

**THE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
OFFICIAL REPORT  
[VOLUME]**

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

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**110<sup>th</sup> Sitting**

**2 p.m.**

**Monday, 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1977**

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**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**Speaker**

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

**Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)**

**Prime Minister (1)**

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

**(Absent)**

**Deputy Prime Minister (1)**

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

**Senior Ministers (9)**

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

**(Absent)**

\*Cde. H. Green,  
Minister of Co-operatives and  
National Mobilisation

**\*Non-elected Minister**

\*Cde. H. O. Jack,  
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

\*Cde. F. E. Hope,  
Minister of Finance (Absent)

\*Cde. S. S. Naraine, A. A.,  
Minister of Works and Housing (Absent – on leave)

\*Cde. G. A. King,  
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

\*Cde. G. B. Kennard, C. C. H.,  
Minister of Agriculture

\*Cde. C. L. Baird,  
Minister of Education and Social Development (Absent)

\*Cde. F. R. Wills, S. C.,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Absent)

#### **Ministers (5)**

Cde. W. G. Carrington,  
Minister of Labour

Cde. S. M. Field-Ridley,  
Minister of Information and Culture

Cde. B. Ramsaroop,  
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs  
and Leader of the House

\*Cde. O. M. R. Harper,  
Minister of Health

\*Cde. C.V. Mingo,  
Minister of Home Affairs

#### **Ministers of State (9)**

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

#### **\*Non-elected Minister**

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

Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,  
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

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

**(Absent)**

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

Cde. J. P. Chowritmootoo,  
Minister of State – Regional  
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)

\*Cde. W. Haynes,  
Minister of State for Consumer Protection

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

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

### **Parliamentary Secretaries (6)**

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

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

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

### **\*Non-elected Minister**

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

Cde. R. H. O. Corbin,  
Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Education and Social Development

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

**(Absent)**

**Other Members (19)**

Cde. L. M. Branco

Cde. E. M. Bynoe

Cde. E. H. A. Fowler

Cde. J. Gill

Cde. W. Hussain

Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh

Cde. K. M. E. Jonas

Cde. M. Nissar

Cde. L. E. Ramsahoye

Cde. J. G. Ramson

Cde. P.A. Rayman

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

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

Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.

Cde. H. A. Taylor

Cde. R. C. Van Sluytman

Cde. L. E. Willems

Cde. C. E. Wrights, J.P.

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.

**(Absent)**

**(Absent)**

**Members of the Opposition (16)**

(i) **People's Progressive Party (14)**

**Leader of the Opposition (1)**

Cde. C. B. Jagan

**Deputy Speaker (1)**

Cde. Ram Karran

**Other Members (12)**

Cde. J. Jagan

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J. P., Opposition Chief Whip

Cde. Narbada Persaud

Cde. C. Collymore

Cde. S. F. Mohamed

Cde. L. Lalbahadur (Absent – on leave)

Cde. B. James (Absent)

Cde. C. C. Belgrave

Cde. R. Ally

Cde. Dalchand, J. P.

Cde. Dindayal

Cde. H. Nokta

**(ii) Liberator Party (2)**

Mr. M. F. Singh

Mrs. E. DaSilva

**OFFICERS**

Clerk of the National Assembly – F. A. Narain

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

10.1.77

National Assembly

2 – 2.10 p.m.

2 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

**Leave To Members**

**The Speaker:** Leave has been granted to Cde. Hoyte for today's Sitting.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**MOTION**

**APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1977**

**BUDGET DEBATE**

*The Assembly resumed the debate on the Motion moved by the Minister of Finance on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1976, for the approval of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1977, totaling \$417,283,736.*

**The Speaker:** Cde. Belgrave

**Cde. Belgrave:** Cde. Speaker, we in this House have had a break for two days from debating the 1977 Budget and I hope that during that break, members of the Government will have come to realise and understand the true position that this country is in. Last week glorious pictures were painted in this House by Ministers of the Government and a few backbenchers in relation to the wonderful position that this country is in despite its economic problems. Unfortunately, as I see it, they used the wrong type of material for this painting. They used whitewash and when the sun shone, it caked and exposed the position of the building prior to this exercise.

We have heard the Minister of Agriculture recording the agricultural output of this country from 1964 to 1976, the failure of the P.P.P. when it was in office and the progress made by the P.N.C. after it took office. The picture he painted to this honourable House does not reflect the truth when it comes to the actual happenings where the people, the man in the street, the worker, is concerned.

