rice Industry. This was by the Rice Marketing Board. In our time there were three Reports.

Now, we have seen how many Reports there were over the past years, all in connection with the rice industry. The point I want to make is this. Reporting and investigating alone cannot do anything. I am certain that all my friends on the other side know the right line of action to take in order to improve the rice industry. But what is surprising and interesting is that even though they had this knowledge, when we came into office the rice industry was in chaos. That was the situation when we came into office. They investigated much and they talked more, but when it came to the point of doing something they went into hiding. It is only when you do something that you can really find results that will benefit our rice farmers. This Government is now determined to do something to make the rice industry viable in this country.

During the years 1963 and 1964, the very heart of the industry was really in trouble. They had an arrangement with their friends. Even the then Minister of Trade thought:

[DR. REID]

that he had a firm agreement, but he found out that it was a political gimmick and not a firm arrangement to market such a viable product. I emphasise, and very seriously too, that any Government that is interested in the welfare of the people of this country will not make an arrangement that will serve only during its term of office.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: This sitting is suspended until 4.30 p.m.

Sitting suspended accordingly at 4 p.m.

4.10 p.m.

On resumption—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. Minister of Trade will resume.

Dr. Reid: When the adjournment was taken I was making the point that it was the history of the rice industry in the days of the last Government that created and maintained chaos. I indicated that it had a political arrangement with Cuba. Although the members of the Opposition attempted to blame this Government, it is of interest to note that the last Minister of Trade, Mr. Kendall, who was in charge at the time, had this to say on the 29th September, 1966, in a broadcast over Radio Demerara at 9.15 p.m.:

"This evening I want to take this opportunity to put before the Nation the facts which have led the Government to consider a reduction in the prices of all types of rice purchased by the Board. The Board, many will recall, was reconstituted by my Government on May 26, 1965. Up to that time the Rice Producers' Association had been in control of the Board and when the change was made there was an accumulated surplus of nearly 58,000 tons of rice over the previous two years."

That is the "chaos" which I mentioned. Though the members of the Opposition claim to have an interest in the rice farmers they were not concerned with what would happen to rice farmers if there was no

market for rice. I want to emphasise that no Government is worth its salt if, for a national product, it makes an arrangement that will last only during the lifetime of that Government. The members of such a Government have condemned themselves from ever returning to the seat of Government unless they become repentant.

My Government was determined to make sure that the farmers did not suffer unduly. The Minister who was in charge of Trade, at that time, ensured that \$3 million was made available to the Board to reduce the losses of that year. In addition, another \$2.7 million was made available to the Board to pay farmers for the rice they sold to the Board. In other words, in this period this Government made available to the Board the sum of \$5.7 million to help the Rice Marketing Board.

This is of interest to the rice farmers. Here was a Government that was determined to ensure that rice farmers did not suffer unduly. At the same time we maintain this position: This is not a situation that can continue indefinitely, that is, the spending of two to four million dollars to support a large industry like the rice industry, because this money comes from the taxpayers finally and it is unfair to have taxpayers subsidise an industry to the tune of four million dollars, especially if it is an industry that can be made viable if properly managed and supervised.

That is why I said we are now in the process of reorganising the rice industry. I know this is hard for them. I will read to you some of the reasons why the hon. Members on the other side do not wish the rice industry to be re-organised - I shall come to this shameful document in due course.

In the broadcast made on 2nd October, 1966, our Prime Minister emphasised that:

"no government worthy of its salt and conscious of its duty to the nation on the whole could allow this state of affairs to continue."

He added - and this is an assurance to rice farmers:

"Your Government intends to build a profitable rice industry in Guyana. The industry must and can be made competitive. The quality of the product must be regular and high to ensure maximum earning abroad especially in the context of ever growing world demands for grain."

There is no difficulty in finding markets. Our trouble in Guyana has been that the cost of production is so high that we cannot get remunerative prices on the world market and that is where we come to the point of research. *[Interruption]* My friend on the other side (Mr. Ram Karran) does not want to hear about research. When he hears of rice being produced in 90 days and production doubled he seems almost offended, because he is determined that production must decrease. It is research that will do the trick. This is the mainspring of the industry. We must admit that Governments in the past, our friends on the other side, heeded not the reports, heeded not the recommendations because they were afraid of losing their political support. They were not bold enough to carry through some of these recommendations and that is why the rice industry today is still struggling to gain a place of economic stature in this country. This Government is determined to make bolder steps; it is determined that research will go on and that research will point the way. We will take heed and we will put some of the sensible proposals into operation as my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Mr. Jordan) has done. Instead of getting one grain, he is now able to get two grains. In other words, he has been able, by research, to double production on the same piece of land.

Our friends have spoken about the cost of production. The opposition member himself admits that the cost is one and a half times the previous cost, but if the production is double you are still in a better position than you were in before.

We need not go over all that the Minister has said, but hon. Members will remember that he made the point that farmers have

been able to reap 4,000 pounds of paddy where previously 1,900 pounds per acre had been reaped.

4.50 p.m.

This is an achievement for which even our friends on the other side ought to stand up and cheer. The Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources has gone a great job. But we must move on from there because this research team has been expanded. We need to do more than that. We need to take time with the husbandry and the cultivation of the crop. We want our farmers to be assisted by the extension services. We want them to know that they must plough properly and spray the crops when necessary. As a matter of fact, we need some discipline in, not only the cultivation of rice, but in the cultivation of several other crops in this country, if we are to meet a competitive world price in the markets.

At every stage of production great care must be taken so that we can get the best out of our lands. We have got on record that, in the past, there was a loss of about \$4 million per year because of bad storage. The policy of storage was wrong because insects destroyed much of the grain, especially white rice that cannot be kept for very long. All countries that grow grain store the grain itself and not the milled grain and that is what we have to take into consideration. I know that this is annoying because if we store the paddy the millers will be given their allocation to mill. They will have to mill according to the requirements of the market. They will have to hand over to the R.M.B. all the paddy that is milled. They will not be able to play the trick that they are playing now.

I remember when I was Minister of Home Affairs I received the news that rice was milled at a certain factory and, instead of the rice being channelled to the R.M.B., it was in a launch at Charity on its way to Moruca. I told the Commissioner of Police and, fortunately, he was able to capture 26 bags of rice which should have been

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channelled to the Board but which was being shipped to Moruca. Much of this still goes on. Oft-times we find lorries along the East Coast road selling rice. If we are to have a profitable industry all of this cannot go on, so the important thing would be to buy all the crop and store properly.

The Government is already carrying out a feasibility study so that we will know the type of storage bins that are necessary and the sites and areas where these should be located. Of course the millers would not like this because they do all sorts of things, and some of my friends on the other side who have all sorts of arrangements with the millers, would not like it either. Some of them, especially the last speaker who is famous for 10,000 bags. [Mr. Chase: "Do not say so in his absence."] I did not tell him to run.

I am happy that some of my friends are here because I am going to read a letter that was sent to the rice millers themselves, not the farmers. This letter was sent at a time when they were telling the farmers not to plant and not to sell because the business cannot pay. They still asked the farmers to give from that non-paying business. I will now read the letter:

"c/o Freedom House,
41 Robb street,
Georgetown

14th Sept., 1966

All Rice Millers,

Greetings ! Rice farmers of your area every year have contributed either directly in the form of paddy or authorised deductions through your rice mill. For your past co-operation and assistance in this connection our Party wishes to thank you most sincerely. This year again I wish to ask for your co-operation.

Many rice farmers have intimated their desire to continue their donation to our party by way of deductions through your rice mill. I

will appreciate it if you will expedite such deductions and remit same either directly or through our Party's organisation in your area.

Your continued co-operation will be greatly appreciated - best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) C.V. NUNES

Chairman.

[Mr. Chase: "What is wrong with that?"] I do not expect them to see anything in this but I am going to make them see. They are playing they are blind and deaf but I am going to make them see what this means. Herein lies the interest of the P.P.P. in the rice farmers - continuing to sell to the mills whether they are efficient or inefficient. You do not care one damn as long as you can collect large sums of money through these mills.

Once you have done this for the millers, how can you, in the name of heavens, turn back and tell them that their mills are inefficient and that they must have good multistage mills to prevent the wastage that has been going on in the milling of this product? This is important and I know it is difficult for the members of the Opposition to understand this. [Mr. Chase: "Logic was not one of your subjects."] Your law is not serving you any purpose.

The Government cannot compromise on this issue. It cannot allow inefficient mills to continue in operation, and once the Government has the facilities to purchase all the paddy in this country, inefficient mills will not and cannot be tolerated any longer. The farmers who grow paddy must be able to get remunerative prices for their products and this can only be achieved if we are efficient all through the line, from sowing to reaping and marketing. One of the aspects of inefficiency is in milling. If you have an inefficient mill, then there is no place for you in the reorganisation of the rice industry, regardless of whether you voted for the P.N.C. or not.

We know too that during last year members of a committee headed by Mr. L. A. Fort visited some of these mills and they carried out what was called "Operation Clean-up." To their great dismay, the hygienic conditions in some of these places were so poor that one did not like to think that herein there was produced a grain for food. The millers were very responsive and some of them indicated it was true that, in the past, they could not do better because the bonds and mills were never empty. In 1966, for the first time, because of our arrangement for marketing rice in this country, many of the mills and bonds were empty, and millers had an opportunity to carry on this "Operation Clean-up."