Take a look at the true agricultural position of this country. People are virtually starving in an agricultural land, a land where we should have plenty. In this land we need more produce so as to satisfy the people. When we were in office, we had no good days. Between 1961 and 1964 our Party was faced with turmoil, internal and external, strikes and so on. Some of the strife that was perpetrated in this land was carried out by the P.N.C. when it was not in office. Destabilisation is not new to us. Our economy, when we were in office, was on many occasions destabilised by the P.N.C. at the time when they were in opposition. But, out of this, we were able to find enough for the people to eat.

I can remember some of those commodities which we enjoyed, commodities which are a necessity to us. Who will deny that plantains were two cents a pound on the bunch and four cents a pound off the bunch until 1964? Today, what is the true position in relation to those commodities? I shall run them down briefly. Plantains have gone up in price by leaps and bounds. If you cannot find some at 50¢ or 60¢ a pound, you cannot eat plantain. But comparison was made to the effect that when the P.P.P. was in office times were bad; the Government was a ridiculous Government; it could not afford to give the people these necessities.

I have heard so much about yam balls. Who can afford a yam ball today? Yam sells at \$1.48, sometimes \$1.55, per pound. Eddoes, Tannias – you cannot even find them on the market. Imagine this in a country like Guyana where such commodities grow and we have been hearing all about nutritional values and balanced diet! These crops like Bora and Calaloo are

commodities that assist the working-class diet but if they are not scarce on the market, they can hardly be purchased by the working-class man.

Whilst there is a tremendous jump in the price of the produce, what do we find over the period 1970 to 1976? Wages remain static. Other commodities jump tremendously in cost but what has happened to the working-class man where his wages are concerned? The Government has not seen it fit to raise the minimum wages from \$5.50 a day. The Members of the P.N.C. cracked that in the P.P.P. time it was three dollars and odd centes a day but how much have they done in this period of time from 1964 to 1967 to raise the wages in comparison with the increased cost of living? Not one thing has been done! But we hear in terms of the working class man, “Through your hard work and efforts, we shall build a just society for all” that is, all of those who are in the privileged bracket. Take a look at how much it costs the working-class man to live each week. I am positive that not one of the Members of the Government side would deny this: if they do, they are out of touch with what is going on in this country. It costs a working-class man with a family of five %50 a week to survive.

### **2.10 p.m.**

Fifty dollars per week is costs a working-class man to survive and if one takes the minimum wage bracket of \$5.50 per day, one will see that to survive a man has to supplement his income by close to \$14 or \$15 per week.

For this reason I respectfully submit that this nation is plagued with an upsurge, a tremendous jump, in crime because the working-class people have no alternative. Don't blame everybody in the society who commits an act of fraud as being a ridiculous element in society. If so be the case, there are several from the top bracket, who have committed these acts, some punished and some punished. Some, despite the acts that have been committed, are being given licence to continue with a pat on the back. But one has to look at the true happenings in this country.



There are many Guyanese who go to bed hungry some nights. There is no doubt about it. **[Interruption.]** I would like that lie to be passed on to the working-class man, the man in the street, because he has a different impression of the whole thing. Only yesterday on a radio programme a man had to be cut off quickly when he started relating the economic position that he is in. He is unable to find work. He has to go to his mother to see if she can find something for him to eat. And the man is no fool because he has some documents to indicate that he has learnt. But this Government does not lay emphasis upon the ability of a person. It lays emphasis upon those who can do favours or those who can pay lip-service to the regime. It does not put emphasis upon the quality of the man. It lays emphasis on the square pegs who fit themselves into round holes.

One of the annoying things when I was in this House was the broadside attack, not by one Minister but by more than one of the Ministers who on the surface are talking a lot about socialism but make uncalled for attacks upon the Soviet Union who leads the way in developing socialism the world over. And not only that, the Soviet Union has shown other countries the way to scientific socialism. The attack was carried out broadside in this House by Members on the Government side. I can remember particularly when the Minister of Justice spoke; the Minister of Economic Development spoke and then attack was geared to show that even in the Soviet Union things are bad. Workers are punishing.

This is an article that I brought back from the Soviet Union when I visited there last year, thanks to my party who saw fit to expose me to the life of the Soviet people so that I can learn some more. This is a booklet which is headed, **The Rising Standard of Living in the U.S.S.R.** It can be loaned to some of the members on the other side who are prepared to learn a little more about Marxism. It is printed in Moscow, 1976, and on page 3 it states clearly:

“Labour and Wages in the USSR

Unemployment has been non-existent in the USSR for several decades. The last labour exchanges” and I hope my hon. Friend, the Minister of Labour will note this with interest “ceased to exist in 1930.”

Which means clearly that that particular agency that is supposed to cater for those who don't have jobs has not existed in the Soviet Union since 1930.

“In the USSR every citizen is guaranteed the right to work with remuneration according to the quality and quantity of the work done.”

I relate this to the Bank of Guyana Report which states on page 109, Population and Labour Force – and I am relating this to the 1970 census which estimated population at 714,000 people and also relating it to what the report says, labour force 1970, 210,000 persons employed out of a population of 714,000. I believe this figure is a little off colour, in case anyone on that side wants to argue that it is inaccurate. I feel it should be a little more than that since 1976, but the point I am making here is that about one-quarter of this population is employed taking into account children at school, wives at home. One is likely to come up with an analysis that enough emphasis in this country has not been paid in relation to finding jobs for working-class people.

Let me refute the remarks made by the Minister of State in this very House. This is to show where the facts are being distorted, Cde. Speaker. He mentioned that the Guyana Transport Services will be ordering a number of buses by 1980 and then ridiculously related to this House that for each bus seven workers are employed. This is one of the twisted attitudes of the Government to jack up the figures to give the impression that unemployment is minimized in this country when at the moment it stands at nearly 30 per cent of the working-class people. **[Interruption]** You have to take into account working people, directly and indirectly employed. From this report you will come to the conclusion that my figures are accurate. I am

dealing with the report against the background of their arguments. When a research was done into the Guyana Transport Services it was found that it is just under four point something employees per bus, a total of 190 buses they have got in service against a background of 170 employees.

This is the thing that makes it so ugly when supposedly respectable people, persons who hold positions in high offices in this country and come to this honourable House and attack the Opposition at full length, by saying “You are distasteful and destructive; your criticism does not relate to the truth” and they themselves will stand there and tell this honourable House and the public untruths. Much is to be desired from those people.

The Minister of Agriculture in his speech was telling us about Soviet agriculture - -

**The Speaker:** Cde. Belgrave, I listened with rapt attention to what the Minister of State was saying. Please do not leave it as it is. You have said that he has not made an accurate statement, namely that seven people will be employed for each bus. That is what he said. It is found necessary that seven peoples should be employed for the proper servicing and maintenance of each bus and in 1980 when 700 buses will be on the road approximately 5,000 people will be employed. That is what he said.

**Cde. Belgrave:** When I looked at the report in the papers yesterday –

**The Speaker:** I am not concerned about the papers. You were here in the House. Let us not deal with the paper. Let us deal with the remarks that were said in this House.

**Cde. Belgrave:** Cde. Speaker, I listened to the report on the air, and to the speech by the Minister in the House. I am convinced that I am so accurate because what he said was that there would be 700 buses by 1980.

2.20 p.m.

He gave a general figure as to how many persons would be employed per bus and related it to the 700. It should be 4,900. I add the other hundred for wear and tear. He was very clear that seven persons are employed per bus.

I will deal with the efforts, hard work and energy of the Ministry of Labour and its concentration upon workers' participation. I have had the privilege of going to the Critchlow Labour College over a number of years; I have had the privilege of listening to lectures; I have had the privilege of listening to the hon. Minister on one of his famous topics "Class struggle in the working class movement" and by one message in conveyed: That so far of that particular unit which involves workers' education in concerned, it is not properly geared for total involvement of the worker. I have pointed this out on several occasions and will point this out again. You cannot have a position where seven persons hold the office of director in a particular Government concern or Government business, and then you take one workers from the rank and file and you put him there within that particular body to function effectively for the benefit of the workers. It will create embarrassment and when the time comes for a decision to be taken the workers' voice will be like one in the wilderness.

We have pointed out on several occasions that the system to be applied at the moment is equal status on any Board. If it is that you need a number of persons for the directorship of any company, corporation or the like, the Trade Union Movement must have equal say. If the Trade Union Movement does not have equal say. If the Trade Union Movement does not have equal say, all you will have is destruction and the destruction of the particular enterprise or industry.

It is clear that when we talk about workers' control it comes from the valley of scientific socialism and scientific socialism has a lot to say about workers' participation. It is not only involvement; it is not only for us to say that we have a representative at the top. This will not

answer the question. It is the type of decision to be taken whenever you have to arrive at a decision. How will you be able to examine the records? How will you be able to have the corporation or body expose its records so that we will know whether or not their demands are just?