My hon. Friend spoke about Connell getting \$258,000 per year. I want to say that this is a false statement. The arrangement with Connell was that he was going to get an initial payment of \$250,000 to seek for markets. At that time we had about 58,000 tons of rice in all stages decomposition which we had to get rid of. Connell came in in due time, assisted us in this exercise, and he was given \$250,000.

5.00 p.m.

But this is not \$250,000 a year. In future, as long as Connell agrees with the Rice Marketing Board that he will be agent to sell rice, he will get the usual percentage that he got. So, there is no arrangement with Connell that he should get \$250,000 a year. But we went over and over again this exercise.

Other than the storage problem, there has been spillage going on. We have been storing in bags. The re-organisation will ensure that we will store in silos. When we store in bags, there is a chance of bags being torn and the rice being lost.

We have gone on working on the improvement of the quality of rice. In this direction, there has been some measure of success and so successful has this been, that it is difficult now to get the large amount of broken that we used to get in the past. This

alone is evidence for my friends. It is up to 50% in the inefficient mills.

I was pleased to visit the Canje district and to declare a mill open and I was shown the type of rice that was produced in this mill - broken 4%. This is a long way from 50% in inefficient milling, so this is an area that is worthy of consideration. But even though we know this and I concede my friends on the other side know all this, they knew all this during their seven years in office, but even though they knew the right thing, they were not bold enough, they were not interested enough in farmers to put the right thing into action.

We know this Government is determined to do the right thing in the rice industry. In other words, to ensure that we put into action what is right and what will be useful to the entire country, we must reduce spillage; we must improve the quality, and we must organise the management properly, so that whatever benefits come from these exercises may go to the farmer. We are hoping that when these being to pay off, the farmers will share in the profit, like what they do in many other countries, when the profits go back to the farmers in a certain percentage. We hope that by that time, the sounding brass and tinkling cymbals will cease from noise making in our community.

One point was made by my hon. Friend Mr Benn - he has come just in time for me to reply to the point he made that it was a bad thing for this Government to agree to a small increase in the cost of poultry feed. He thought it was a wrong thing but we examined the figures very carefully and we looked at the position carefully.

There was a time, and I mentioned this some time ago, that mills produced as much as 50% broken. Due to good milling, this has been reduced to 4% and so stockfeed rice is not available. If you go now to the Rice Marketing Board, it is difficult to get stockfeed rice. We know this because we have asked the Rice Marketing Board and we

[DR. REID]

cannot get the broken rice, hence, the cost of production of this commodity has increased.

More corn has to be imported, and my hon. Colleague the Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources has indicated that more work is being done to produce more corn and we have insisted that the feed manufacturing company should join in this exercise of producing more corn.

We will promptly examine prices again when we can produce more local stockfeed materials and ensure that the reduction in cost of production is given to the community. We do this because we are not here in Government for one section of the community; we are here for all sections of the community and if we feel that an industry is hard-pressed and the facts glare before us, it is for us to make the necessary arrangements. We are satisfied that this is the right thing.

We have heard about the history of rice. We have kept the theme of re-organisation as mentioned in the Throne Speech so that people will realise that Government has not only looked at Reports, but Government is putting advice into action. Also, the outlook is good because in 1964 when this Government had to get rid of rice that was in all stages of decomposition, the price was only \$90 a ton. Today, one is happy to report that the price has improved considerably and we have on record now, instead of \$90 per ton, \$124 for White "B" and \$132 per ton for White "A". We hope that with research and direction, production will increase and the rice industry will be what all of us want it to be, a viable economic arm in this community of Guyana.

Mr. Hubbard rose -

Mr. Bhagwan rose - -

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will ask the hon. Member in the front to stand down.

Mr. Bhagwan: The Speech from the Throne must have been intended, at least by tradition, to examine some of the problems

that face the Government and to project for consideration, Government's plan for the rest of the year. Whatever may have been Government's intention, the Throne Speech gives the appearance of being a transparent Election promise. No doubt, the Government is near the end of its term.

5.10 p. m.

Unfortunately, being Election-conscious, we are not given the facts objectively. It is no surprise that, with the Throne Speech filled as it is with all kinds of promises, old and new, Mr. Trotman found himself rocketed into a state of euphoria while the hon. Mr. Prashad was overwhelmed into silence. It is interesting to look at certain aspects of the Throne Speech.

On several occasions I have expressed my approval of and agreement with certain aspects of the Government's programme. In particular, I have commented on its efforts with respect to self-help work, the promotion of co-operatives and the new focus on a regional role to be initiated by this country with respect to the formation of Caribbean unity. While I commend the Government on these aspects, one finds in the Throne Speech that the Prime Minister, under whose portfolio these subjects fall, has not got down to the task of creating the machinery - *[Interruption.]*

The Development Programme has a very small provision for co-operatives. The Throne Speech makes the point that the co-operatives and the self-help department have not yet got the organisation they deserve. There has been some delay in this respect. Regarding Government's role in the Caribbean, one must say that the efforts have been consistent, and a great deal of money and attention have been spent in this direction. There are bound to be criticisms on this project. Those criticisms have already been mentioned in this House and I do not wish to repeat them.

I must, however, lay emphasis upon one omission, that is the failure of the

Government to take the nation into its confidence and outline very carefully how it proposes, stage by stage, to move towards Caribbean unity. The Prime Minister shouts from the House his commitment to Caribbean unity and he appears to be a very solitary figure in this respect, while the Leader of the Opposition who has always been expressing sympathy with the Federation has not been able, in practice, to spend one dollar of his substantial collection money towards the goal of Caribbean unity. Instead, the Jaganite leadership spends all its time and efforts to mobilise such supporters on this country who have become ineffective in these days.

It is true that mistakes have been made on the question of Caribbean unity. But, instead of standing by and being critical of such efforts that have been made by the reactionaries and by the conservatives, the P.P.P. should go straight into the field and give to the masses of the Caribbean a practical revolutionary alternative. Why does the P.P.P. not start campaigning in Trinidad and Jamaica and start talking to the masses about Caribbean unity? When Jagan has come to this decision one would then think that he is taking a definite step towards meeting the new challenges which Independence has brought.

As a radical myself - [*Applause*] I am concerned that there is no one who talks about Caribbean unity being essential to socialism in his part of the hemisphere. By standing in the sidelines, the Manleys, the Adams' and the Bustamantes, and now those leaders who are being put forward from the Guyana band wagon are giving their opinion of what Caribbean unity should be, and all that these radicals can say is that this is not the way. Let us have the radical way!

There is one aspect, however, in the Government's programme that is assuming importance that it had not assumed before. The whole question of the recolonisation of Guyana is one that has to be treated with the gravity and seriousness it deserves. Look at any aspect of Guyana's affairs. Take the

rice industry for example. The people who are organising the rice industry are Americans. The people who are coaching in sports - Americans! Those in control of the T.U.C. Americans! Those in complete charge of the Road Programme - Americans! Those in charge of the runway at Atkinson - Americans! Those in charge of advising the Prime Minister - Americans! Those who are equipping the police intellectually and physically - Americans! Those who hold the strings in the University - Americans! Even in community development there are Americans. [*The Prime Minister: "Is Mr. deGroot an American?"*]

5.20 p.m.

If we are going to be shameless, if we are going to be hypocrites in the face of this deluge of Americans, we can turn to the world and say, "This is an independent country; we are winning respect from the international communities," whatever that means. This Government, if it is to retain the respect of any true-blooded Guyanese must take a position of denouncing Americans imperialism, as we know it to be creating bad relationships with the rest of the world, and eschew that course which it has taken of entrenching the Americans in every sphere of Guyanese life, for, with the Americans comes a great deal of corruption, from page one to the last page, from Genesis to Revelation; there is the advocacy of principles of buying and selling, fixing a price for every man. What you do is to set a moral base for the society upon which everything turns and upon which nothing can be constructed.

The Americans have been known to carry their corrupt ways into every part of the world. This country is proving to be no exception at all in so far as American infiltration is concerned. I do not say that we must shut out every American, or that we must reject every relation with the Americans. I say that at least we must be discriminatory; we must select from the Americans what good they have to offer and not go by back

(MR CHAGWAN)
(DR. REID)

doors or front doors to the Americans, who, at the moment, are in serious troubles in every single country of the world, even with those that are supposed to be their allies.

There is another crucial problem about which I must speak, and that is the problem which is euphemistically referred to by the Prime Minister as the "brain-drain." I prefer another term. I call it "The Great Escape." Thousands and thousands of Guyanese have been leaving this country. This began not yesterday, but ever since the dawn of Independence was appearing on the horizon. We must analyse this problem. Why are so many people actually running away from Guyana? Let us leave aside those who may be going to pursue studies and look at those who are leaving good jobs for others, those who are leaving opportunities here to find opportunities elsewhere, those who, for no sensible reason, are deserting Guyana in her moment of need. We cannot be critical of these people for it may be that there is a weakness of character among Guyanese due to a very long history of colonialism. Left to ourselves we collapse as soon as we are confronted with a situation that is difficult, a situation which calls for extraordinary resources. We cannot then draw from the colonialists, who were here before, to keep things running orderly. When the budget cannot balance, and the colonialists are here, the Civil Service runs calmly and orderly; there is an atmosphere of calm and peace. Now that we are independent problems start to come in. Organisations have to adjust; some of them find themselves incapable of adjusting; all individuals have to adjust.

Let us have an explanation of this phenomenon. Jamaica has it. We must find an answer to the problem of the brain-drain. We must put a stop to "The Great Escape." What is the solution? What are the causes? There are those who cannot accommodate themselves to a coloured government, that is, the whites

who were in control previously. Those who are wealthy are afraid of what will happen to their wealth. Those who have vested interests overseas have to look after them. So these people run. That is inevitable. When there are changes this is inevitable. You do not have a stake in the country; you do not have self-confidence to make a decision to stay in and independent country. What do we find? Something more than that. We find ordinary Guyanese scrambling to get \$800 to go to England to become bus conductors. We find a glorified civil servant leaving his white collar job and going to collect garbage cans in the United Kingdom. The common people are leaving, civil servants and ordinary workers. Why are they leaving? First of all, we must take the problem of the Public Service.

I would be the last to say that the public service, as we have known it, must remain untouched, that it must remain the backward instrument it always was. I would be the last to say that civil servants are inviolable, that nobody can remove them or dismiss them. That is a colonial structure that must go. But it is essential that fundamentally there must be stability in the system which not only reacts on those who are immediately and directly a part of it, but casts its reflection far beyond its borders, so that those who are not in the public service will feel a sense of security, and so that we have a system in which good principles become the foundation and the whole basis for action and for performance.

If things happen in the public service which make people open their eyes, then not only are you going to have a very demoralising and negative current operating within that body but people are going to say, "If that once stable body is now subject to all sorts of disturbances, what is going to happen with those of us who have no security at all?" The result is that we are going to have the development of a vicious circle; people will leave the Civil Service and this will influence those outside the Service. There will be an exodus from all directions and at every level.

That is why we need a revolution, a reorganisation of the Service in which the old colonialists are put in their places, the people whom we inherited from the British. Is there a reorganisation that puts emphasis on initiative and drive? On a destruction of red-tape methods and encouragement of civil servants to get out into the field? Are those who do not participate in the new movement the victims of demotion? I do not think that has been happening. On the contrary, what we find is a conservative body of people being entrenched in many places, so that those with initiative in the service, those who may be radically oriented, find themselves being replaced by those who may be called the neo-colonialists. We find that the Government, by its appointment of conservative personnel, is expressing a great deal of confidence in them. In the Service itself, men of good quality, whatever may be their failings, have resigned. The Ministry of Labour has lost Mr. Chung, the Ministry of Health has lost Dr. Mootoo and the Inland Revenue Department has lost Mr. Gangadeen.

5.30 p.m.

Some of them may be leaving for the wrong reasons. Some of them may want more money, but the fact is that if the Government service had been reorganised at this top level and if it had stated an ideological concept behind this reorganisation, then one would say that the Government is heading in the right direction.

We find instead, that there is no ideological concept in any of the tamperings in the Civil Service. There is tampering at the petty level which amounts to power manoeuvre. For example, at the University of Guyana, an ordinary clerk or messenger by the name of Webster receives a dismissal notice before a certain charge has been proved. A little boy like Ahmad is given a dismissal notice for incompetence and for rudeness. [The Prime Minister: "Who dismissed him?"] The Minister then rings up the authority and says that he must be re-appointed.

In other words, there is this petty tampering in the Civil Service. Ministers are finding jobs for their friends. I am referring to the Government's general policy of employment. You are going to lay no basis for very good performance by the civil servants if you are going to remove Forbes and put Hollies. At least Forbes has better qualifications than the other man. [The Prime Minister: "The Public Service Commission dismissed him."] Do not tell me that. I am a politician and the Prime Minister is going to tell me about the Public Service Commission, as if the Prime Minister has to write letters to the Public Service Commission saying: "Boys, do this and do that."

What I am objecting to is tampering that is petty, spiteful and vindictive. What I am calling for, if you are going to tamper, is a decolonisation of the Civil Service. Then you will find that most of the schemes which are being sabotaged and over which there are delays, are going to bear fruit. There must be a change of attitude from certain Government Ministers who are using their positions to direct Government officials to carry out petty exercises all over the place.

The problem of exodus is a general political problem. If a man wants to go away — I am not talking about those who want to go away on leave — and you ask him: "Comrade, where are you going?" he would say: "I am going to the United Kingdom." If you ask him: "Why don't you stay here?" he would say: "What is there to stay for?"

The political situation offers no hope at the moment. Ask the Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan) to tell his supporters what are the plans to fight this situation! Ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham) how he is going to solve the huge racial problems! By the appointment of Ramphal's son? By the association with people like Deeroop Mahraj and other corrupt Indians? Is this the way he intends to appeal to the Indian masses? This is a very superficial approach to the racial problem. There is no sincere and constructive effort on the part of the Government to tackle this crucial cultural problem.

[MR. CHASE]
[OR READ]

The P.P.P., on the other hand, has made absolutely no attempt, as a so-called revolutionary party, to disassociate itself completely with Indian racialism so that it would be equipped to fight in a new situation. I do not know how a man like Fidel Castro has found himself in association with people like the members of the P.P.P. Castro said that the duty of the revolutionary is to make revolution. The duty of the Opposition is not to sit here and plead for a place in the office. The duty of the Opposition is not to appear at the imperialists' door knocking. It is the duty of the Opposition, if it finds that the present method it employs is ineffective, to reorganise and find a new basis. It must have the political courage to do this. [Mr. Wilson: "You are talking nonsense."]

The hon. Member Mr. Wilson says that I am talking nonsense. [Mr. Wilson: "You are".] He will get up on the platform and say: "Comrades, we are not racialists. Look we have Messrs. Benn, Chase, Nunes and myself." One of the P.P.P.'s problems is that it cannot mobilise the Africans. He says that I am talking nonsense, and look at him, he is in association with the worst racist elements in the party which Dr. Jagan has had to fight in an earlier period. I am telling members of the P.P.P. to reorganise and divest themselves of racialism. You have to tell the Maha Sabha to go to hell. Can you do that, Mr. Wilson? [Mr. Wilson: "We have no Maha Sabha in the party."]

The Government has taken a clear and definite stand; it is with the imperialists. The Government must be opposed as long as it is with the Americans and as long as it pursues a conservative policy and aligns itself with all the conservative personnel it can pick up in this country. The duty of those who are in opposition to the Government is to find the best basis for opposition. [Mr. Chase: "Come back to the subject."] The hon. Member Mr. Chase is sophisticated enough to realise that there are all kinds of division in the world today.

I am explaining the circumstances which exist and which explain the reasons why there is an exodus of a vast number of Guyanese. At the moment, the political dilemmas in this country suggest to those who are leaving that there is no hope for them here. I do not agree with this position. No Guyanese must run away from this country. We must all stay and fight.

5.40 p.m.

So long as you have this exodus from Guyana, so long you will find there is no real effort to develop the Country. If people are going to run at the slightest excuse they are not responsible enough to become involved in self-help projects. They will not be committed enough to take on responsibilities. Only recently one magistrate said that there are too many frauds.

The rest of the statement contains a number of unfulfilled promises. Of course, we have repeated in the Throne Speech a proposal for the introduction of [Interruption.] Why is this? What are the hon. Ministers doing that everything they have in the Throne Speech was promised before? [Interruption.]

The hon. Minister of Local Government has been sleeping for two years on the Local Government Bill. The progress on the University building has been exceedingly slow and you can look at many of the Government projects and see that they are caught up in all kinds of delays and they are not projects at all; they are what I call "project abortions." They say, all the hon. Members on the other Side say, "What have you boys done? You have not done anything." So, that is the reason for not going on with anything.

Take the Atkinson Field runway. Look at the incompetence exhibited there. If the American company was going wrong, why was there no strict supervision in order to prevent them making the mistakes they made.

Look at the time spent working on the East Coast road and on the sea defences. Have they been so bad that there has been a lot of money spent on these projects.

The Government has been talking in this House about a Youth Corps. There is a vote for it of \$75,000 in the Development Programme. How much of that has been spent? So far as I am aware, they are fighting it out as to who must train the youths militarily, whether it would be the G.D.F. or the Government.

Why did not the Government take advice? How can it hope to diversify by introducing bananas when there is a glut on the market. Let the hon. Minister concerned give a fair and honest explanation why the banana project has fallen down. How can the Government be so simple as to spend time and money on a banana project when the future for such production is bleak.

Many years ago, we passed a Cane Farmers Ordinance. Will the hon. Minister of Agriculture tell us what progress has been made? I have already expressed my view that that Ordinance was a waste of time.

We want to find out too, what has become of the hydroelectric survey. Is it true that there has been failure here? I am not blaming the Government if there was failure. Hydroelectricity is a good thing. I should like to get a statement from the hon. Minister concerned, about what really is happening with the hydro-electric scheme. Is it that the Government has to find new sites?

I hope that it will not turn out that the Speech from the Throne is a pamphlet of Election promises which, like many promises the capitalists have given us, will fail to come to fruition. We are at election time and we know that the Government is likely to make promises. Let us hope, for the sake of the working-class, that many of those promises come to fruition.

An interesting one is the housing programme for \$20 million. The Development Programme does not say very much about the programme for \$20 million. The Development Programme promises expenditure amounting to \$24 million scattered over various projects, many of which are not really for the construction of houses or pro-

jects directly concerned with housing. Almost \$4 million of that is for projects not directly related to housing construction. About 90% of the land being marketed through the Government has been *[Interruption.]*

The statement made in the Throne Speech about the housing programme says further that as a result of negotiations, it is expected that a sum of approximately \$20 million will be invested in housing, making homes available for purchase. I feel we should be allowed to have more insight into this programme which has been announced. This is a bare statement; there is no elaboration and we are seeing it for the first time. The Government must say whether it is a Government of private enterprise programme. Is this programme actually in operation at the moment? Has it arisen out of the Development Programme, the Seven-Year Development Programme? These points should be clarified for there has been nothing said.