At this present moment, not one of the corporations has adhered to the call for realistic changes. Even those who hold offices as Managers, those who change their ties over night, wear shirt-jacs the next day and claim to be socialists in this land have been carrying out the same practices as they carried out when they held office for the capitalists. We have pointed all this out. I can remember only too well raising this question on several occasions.

I have here Lenin's book on workers' control and nationalisation of industry – I am positive that my hon. Friend has one of these books in his possession. It is a valuable book. I am also sure the Workers Educational Unit has a copy in its possession so that workers can properly involve themselves in finding out what work Lenin had to do, the works and writings of Marx which were accepted and put into practice by Lenin. In Lenin's Draft Regulations on Workers' Control, page 100, it is stated:

“Workers' control over the production, storage, purchase and sale of all products and raw materials shall be introduced at all industrial, commercial, banking, agricultural and other enterprises employing not less than five workers and office employees (together), or with an annual turnover of not less than 10,000 rubles.”

In other words, as long as the business has got not less than five workers or factory or office employees, there should be workers control also in banks, in industry, in all spheres of life, all working areas where the workers is involved.

“2. Workers' control shall be exercised by all the workers and office employees of an enterprise, either directly, if the enterprise is small enough to permit it, our

through their elected representatives, who shall be elected immediately at general meetings, at which minutes of the elections shall be taken and the names of those elected communicated to the government and to the local Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies."

He went on further and this is very important. I hope it will be listened to.

- "3. Unless permission is given by the elected representatives of the workers and office employees, the suspension of work of an enterprise or an industrial establishment of state importance or any change in its operation, is strictly prohibited."

He said you should not limit the industries.

- "4. The elected representatives shall be given access to all books and documents and to all warehouses and stocks of materials, instruments and products, without exception."

In our position, despite the allegation that the Government controls 80 odd per cent of industry in this country, the workers' bargaining is discussed in the dark. It is for that reason we had that recent development in Guybau. It is alleged that 99.99 per cent of the workers up there are supporters of the P.N.C. They support the objectives of the P.N.C., they support everything the P.N.C. does, its goals, its ideals and its aspirations. Despite that what you had up at Linden was workers resisting a regime which has absolutely no respect for the working class people. They used the C.I.A. in 1963 and 1964 and now they are blaming the C.I.A. for the attacks on the workers. The Government should choose its priorities and know exactly what it is doing. It is up to the members of the Government.

**10.1.77**

**National Assembly**

**2.20 – 2.30 p.m.**

I would also like to ask the Minister of Labour to have himself more involved. I can call the names of some more books which I would be very glad for him to look at and to have his Ministry involved, particularly the education unit. In this way he will be able to look at things of interest to workers. The books are: “Lenin at work under socialism and communism”, “Against dogmatism and ..... in the working class movement”, “The Soviet Workers”, U.S.S.R. Trade Union Movement.” All these books are guidelines towards a socialist development.

**2.30 p.m.**

Workers in this country are being harassed and persecuted. They are not only being harassed by members who hold office within the Government, but they are also being pressurised by those who are placed there to manage the affairs of the Government because they are capitalist-oriented people. They are persons who are being oriented by the capitalists themselves and they can only work within that particular area. I am convinced that if there is a change in the particular department, if some more in-depth research can be done, if the workers can be more involved, if there can be more understanding so that they can know exactly what is going on at the bottom, the Ministry of Labour can play a vital role in reconstructing the society to socialism for the working class people. I am positive that the Critchlow Labour College can be used as a vibrant organisation instead of having people like Plant and others from the Trades Union Congress of England abroad coming here and abusing socialism.

At one time the Minister himself talked about Marxism. A member of the Trades Union congress of England came here and talked about voluntary democratic socialism. This is a contradiction. An eminent Minister of the Government is saying one thing and the Critchlow Labour College is being used to distort the true facts which the workers should learn.

**The Speaker:** One minute more.

**Cde. Belgrave:** Cde. Speaker my time is limited. It is stated clearly by the Minister of Agriculture and others that a bright day is ahead for Guyana and the prospects are bright. I will urge them in this year 1977 to have a closer look at the situation for I am positive that there are dark days ahead for this country, for the working class people and that prospects for the future have never looked so dull.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Carrington

**The Minister of Labour (Cde. Carrington):** Cde. Chairman, I listened with rapt attention to the speaker on the other side of the house but before dealing with some of the points he raised permit me to refer to the Budget. You will agree that it is in a time of crisis that leadership is proven. When times are good leadership find it very easy not only to do its work but to lead. It is in a time of crisis that many nations prove their worth if they can rise to the occasion. It is in a time of crisis when individual leaders must prove their ability to prepare to overcome the crisis.