There is the repetition of the promise of the Georgetown Hospital. What is the sense of repeating a promise that has been made year in year out? What we should be told is the reason for the delay in the construction of the Hospital. Let us have the details.

Then, there is the announcement of the National Insurance Scheme. That is supposed to be for the benefit of workers. Can the Government say anything about it? Has any money been actually spent so far, because there is a definite promise that a National Insurance Scheme will be introduced this year. There was a vote at the beginning of this year of \$300,000 to be spent on this scheme. I should like to know how much of this money has been spent. Is it coming into operation this year and would the Government make another promise that it will be put into operation this year?

5.50 p.m.

Now, on education. I am sure that the Minister would like to tell us what progress is being made in actual construction of the University building. There is a Teachers Pensions Bill to be introduced. I must congratulate the Minister and the Government

MR. STEWART

for thinking of a scheme such as this. What I would like to know is how much this would cost. How much money is going to be spent? If this is going to be introduced this year, is it going to come into effect this year? If so, where is the provision for it in the Estimates? [The Prime Minister: "Supplementary...."] I see. It is a pity Mr. d'Aguiar is not here to refute that.

Now, we heard an interesting statement about the Guyana Marketing Corporation. I think the Government is guilty of a little double talk in this respect. It said that there is going to be a lot of expansion — improvement. Mr. King is in charge of re-organising the Guyana Marketing Corporation and I really would wish that gentleman well. But how does the Government expect us to believe this announcement when it has reduced the figure of \$1 million which had been given to that Corporation to \$560,000? And the then Minister had rejected many proposals for improvements and expansion there. Is this \$560,000 enough for any plan for re-organisation? I wish our friend Mr. Henry Thomas were here because he expressed the view that a great deal more is required for any serious attempt at re-organising the Marketing Corporation.

There is an interesting bit too, in the Throne Speech, about a Domestic Training Scheme. I may be making a mistake but I hold this view very firmly. I do not think that we should spend money on the training of domestics. Let us spend that money on training them to become something else, but not to provide services for the big shots who come here. What kind of a Government is this? It is projecting the image of an emergent country and it is spending our money to train domestics. Certainly it is a waste of money, and repugnant to say the least, to train our people to become domestics. There is no ambition in such a scheme. I would hope that this item will be excluded.

Many of the projects are subject to delays. We must try to find out the reasons for this. Do we not have enough Ministers to galvanise the Ministries into action? I think that I must be critical of many of the Ministers in this respect. I have spoken to the Prime Minister privately about this question. The leaders have to be upright. The leaders have to set an example. If I am a worker and I see Mr. Kendall in that two-mile long motor car driving around the streets of Georgetown how could he turn around and ask me to make certain sacrifices? I am not attacking the Minister personally. I am merely giving an example. Too many of our Ministers have been putting forward the wrong image.. [Mr. Kendall: "What about your motorcar?"] It is a small motor car. This is simple psychology.

The Prime Minister is a bold calculator, a man who analyses everything well. How could he turn to the workers and say: "Don't strike, work hard, eat less?" [The Prime Minister: "I do it."] How many of the Ministers do that? How many people know that you do that? This is a very serious point that I am making. If these projects are not to fail, if we are not to encourage fraud, indifference, detachment and disillusionment, then the Ministers as a whole must cut out all this gallivanting, all this conspicuous consumption, and get down to brass tacks.

There is an absence of popular and public participation in development as a whole. Any Government that operates in an environment from which the people have withdrawn themselves and are only receiving, giving nothing, is doomed for failure. The whole problem is, of course, that we are all taking now. The whole country is being asked to be spectators to this gruesome, morbid power struggle between these political parties. As long as this happens, the people will have absolutely no inspiration to settle down in the society and do any constructive work. Demoralisation is going to start from the top and go down to the bottom, and we will

waste the Americans' money. They have been complaining already.

Mr. d'Aguiar has physically withdrawn himself - not that he is right. He is mountain climbing. Every time we have an important debate in this House he is mountain climbing. [Mr. Prashad: "Because he doesn't want to hear stupidity."] I must say that that is the boldest defence given by Mr. Prashad. Mr. d'Aguiar is a very practical man and he understands when he should be absent.

Any Government that has to spend taxpayers money, should have the best wishes of the taxpayers. But the Government must try to do something to deserve these good wishes. The Ministers have a great responsibility, not a responsibility to start campaigning for Elections, but to get down to serious work. The Opposition has its own responsibilities. I regret to say that they are both failing.

6 p.m.

Mr. Lall: I would like to deal with three aspects of the Throne Speech (1) the Development Programme; (2) the National Insurance Scheme; and (3) compulsory or voluntary arbitration, whichever we may call it.

I should like to quote from the Throne Speech first with respect to the Development Programme:

"The achievements of the past year are well known and it is my Government's intention to maintain progress and redouble its efforts with the co-operation of the people to ensure economic advance and establish true equality and opportunity for all."

I want to put emphasis on this point. What are the achievements we have seen during the past year? There has been the achievement of what I might call "retrenchment of workers in Guyana." There has been retrenchment at the Transport and Harbours Department and retrenchment at the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics. That is the achievement we have seen during the past year.

In addition, we have seen over a hundred strikes. What are the root causes of this industrial unrest? Lack of funds? Let the Government tell us so. The Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar) who is now somewhere at Ankoko said that he was going to burst open a tin of evaporated milk, and money was going to flow in this country like the waters of Kaieteur Falls. I now wonder where all this money is.

I should like to emphasise that the only achievements we have seen, are the retrograde steps affecting the working-class man in this country, the high cost of living and everything else that will affect the working-class man, together with the exposure of the fact that \$3.1 million was unaccounted for in 1965. I quote from the *Guyana Graphic* of 31st May, 1966:

"The Director of Audit has reported that Government has failed to account for more than \$3 million spent during 1965."

This report is from the Director of Audit. I should like to ask whether the squander of this money has caused the unemployment that exists in this country today. If not, I challenge the Government to tell us that the Director of Audit is wrong. I continue:

"Mr. D. W. Dunlop, who operates from an independent position protected by the Guyana Constitution, disclosed that during 1965 the present Government spent \$3,175,632.23, charged the money in the accounts, but 'supporting vouchers have not been submitted for audit.'"

What an exposure! Let the Government tell us what has happened to this money.

I see the future Minister of Finance sitting on that side of the House and I do hope he will tell us in the near future where this money has gone and why it has not been accounted for.

I should like to deal with a second aspect of the Development Programme, the "brain-drain," as my friend said. It is a shame and a disgrace that a Government cannot retain the services of the very people who elected

**[MR. LALL
[DA-REID]]**

it. There is something radically wrong. What is it? In the interest of Guyana, in the interest of the Guyanese people, let us examine our conscience and find a solution to this problem or "Too late, too late," shall be the cry.

Already the Government is substituting Korean doctors for well-trained doctors. I wonder if the Minister of Health (Mr. Kendall) has been to the hospital and had an interview with one of these doctors. They cannot speak English. How are they going to diagnose the illness of a patient? This is a sorry state of affairs. We don't want counterfeits. We have efficient Guyanese people to run our affairs in Guyana. Let us retain their services.

6.10 p.m.

I have a letter that was sent to me by the C.S.A. seeking G.A.W.U.'s support in the present dispute between the C.S.A. and the Government regarding the firemen at Atkinson Field and in Georgetown. Here again we are playing with the lives of human beings. The firemen at Atkinson Field are trained in a different kind of operation from the firemen at the Fire Brigade Station here. If we should merge these services and take away the services of those trained men who are skilled in aerodrome services, then we would be jeopardising the lives of thousands of incoming and out going passengers. I pray that the Government would reconsider its stand in this matter so that we could have an airport with international standards and trained men.

I should like to deal with the national insurance scheme. I think the hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security (Mr. Merriam) is in charge of this and I shall now read what is stated on page 5 of the Throne Speech:

"My Government will introduce during this Session legislation to establish a national insurance scheme to provide benefits for all workers between the ages of 18 and 65."

This is very commendable as far as it is down in black and white but before the scheme is started the Government is making excuses. I continue to quote:

"Much work has already been done on the organisational aspects of this important scheme and only the pressures of the legislative programme and a shortage of drafting staff have prevented the earlier introduction of the necessary legislation."

Let us put the legislative programme aside because the boys have to go gallivanting all over the West Indies and to Expo '67. We can understand that because we want to sell our products. They went gallivanting all over the West Indies and then they say we had a packed legislative programme. All right, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. We concede that you must have some fun.

I will now come to the question of the shortage of drafting staff. It is a shame, a disgrace, and quite an exposure on the part of this Government when it has an Attorney-General who is being paid \$4,000 per month — and who has an efficient staff, and yet it is short of drafting staff. The Leader of the Opposition said yesterday that the money the Attorney-General and Minister of State (Mr. Ramphal) receives annually can employ, for a whole year, 53 workers that were retrenched. Yet you are short of drafting staff! How were you not short of drafting staff when you wanted to introduce the National Security (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill to send people in that inglorious pen — detention camp? How were you not short of drafting staff when you wanted to introduce all those vicious Bills that were passed in this House? But you are short of drafting staff to draft legislation for a national insurance scheme which will benefit thousands of workers in Guyana! Something is wrong somewhere.

The hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security is going to bring the Arbitration Tribunal Bill in this House before he brings legislation to establish a national insurance scheme. This will obviously happen. The Government employed a gentleman by the

name of Mr. Niall Mac Cabe to draft the Report and Mr. Mac Cabe clearly stated that 4,000 pensioners in the sugar industry are receiving a paltry sum of \$575,000.

6.20 p.m.

Even if you were to break that down, you will see that workers with 40, 45 or 50 years' service are getting \$2.50 and \$2.75 per week. [The Minister of Labour: "You should go before the Commission and tell them that."] To delay legislation like this is playing with the lives of the working-class people. Long ago, a man could buy a pound of plantains for one penny. [The Minister of Labour: "How much are you paying now?"] Five or six cents a pound. Cassava, two and three cents a pound and they gave you overs. Salt fish, you used to pay 46 cents a pound. Today, it is 75 cents to 80 cents per pound because the Government's friends are creating artificial shortages and are telling the workers, "If you want it, you have to pay so much."

That is why it is essential that a national insurance scheme should be given priority.. This legislation for this scheme should be given priority in this House.

I have not seen in this Throne Speech, I do not know what kind of Throne Speech this is, [An hon. Member: "You have not read it well."] Anything about payments to old age pensioners although the cost of living has gone up by nearly 30 to 40%.

The old age pensions that the people are receiving remain the same. Social assistance that the people are receiving remains the same. Why is there no comparative increase. [An hon Member: "Who said 'not a cent more'?"] We gave them four dollars a day. I challenge the Government to raise the workers' minimum wage to five dollars a day.

I am merely making constructive criticisms so that the Government may come to its senses. We are here to criticise the Government and to expose the things. [The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs: "You cannot depose."] The people will depose you.

I am advising the Government, it is our duty to advise the Government, to alter its

misdeeds and work on behalf of the population especially the working-class in Guyana.

Then, I should like to deal with the last aspect of this Throne Speech, and that is, the arbitration tribunal. Sir, it does not matter whether you call it the industrial stabilisation act, or you call it the compulsory arbitration act or you call it the arbitration tribunal — the hon. Dr. Reid called it "voluntary." Well, whether you call it voluntary or I.S.A., it is the same rose. All roses smell sweet but it is the same rose.

This arbitration tribunal stinks to the heavens, and the working-class of Guyana cannot bear the introduction of this legislation. The Government wishes to curb strikes. I know we have a lot of industrial unrest in the Country but we have to ask ourselves what is the root cause of this industrial unrest. There must be some cause and that is what we should examine.

Sitting suspended at 6.30 p.m.

8.10 p.m.

On resumption - -

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Mr. Lall, please continue.

Mr. Lall: At the suspension, I was making the point that the Government must look into the root causes of the industrial unrest in the country today before it attempted to introduce legislation to curb the workers in the use of their democratic rights, of their privilege to withdraw their labour when they are cheated. Then I went on to examine why we are having so many strikes in this country today. If I were to attempt to give the reason, I would say that it is because the capitalists in this country believe that their friends are in Government now and they can do as they well please with the working masses in this country. At the same time, the working-class people are determined to band themselves together to stop the exploiters from further exploiting them.

The people in Bookers Stores used to get their Christmas bonuses. But what happened last year? When they asked for their bonuses

MR. LALL

they were offered a paltry \$25.00 each. Yet Sir Jock Campbell, the money magnate of Bookers Bros., declared that that was the biggest year of profitability for Bookers Stores in Guyana. We had a meeting with my good friend the Minister of Labour — we always meet — but the problems were not solved. Many of the big problems were left unsolved.

The Minister appointed a one-man Commission — the Persaud Commission. Bookers refused to submit figures to Persaud and the Commission has gone with the wind. There must be dissatisfaction in the ranks of the workers because they are told one thing by the Minister, while, on the other hand, the capitalists are using their capital to negate the requirements of any Commission appointed by the Government. These are the root causes of all the labour unrest that we are having in this country today. Since this Government assumed office, the once-for-all bonus for sugar workers has diminished. The good Minister appointed the Cummings Commission to look into this.

8.20 p.m.

What did the Cummings Committee report? The Cummings Committee reported that the sugar industry cannot afford to pay a once-for-all bonus nor to increase the wages of the sugar workers. This is no surprise to us because the so-called “trade union” that is representing workers in the sugar industry advocate that Government should raise the local selling price of sugar by 2½ cents per pound, and at the same time the Sugar Producers were asking that the Government should raise the local selling price of sugar by 2½ cents per pound.

As we have said before, this company union was forced on the workers of the sugar industry. That is why the P.P.P. Government in 1963 attempted to pass the Labour Relations Bill. The members on the opposite side were short-sighted when they did not support the Bill. The number of

strikes that are taking place today could have been avoided had this Bill been inserted on the Statute Book of our country.

It was no surprise to see the decision of the Committee, since both the union and the Sugar Producers called for an increase in the local selling price of sugar, but if we were to examine the profitability of the sugar industry we would see that in 1963, in the exportation of sugar, rum and molasses alone, the industry made \$86 million and paid out in wages and salaries \$36.5 million. Let us put aside another \$20 million as overhead expenses. Look what remains as the profit! We are not now speaking about the local sales, the money that accrued from local sales of rum, sugar and molasses. We are talking about gains from export. Although 1964 was a bad year the money that accrued from export and local sales of rum, sugar and molasses was around \$79 million. This is to be found in the document *Economic Survey of British Guiana, 1965*, which was published by this same Government. Wages and salaries paid out during that year amounted to \$31.4 million.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are these figures your own or are you quoting from some document?

Mr. Lall: I beg pardon, sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just want to know whether you are quoting from any document. The official reporters would like to know.

Mr. Lall: These figures can be found in the *Economic Survey of British Guiana, 1965*. Workers observe that the sugar industry is making these large profits and is unwilling to pay higher wages because it is protected by this very Government which is now attempting to pass legislation to set up an Arbitration Tribunal. That is why I said the Government must go into the root causes of all this industrial unrest. This is what it is trying to curb.

I should like to quote from what Mr. Samuel Gompers, who for 37 years was President of the American Federation of Labour, had to say about compulsory arbitration or

Arbitration Tribunals or I.S.A., Industrial Stabilisation Act, whatever the Government wants to call it. This is what Mr. Gumpers said:

"If organised labour should fail to appreciate the danger involved in the proposed scheme of so-called compulsory arbitration and consent to the enactment of a law providing for its enforcement there would be introduced the denial of rights of workers to strike in defence of their interests."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: What are you quoting from?

Mr. Lall: This is the *Trinidad Vanguard* of 26 May.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: What year?

Mr. Lall: 1967. [Mr. Bowman: "Published by whom?"] It is an extract from the *Vanguard*. [Laughter.] The enforcement of legislation such as this will be the starting point for dictatorship in Guyana. If I remember well, when Hitler began in Germany he started by banning the trade union organisations and introduced similar legislation in that country. So did Mussolini of Italy, but where are these dictators now?

8.30 p.m.

Their names are forgotten. Maybe the Government wants to save their friends, the company union.

I should like to have a look at this Bill when it is drafted. I have a suspicion that it will embody the union shop. What is a "union shop?" A union shop means that workers need not be members of a union.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hope I do not have to remind you that it is contrary to the Standing Orders to anticipate.

Mr. Lall: I merely bring this to the attention of this House because I am suspicious about this legislation which is dangerous to the free labour movement of any country in the world and we should not allow it to be introduced here.

In conclusion, I should like to say that we do not want legislation to curb the workers' right to strike. We need to stabilise the cost

of living because the wages of \$4 per day, in 1964, only value \$3 per day in 1967, as a result of the high cost of living. I am appealing to the Government to stabilise the cost of living in this country and encourage the capitalists to expend more of their profits in this country. If the Government is not prepared to do this then it should tax them heavily. We on this side of the House would give them full support on this.

I should like to quote what Dr. Reid said when he addressed the Chamber of Commerce. I am quoting from the editorial of the *Evening Post* of 27th February, 1967:

"In a thought-provoking address at the Chamber of Commerce luncheon last Friday, the Acting Prime Minister, Dr. Ptolemy Reid, on a note of seriousness, reminded members of the Chamber that no man's security in the community was assumed so long as thousands of citizens, representing no less than 20 per cent of the adult population, were unemployed.

'Wealth,' said Dr. Reid, 'is no safeguard in this type of situation, unless you are willing to use it for the development of Guyana.'

This was a very timely statement by that hon. Gentleman but we do not want to hear statements alone, we want to see the enforcement of these statements. That same hon. Gentleman said that he will deal with the sharks accordingly, but today he is allowing those sharks to get away with murder.

As I have said before, they are creating artificial shortages of goods so as to carry up the prices. When the members of the working class go to the shops, they are told that the goods are short. I can remember that garlic was sold at over \$1.20 per pound. The Government should put a stop to this. Instead of taking away the rights of the working class by curbing strikes, the Government should stop these robbers who are in Water Street, these big sharks, as the hon. Minister of Trade called them, and see that they are safely put away at Camp and D'Urban Streets if they continue to exploit the working class. I can

[MR. LALL]

assure the members of the Government that we on this side of the House will give them 100% support when they alleviate this kind of suffering from the working class of Guyana.