We have listened to many a Budget Speech in this House by many other Finance Ministers but I am sure many of us were more than surprised at the presentation by Cde. Hope. To be able to present a Budget in a time of crisis, the one that he has presented, you will agree with me, Cde. Speaker, would require time, study, planning, concentration and an understanding of the Guyanese situation at this time. It is leadership of that caliber and kind that is required at this level of decision-making in Parliament. I must be honest with the Opposition: you will only find such leadership in the People's National Congress. **[Applause]**

This is not the first time that Guyana has been faced with a crisis. We have had a crisis before but we have seen Finance Ministers and Premiers blundering, creating chaos, confusing the workers and, what is most important, destroying the relationship between the workers and Government.



We have seen Britain in a crisis inviting the workers to show restraint in their demands. We have seen other leaders in crisis, telling the workers “not a penny more.” Today, though we are faced with a crisis, it is clear that the public servants are told “Continue with your negotiations for wages and better conditions.” They are also told that there will be no retrenchment at this stage. The Government will find areas of deployment and I hope that the Opposition will see the need to co-operate on this question of deployment. Let me repeat again: it is in a time of crisis that a leader proves his worth; it is in a time of crisis that a movement proves its worth; it is in a time of crisis that a Government proves its worth.

In the Budget Speech, the Minister of Finance concluded by saying:

“It is my firm conviction that the fundamental solution to the problem of the economy is a high level of production and increased productivity.”

The Government not only at this time of crisis realises the importance of the workers and invites their co-operation for production and productivity. In 1969, the Government introduced a policy decision, the first in the Caribbean, on workers’ participation aimed not at sweating the workers, not at grinding their faces to the wheel but aimed at having them participate in decision-making at all levels of management.

We are not so much worried or bothered at this time about serving on the Boards. We want the workers to prove their ability and their creativity at all levels of industry in the field, in the factory and in the offices. The introduction of this system did not follow the Russian system of workers’ control and workers’ participation. It did not follow the British or the Yugoslav or the Danes or the Swedes. We made a careful examination of the Guyanese situation, the history of the working class, the relationship with the workers, the various systems that were in the industrial system over the years, such as joint consultation. The Opposition will remember when they sweated us with the *stupidness* they called Whitley Council which they borrowed from the British and which we have thrown overboard.

**10.1.77**

**National Assembly**

**2.30 – 2.40 p.m.**

What the system aims at is in the interest of the workers for higher production and productivity. The programme is in keeping with this Government's ideological position 'From each according to this ability to each according to his work.' The aim is to give every worker an opportunity not only to work but to have a say in the management of the various concerns.

**2.40 p.m.**

Socialism is premised on democracy, not democracy when you cast a vote for those who will manage the Government in Parliament; not democracy at the Union elections or the local elections but democracy at all levels of society and so the system is intended to bring in to being industrial democracy. The workers are the majority in every concern; it is the workers who in the final analysis must have the major say.

We hear about socialism and my comrades quote books concerning the USSR. I will ask them to come back home for a while. It is said, from the socialist point of view, that the entire world is in a transition and surely if we examine the world situation today the social political and economic situation of the world, we will agree that the world is in a transition. But we must come home and we will find, as Lenin said, that in socialism there must be a transition. There is a communist party in the Soviet Union but there is no communism; it is not a communist state. There is a transition from socialism to communism and many of the things they expect to do when they become a communist state they cannot afford to do now for one reason or the other. The transition requires time, education, training, planning and the development of resources, human and otherwise. That is the goal.

Our goal here, as regards the workers' participation, is workers' control but at this stage we are in a transition from workers' participation to workers' control. At every stage of our socialist development we must understand what is meant by the transition. This Government has taken a bold position, a strong position, in ensuring that the workers' true position is

guaranteed in the final analysis. We believe in the dictatorship of the participation systems that exist today, where the majority on the Board are workers, were not built in a week; it took years not months to build them.

We must prepare the workers. We have a system of education and training for the workers to take full control in time. Therefore, we can say that the programme devised by the unit of the Ministry of Labour is with an objective an objective that requires time. The comrade said he listened to some of the lectures and attended some of the seminars. As a matter of fact, to show you our sincerity and belief in the education of the workers and the masses to take their rightful place in society and industry we have organised an education and training programme through the Ministry of Labour for the Guyana Agricultural Workers' Union.