Dr. Ramjohn: I should have thought that very good medical attention for the people of any nation that wishes to progress would be obvious and that any responsible Government would spare no effort and reasonable expense to ensure the health of the community by preventing diseases and by seeing that curative medicine is elevated to a very high standard. It seems to me that, in Guyana, the present Government is not prepared to do its utmost in this respect.

I know that the Government has said that it has spent a greater sum than was spent in previous years. This may be true. We have however pointed out that the percentage which is being spent on the health services is smaller than in previous years. In view of the increasing population and the increasing needs for staff, the amount spent is inadequate to ensure proper medical facilities.

At the moment, members of the public, particularly those who, most likely because of financial necessity, go to Government institutions for medical care, are very badly treated and they cannot generally obtain even good — I would not say excellent — medical attention.

8.40 p.m.

Looking at the Throne Speech I see there is a reference that the medical services will be expanded and existing institutions will be improved. Well, every Government must say at least that. That is the minimum that it must say. I do not expect the Government to say that medical services will be curtailed. But the Government does not elaborate on this. It does not say in what direction the medical facilities are being expanded or whether expansion is going on. Even with a moron at any institution, organisation must be inevitable in the normal process.

Would the Government come forward and say, "we have just completed a health centre in the Canje" or "we have completed a hospital at Lethem," which, incidentally, was to have been started by June. Would the Government say, "we are putting a qualified surgeon at Suddie or at New Amsterdam?"

What the hon. Minister of Health and Housing does not seem to understand is that in the years immediately following the war, when there was a great shortage of personnel and particularly technical personnel in the medical field, there was great difficulty in obtaining highly qualified doctors. Now, the position is easier and is becoming easier day by day, so it is inevitable that we would have four, five or six surgeons. As a matter of fact, the medical services now should have been in possession of a greater number of specialists in medicine than they have now if they were not being chased out and discouraged. [An hon. Member: "Who was chased out?"] I am not mentioning Chandra and Mootoo.

I quote the case of an obstetrician who was recruited by the Frank Denbow Mission. He saw an advertisement in the *British Medical Journal* and contacted the High Commissioner in London. He told him, "I am a qualified obstetrician and gynaecologist and I would like to go to Guyana and serve."

This gentleman had a very good job in Wales. He travelled down to London and was interviewed by the High Commissioner. He was given an undertaking in writing that he would be provided with housing, that he would be in sole charge of the department of obstetrics and gynaecology, that he would be allowed private practice and he must therefore go ahead and resign his job in Wales and make arrangements to proceed to Guyana, which he did.

After this gentleman had resigned his job, he received a telegram from the High Commissioner in London. He met the High Commissioner on the steps of the High Commission, going down. The gentleman was told there was a hitch. He wanted to know what

was the hitch. The Commissioner told him not to worry, that everything was all right.

That gentleman duly arrived in Guyana and at that time we were in sore need of an Obstetrician and Gynaecologist who knew his job. In the number of weeks that gentleman served here, he was responsible for saving a great many lives — mothers-to-be and new born babies that he delivered with great skill and with great concern.

That gentleman, when he arrived here, was not provided with a house. He was put up at the *Belvedere Hotel*; it so happened that he was locked out one night. Eventually, he was shown a run-down house in Kitty. That gentleman, although he had it in writing, that he would be allowed private practice, was told that he would not be allowed private practice. He was given the undertaking in writing that he would be in charge of that department. When he arrived here, he was told that he could not be. [An Hon. Member: "Tell us his name."] That doctor was Dr. Suri.

He became so fed-up that he escaped from this Country. This is the pattern of what is happening in the medical services. There appears to be a great deal of muddled thinking from top to bottom.

8.50 p.m.

The hon. Minister of Labour persists in interrupting. If the coalition is to pursue its present policies, I prophesy that in the near future it will be in need of your services as an undertaker. The Coalition Government has placed great emphasis on propaganda, over the air, by Press, by screen, in order to dull the public in its shortcomings, as so very often happens in a totalitarian regime which this Government is rapidly becoming. It is in a position of believing its own propaganda other wise it could not be possible for it to tell this nation that we are making great progress in the medical field. The fact is that the medical service is for the treatment of members of the public who are in need, and if we are to judge from this standpoint, then the

medical service has not progressed, instead it has made a great leap backward.

Earlier this year I had reason to point out, during a debate on Gastro Enteritis — the hon. Minister of Health was there — that the Leguan Hospital which was built by the previous Government and which was staffed by a G.M.O. was at that time without the services of a medical officer. I have now to point out to him that once again the Leguan Hospital is without the services of a medical officer. About 12,000 to 14,000 persons in those islands and in the Essequibo River cannot receive the attention of a medical officer. It is useless for the Minister to tell us that he is studying the Report of some Inquiry. Are the people to await the Report, and his mental gymnastics and deliberations, in order to receive medical attention?

They made a great fuss about the opening of the Out-Patient Department until 9 p.m. This has also been closed down. I understand that the health centre in Pomeroy, which was built by the previous Government is now being used as a residence for a teacher to live in, and not as a health centre. It makes no sense for the Minister to come and tell us that he has put some more equipment — which we got as a gift — in the laboratory in the Georgetown Hospital, and a library which is being stocked with books — from America — which are four years out of date. What kind of progress is this? This is inevitable.

The hon. Minister is asking me for advice. On the 12th of February of this year when we were discussing the Budget, I pointed out to the Minister that there were thousands, in fact the great majority of the children in this country were not being vaccinated against killer diseases such as whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus and polio. I told the hon. Minister that we should start a house-to-house campaign to vaccinate every child in this country. He took out his pen and book and said: "A very good idea. I will go into this." But not a single thing has been done about this. Just two weeks afterwards the

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medical officer went to the Press to admit that the campaign was a failure. What is keeping this back? Is it a question of expense? Are we to grudge the thousands to vaccinate these children, when we can cast away millions, squander millions on all sorts of things like Exposition, and \$5,000 parties in New York City? Can we not spend money to save the lives of our own people?

If such a scheme were to go forward it would not cost the amount of money which may be anticipated because the number of these cases which have to be treated in hospitals is enormous. If we were to vaccinate all these children there would be no necessity to treat them because there would be no such cases. If an epidemic of polio were to break out today we would have to greatly enlarge the rehabilitation centre and spend much more money to treat the children. I am quite certain that the Ministry of Health is unaware that there is a mild epidemic of Gastro Enteritis at the moment.

We have cried out a lot about shortages of drugs. The hon. Member, Mr. Deoroo Mahraj, when he was Minister of Health got up and told the House at one time that the doctors were prescribing sophisticated drugs which could be substituted. I said: "Very well, the doctors do not know what drugs you have. Get your Chief Pharmacist to make a list of the drugs so that the doctors there will not waste time when prescribing." The Minister thought that was an excellent suggestion and was going to work immediately on it. Just a few weeks ago I had a report that a very important drug was required at the Georgetown Hospital but they felt that this drug was not available, and I have been able to find out that there is a whole shelf in the central medical store packed with this drug. If my suggestion had been taken this embarrassing situation would have been avoided.

They said that they were going to build a Reference Hospital. In this there appears to be a great deal of confusion. When I look at the Development Programme on page 79, I

see under (d) General Reference Hospital to be built in Georgetown. Now, one year later I read in the Throne Speech that the General Reference Hospital is to be built on the East Coast.

9.00 p.m.

During the previous Session I asked a question on this very thing and received no answer. The point I wish to make is this: it is envisaged that there will be a general reference hospital with several departments - consultant out-patient department, laboratory services, physiotherapy unit, kitchen and staff dining rooms, residential accommodation, training school and so. In other words, this hospital will have all the facilities that already exist at the Georgetown hospital, which will then be reduced to the status of a district hospital. It is envisaged that the new hospital will cater for internes and persons training to be specialists; in short, that it will be a teaching hospital and that it will sift out the cases that cannot be handled by practitioners or which need treatment by specialists. Such cases will be segregated and transferred to the hospital on the east coast.

I am not against a general reference hospital. There are such hospitals in other parts of the world. What I would say is this: I am of the opinion - and others are - that the cart is being put before the horse. What we need now in Georgetown is 1200 extra beds. I will quote the case of one woman. This case is known by my colleague, Mr. Hamid. This lady was admitted to the Georgetown Hospital on a Tuesday morning with a very high temperature. She saw a doctor on the Wednesday afternoon. On Tuesday night and Wednesday night she slept on a bed with another person and she was over sixty years of age. During the whole of Thursday the lady did not receive a single tablet. I asked her, "Surely some blood tests were done in the meantime?" She replied, "The doctor examined me on Wednesday. I saw nobody again." On Thursday night, this aged woman with a high temperature was told to get out of the bed;

she was given a chair and told she would have to sit there until Friday morning. She promptly signed her name and came out of the hospital. [Mr. Merriman: "She dead?"] [Mr. Khan: "That is all you are interested in." (Laughter)]

We are in great need, as I have said, of additional beds in the Georgetown Hospital now. I have been trying to get from the hon. Minister (Mr. Kendall) some information as to when a start will be made on the Georgetown Hospital. Where is the new hospital to be built? A Question was tabled during the last Session but, up to now, I have received no answer. There is no mention of it in the Throne Speech, but we see reference to this general hospital to which, as I have said, priority has been given.

It is obvious that priority should be given to the Georgetown Hospital. If the Government wants to send local specialists to the University and call them Professors and let them play about with people's lives, all well and good, but our economy cannot afford this now. We must build our health services from the bottom up, not from the top down. What members of the Government do not yet seem to realise is that the University and teaching Hospital could be miles apart. Persons studying medicine at Cambridge go all the way down to London to do their work. If the new hospital were sited in Georgetown we could later on have a medical school. Our students from the University can travel from the East Coast to Georgetown to do their clinical work. It is now planned to duplicate all the equipment, laboratory equipment, laboratory staff, nurses and doctors, even though the staff is not adequate at the Georgetown Hospital. The Government is going to staff the reference hospital and do what? Leave the Georgetown Hospital barren?

Another consideration is the cost of transportation. Even though the distance may not be great, the cost of transporting supplies and patients back and forth will amount to a large sum of money over the

years. The Mabaruma Hospital is sited between two points on the river. Had the Hospital been sited near the river, Government would have saved many millions.

I cannot understand why a reference hospital should be given preference over the Georgetown Hospital. The Throne Speech does not say anything about the Georgetown Hospital so it must be assumed that the new hospital has priority.

I should like to refer to one or two instances from my daily experience to demonstrate something which is occurring every day. I saw a patient this week, a man suffering from diabetes. He had been in pain for eight days. The man was in an advanced state of exhaustion; he was almost in a coma. I said to him, "You need to be hospitalised". I performed all the tests and I wrote a letter - I am quite sure it was very explicit as to what was wrong with this man - and I sent him to the hospital. To my amazement he returned to me about five hours later to say that he had not been admitted. A prescription had been given to him and an injection of abrofine and he had been told to return home. That man would surely have died. I decided I would not let the matter rest there, so I telephoned the Permanent Secretary and the Hospital Administrator. I then telephoned the hospital and heard a very foreign accent which I could not understand very well. The person did not seem to be able to understand me; he seemed to be talking in a different language altogether. He did not seem to know what was wrong with the man even though I had written it down. When I explained it again very slowly he seemed to be thinking in terms of heart disease. I patiently explained the case once again and questioned this treatment of abropine, which to my knowledge was very unusual. I have referred to many medical textbooks and it still seems unusual. Finally the doctor said, "There is some mistake. I did not tell the man to go home. I just asked him to wait. Please send him back."

DR. RAMJOHN

9.10 p.m.

There was a case of a 50-year old woman from Mahaica who was suffering from severe bronchial asthma. This lady was admitted into the Georgetown Hospital where she saw one patient calling for a pan and was completely ignored. She decided after a while to relieve herself on the floor and for this she was later assaulted. This poor woman commented on this adversely and for the next three days she was terrorised by nurses and patients. Finally, she had to flee the hospital in tears in her night-dress. This is merely to give an example of the standard of treatment that the average member of the public can expect at our Government institution.

Since the doctors at the Georgetown Hospital have been allowed private medical practice, it is difficult for patients to receive proper treatment at the Hospital. Those who can afford it find it much more convenient and quicker to go outside and pay the same doctor for the treatment which they should have received at the Hospital. Those patients who cannot afford to pay must and do suffer as a result of this.

We come now to the shortage of drugs. This is something which we have been talking about in this House for a long time. Only this morning I found out that the Hospital was short of anti-tetanus serum. The hon. Minister will say that a great sum of money has been spent in buying drugs. What is becoming of these drugs? At one time a statement was made in this House that drugs had been stolen. Why haven't the culprits been arrested and prosecuted if this is true? These gentlemen are very dishonest. They have publicised the name of a physician in connection with a crime and they do not have the courage to make a charge.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Maybe you are right but you are not allowed to say that an hon. Member is dishonest.

Dr. Ramjohn: I apologise. If there is one field in which there should be no type of

discrimination it should be the field of medicine. But this, unfortunately, is not the case. In almost every phase of the medical service today there is discrimination of every kind. Previously, persons who wished to pursue nursing at their own expense applied to a hospital in London, were medically examined, got their passports, paid their own passages, were received in London, were trained at their own expense and returned to benefit this country. Today they must pass through the Ministry of Health and Housing and I have had reports of many girls waiting from six months to one year for interviews. Why are you keeping them back? It cost the Government nothing.

I have had occasion to point out the discrimination in the appointment of doctors. When the hon. Minister was asked a further question in February last he said that he was fully satisfied. But there has been engendered in the medical service a lack of hope for many brilliant Guyanese who cannot see themselves being promoted and being given an opportunity to serve their country on a basis of equality. Therefore, they go about their daily routine - and even though I disagree with this I find it hard to blame them - with a "could not care less" attitude. This has created a vicious cycle which has undermined the very morale of the medical service and has resulted in the cases which I have quoted here. I am not saying that there are not many who discharge their duties in a proper and excellent manner but there are many doctors and nurses whose attitude and manner do not become that of a doctor or nurse.

If we are to progress in the medical field - and progress we must rapidly - we must have good medical services for we cannot build a healthy and progressive nation on the backs of sick people. The Minister will be advised that children who are born with disease, who are born suffering from malnutrition - and there are an increasing number of cases of malnutrition, despite the statement to the contrary which was made - are stunted in growth not only physically but also mentally so that unless we can have an excellent

medical service we are going to become a nation of stunted mentality.

Each village in every area should have a water supply. This is why the previous Government laid emphasis on this. This is something which is not now progressing satisfactorily. In the field of typhoid vaccination and so on, we find that there has been a lackadaisical attitude. The latrine programme initiated by the previous Government has been going on a slow process of disintegration under this Government. Incidentally, while I am speaking on the question of latrines, I remember that the Ministry of Health and Housing, or someone, advised on the building of schools in Pomeroon. When they built the latrines they decided to empty the refuse from the latrines into the river, which is the source from which the inhabitants of that area drink and wash. As a result, the latrines there have remained closed to this day.

I have mentioned that the question of this house to house eradication of tuberculosis among our Amerindian population must take priority and we must pursue this vigorously. The hon. Minister recently made a statement that we will be vaccinating all new-born children with B.C.G.

9. 20 p.m.

I have never heard of this being done and he might be quite right. I know that B.C.G. is given to those who are tubercular negative and if there is a new process, I congratulate the hon. Minister of Health and Housing.

In the field of administration, our Ministry has a great deal to learn because it does not seem to be able to discipline even its subordinate staff. A hospital committee has been formed but its functioning has been quite useless and ineffective in bringing about results. There needs to be a great shaking up in administering these hospitals. I am not saying these should be put in the charge of a board of governors. A start may be made with the larger ones with the board being given the authority to govern, except in the case of policy which should

remain in the hands of the Ministry and in the hands of the Chief Medical Officer.

We can see therefore that there is a great deal to be done and there is not even a little being done at the moment. Why is this?

I have already mentioned that in the Development Programme, percentage-wise, the expenditure is less. We see, if you were to look at page 79 of the Development Programme, the Seven-Year Development Plan anticipates expenditure of \$14 million on health services. This is not a large sum to spend on the health of a nation over this period of seven years.

If we were to look at the previous page of this very Programme, page 78, it says that with regard to these various proposals for improvement:

"Much of these works can be completed on a community basis, much of the cost of these projects could be reduced if volunteer groups of young men and women come forward to give of their labour. These savings can then be channelled to other departments where development funds are urgently needed."

Here we see we are spending very little over seven years. On the other hand, the Government is thinking of cutting down on this \$14 million and so spend more on other sectors. This Government is not prepared to spend money on the health of the people. It is not prepared to spend money on the health of the people and those poor people, who must rely on the government institutions and on the Government services, suffer now and are continuing to suffer, and unless we can advise a change of heart on the part of the Government, I visualise that it cannot be rewarded with much progress in this field. I hope I am wrong but I cannot say anything else from what has happened in the past two and a half years and from what the Government is saying now in this Throne Speech.

The Minister of Health and Housing Mr. Kendall): My hon. Friend, Dr. Ramjohn, spent some time trying to tell us of some of the disadvantages of the medical services.

[MR. KENDALL]

This is a full reply to him. What is said in the Throne Speech is a fact that the medical services will be expanded, and if Dr. Ramjohn would spend some time in going around this Country, he would see that what the Government has here is true. It has already started to expand the medical services and its impact is being felt not only in Georgetown, but all over the Country.

In New Amsterdam, there had previously been one specialist. Today, there are three specialists. That is a mark of improvement which the hon. Member should appreciate as a doctor. It is the purpose of this Government to decentralise these medical facilities so that everybody would not come to Georgetown. These facilities would be in all areas and it is for that reason that the Government improved the New Amsterdam Hospital, and if the hon. Member went to Skeldon, from where we both came, he would see improvements there.

At Suddie on the Essequibo Coast, there has been improvement. There is also a specialist there. We did not have that before.

So, when hon. Members come here and talk that there is no improvement, it is not true. It is the first time in the history of this Country that there have been so many specialists. You find them from many parts of the world.

With respect to the Koreans, I want to tell the hon. Member that the Government would not have had need for Koreans if Guyanese doctors had shown greater appreciation and a certain amount of service by giving it to the Government medical services.

Dr. Ramjohn, like a good many Guyanese, came to the Hospital, got himself popular among a certain section of the patients and left to make more money. When you are a Government Medical Officer, you must contribute to the social benefits of the Country by contributing to income tax. [Hon. Members: "Do not become personal."] You have to become personal at times in order to let people come back to brass tacks.

9.30 p.m.

We have foreigners giving us service here. [Mr. Luck: "When is your son going back?"] My son is here. He is working in the Government Service and he will remain in the Government Service. Until Guyanese doctors show a greater appreciation for their country we will have to import foreign doctors. If Russian doctors can satisfy the Medical Board they will be registered.

My medical friend has indicated that there is discrimination because girls have applied to be trained in England and their applications were processed through the Ministry of Health and nothing has been done. What he has forgotten is that now that we are independent, the British do not want us in the United Kingdom. We have processed a good many of these applications and it is up to the High Commissioner in Georgetown to give them the entry permits, but he has not done so. It is not the fault of the Ministry. It has been investigated. There is no discrimination because it does not affect the members or supporters of the People's Progressive Party alone.

I appreciate that there is need for a greater measure of discipline - as has been suggested - in the administration of the Georgetown Hospital. But that did not come overnight. It did not come during the two years this Government was in office. It is because of the indiscipline that the Hospital Management Committee has been created, but I do not think that conditions are getting worse. I think there is better personnel relation and a better spirit is now demonstrated. Maybe those who are still not disciplined are those who would like to leave. But, as has been rightly pointed out, now that the Specialists are allowed to have private practices outside, it is affecting some of our private practitioners who left Government with the hope of making more money outside.

With respect to the Reference Hospital, I want to say that Government has decided that it should be near the site of the University. We are an independent nation.

We want to train our own doctors. We want to train our own nurses. Our medical services must be geared to make appointments. We would not have to depend on outside institutions in the future. We are putting it there because we do not want to buy sites in Georgetown which you and others would sell at exorbitant prices. It is a good site and you will appreciate that we have a School of Radiography and we are going to train our laboratory technicians there. There is close association between the University of Guyana and the Georgetown Hospital. We have envisaged that when the present hospital is built it will serve a very useful purpose, not only for Guyana but maybe for some of our neighbours in the Caribbean who will come here and get the necessary training to improve their health services.

With respect to the Out-Patient Service, I want to assure the hon. Member that we are aware of the condition there and it is for that reason that we want to decentralise the health service. The Health Centre at Campbellville will be put into operation and we have one at Parika which will be opened soon.

In 1964, for every thousand births we had about 50 to 60 deaths. This has reduced now to 40 in every thousand. There is an increase in population. The last census showed that in spite of malnutrition and other things we are coming through very good. Some of those areas that were closed to medical services would be re-opened within a month so that the people on the East Bank of Berbice and the East and West Canje will have a doctor. We will also place the necessary X-Ray facilities in interior hospitals so as to treat the people within their environment and prevent them from coming to Georgetown or to Best. You will appreciate that there has been a reduction in the incidence of Tuberculosis and over 70% of the Amerindians have been inoculated against this disease. We hope that in the next generation we will not have Tuberculosis. If you go to Best you will find that there are four buildings unused.

9.40 p.m.

There is a very healthy sign with respect to that communicable disease and I hope that when next the doctor (Dr. Ramjohn) is speaking he will reduce the number of criticisms and try to advance suggestions of a more constructive nature so that all of us may be able to get the benefit of his experience as a worthy Guyanese.

I had hoped that the members of the Opposition would have been able to give me something to which I could reply, but the hon. Member spent most of his time talking about things which he had mentioned during the debate on the last Budget. He mentioned gastro-enteritis. Gastro-enteritis is something that cannot be eradicated from any country. We are trying to do everything possible to arrest it. We are improving our laboratories so that when there is an out break we may be able to investigate and not rely on Trinidad.

In every developed country gifts are made to medical institutions by people who have become affluent. They show their appreciation for the money they have made in the community by offering facilities. I hope that this same spirit will prevail in this country and that persons who have become rich by the sweat and tears of poor people will leave a tangible mark to demonstrate their appreciation for what they have received. *[Interruptions.]* I hope that the mercantile community and people who have become wealthy will continue to offer us gifts in various forms. It would be a very fine thing if they showed their interest in health by donating some of their joint funds to establish a hospital, not in Thomas Street near to the Georgetown Hospital, but in areas outside Georgetown so that medical facilities will not be centralised but will be spread out so that everyone in the country will feel the impact of medical services.

If Guyana can only offer medical facilities through Russian aid, and if this Government is satisfied that Russian aid is a form of aid which will not affect us in any way, then we will consider it. I know that my good friend

[MR. KENDALL]

is thinking of the doctor in Canje. That is a matter for the Medical Board. He must realise that this is not the only doctor who made an application which was not accepted by the Medical Board. There was a doctor from another country whose application was not accepted. The Board did not reject it because the doctor gained his qualifications in Moscow. I am not saying that Moscow does not produce good doctors. A good many of our friends have used Russian medical facilities and I hope that what I see is not the reflection of their work. *[Laughter.]*

The Government has said in the Throne Speech that the health services will be expanded and that is a fact. A new hospital will be erected. That is also a fact, because the funds for the building and equipment are available and there is no difficulty there. Whatever is contained in the Throne Speech with regard to health is a fact. These are not words; they are facts and hon. Members will feel the effects. *[Applause.]*

Mr. Hubbard: I am one of those who have read the Throne Speech and one of the things that I have found most extraordinary about this document is the fact that there is no heading for Finance and there no heading for Trade. Money and trade are the twin pillars of any Government's economy. Money and trade are twin pillars of any economy and we are presented with a Throne Speech where neither trade nor money is mentioned.

I am aware of the fact that we have a Minister of Trade who does not sit in his office. He has a chair and, I presume, a desk as well in the office of the Prime Minister. Trade is left where it was in the old colonial days with the big boys in Water Street and with the Chamber of Commerce. Those are the people who look after trade.

It is of the utmost significance to us at this time that we should have had at least a sentence in this document relating to money and we should have had a good deal more than a sentence dealing with the question of trade. My hon. Friend, Dr. Jacob, will deal

at length with the question of money but I would just like to mention, in order to make my points stick, that it is hardly a fortnight ago that the Governor of the Bank of Guyana went to the West Demerara district and delivered an exhaustive address on the question of money and its functions in other societies. The Governor of the Bank of Guyana left us in no doubt whatsoever about the desperate state of our finances.

9.50 p.m.

The Governor of the Bank of Guyana said - I do not quote but I phrase - that it was a matter of the utmost importance to us that our imports, transfers of money abroad, capital investments, should be carefully watched and carefully handled so that we do not overstrain ourselves. We have in money market securities - which is the present day euphemism for British Treasury Bills - something of the order of \$23 million, and the shadow of devaluation of the pound is dark on our finances.

The other day the rupee was devalued by 30% and if the pound were devalued by 20%, it would mean that we would get fifteen shillings for every pound that we have lying in the British Treasury helping to keep together an economy that is collapsing. We would lose 20% of the money that we have, British currency bills which are supporting our own currency. This is our position and there is not a word, not a comma, not an exclamation mark in this Throne Speech about this vital question - a matter of life and death.

Some time earlier this year, the hon. Minister of Trade (Dr. Reid) who was on his feet this afternoon attended a conference in London which went into questions relating to the consequences in the economies of ours and other Caribbean territories in the event of the British Government entering the European economic community. The question whether Britain will enter the European economic community is not an academic question. Harold Wilson is prepared to crawl into the common market

even if he has to crawl underneath the arches of General DeGaulle's feet.

What does the Government propose to meet this situation? We should be told. Perhaps the Government has not reached the stage of proposing, but perhaps the Government is thinking about it. Surely, at least we are entitled to be told that, in the light of this probability, now a certainty, of Britain entering the European Common Market, we propose to do so and so. But our Minister of Trade shed no more light upon our future than does this vacuous document which is merely ornamentation.

Perhaps the Minister of Trade is not to be blamed because the Minister of Trade cannot be expected to have become acquainted with all the ramifications of these international problems and with the consequences that are pending, but at least he attended a conference and, having returned to his native Guyana, he issued a communique in which he spoke about bananas, sugar and citrus fruits. I do not think that any Minister could have merely issued a communique and left so vital a question unanswered. I am not only disturbed but I am deeply distressed to find that, on every vital issue underlying the existence of this country, the Government has nothing to say. It has a lot to say on questions that are of no importance, but it has nothing to say on those matters which are vital.

In the Economic Survey of Guyana for the year 1966, the Government tells us that our terms of trade have worsened, using 1961 as a base year, the figures show that

from a peak of 114.9 at 1964, the terms of trade figure has fallen to 94.4, a figure which is even less than in the year 1962 when it stood at 98.7. That was the year when we had the great conflagration, when the first political arson took place in this land.

With worsening terms of trade, with uncertainty for protected markets for some of our main products, with the possibility of devaluation in front of us, we are asked to examine the Government's programme of activity for this year and to accept such a programme without any reference whatsoever, not even a heading without words below, to the two most important and the two most threatened field crops of our whole economy.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think it is time for us to take the Adjournment.

The Leader of the House (Mr. Bissember): Before I move the Adjournment I wish to say that I had indicated originally that this would have been a two-day debate. I now request that it be extended to a third day. Having regard to the activities of Monday, I should like to indicate that the Prime Minister would be winding up for this side of the House and it is hoped that the debate will be concluded when we take the Adjournment at four o'clock.

I now move that this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 14th August, 1967, at 2 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 10.00 p.m.