One would wonder why it is that the Ministry of Labour selected a sort of Opposition union to the Government to train its members and to educate them. When it comes to the working class, the training and preparing of workers to take their rightful place in society and industry, there should be no political barriers.

I appeal at this stage to the P.P.P. to relieve the workers of the political pressures and give them an opportunity to prepare themselves for the final take-over, for the final position of the workers. If the People's Progressive Party people were to leave the GAWU as a union to itself, to behave as a trade union, we would see the kind of industrial climate in the sugar industry as expected by the Minister of Finance in his Budget.

This question of workers participation has not only captured the imagination of the workers but the managers of the various concerns have come to realize that this is an inevitable course of development for industrial relations and for working class relations in an industry. We have the system established at many enterprises in Guyana today and we intend to gradually introduce it in more of the enterprises. The Government's position is not to end it there in

public concerns, but in time in introduce legislation to make it law that there should be workers' participation in private concerns also.

I need not speak any further on workers' participation to tell you how many people we have trained over the period. But let us look at labour. I will deal with social security briefly. This Government for many years is truly a working-class Government, made possible by a working-class Party. There is no question about that. We draw our strength from working-class organisations such as the T.U.C. and its affiliates.

**2.50 p.m.**

I think you know, Cde. Speaker, that the Prime Minister is the President on leave of the oldest trade union in this part of the world and I am the President on leave of the strongest trade union. **[Laughter]** My union has a history of creating the breakthrough against Colonel Teare when Ram Karran was there with the union. All of those unions are now on the side of the P.N.C. including the union that was led by the Leader of the Opposition, the Sawmillers and Forest Workers' Union. Why do you think they have come over to this side? Because of our relationship with the trade union and with the working-class.

Over last year, 1976, and to date in 1877 the Ministry of Labour trained over a thousand workers through unions. Our relations with the T.U.C. could not be batter. It was never better. As the years go on, the T.U.C. has come to understand more and more every day the true ideology of the P.N.C. and its policy so that the link between the Government, the Party and the T.U.C. is strengthened every day.

We recognise that the workers are important. We say "People first and everything else afterwards." I went through a period as a trade unionist and I know when a Government is hostile to the workers or not. **[Interruption]** Cde. Speaker, don't let them start me up in this

House today. The Member is talking about tear gas. I was out here when they were firing shots, shooting the workers. I do not know where the shots came from. I was at Annandale when -- **[Interruption]** Don't start anything! What is bothering the Opposition is the relationship. Why such a relationship? Because the Party, the People's National Congress, does not just say something, it says what it means and means what it says. When we speak of strengthening the working-class organisations, we do it in a tangible way.

There was a time when the Critchlow Labour College found it difficult to manage its financial affairs and had to appeal to local bourgeoisie and to foreigners for assistance. The Government said: "You will not have to do that any longer. Whatever it costs to run the Critchlow Labour College, we will finance it to make sure that your education programme goes ahead." This is not intended to weaken the movement. The education programme and assistance that is given to the College and to the T.U.C. is not intended to weaken the movement. I do not know how education can weaken a people or weakens an organisation. Education strengthens an organization and that is why we find it necessary to give assistance to the education arm of the T.U.C, which is the Critchlow Labour College.

Now, on the question of production and productivity, just let us give an example of the sugar industry, the major industry in Guyana. **[Interruption]** The year 1976 was a most difficult year for the entire agricultural sector. There is no question of anybody asking why we did not produce enough in agriculture. Anyone who has a backyard, don't worry about acres of land, would know why we could not produce more. If you had a pot, if you had a gasoline drum and perhaps planted peppers, you would know why the nation could not have produced more agricultural produce in 1976. We do not have to go far to understand that. It was uncontrollable. But, to be honest, notwithstanding the weather, production in the sugar industry did well. There were a number of strikes in the sugar industry but not as much as usual.

Now, we cannot predict for the future but I would congratulate the workers. I would congratulate the members of the G.A.W.U. in this House for doing a good job in 1976 under

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**2.50 – 3 p.m.**

most adverse conditions because the weather was bad. Because the weather was bad we did not get the kind of sucrose content in the sugar to get the yields we wanted but we were still able to produce almost 335,000 tons of sugar. The strikes in the sugar industry, we know, will not come to an end right away but I would say that if the situation continues the same way, if the relationship between G.A.W.U. and GUYSUCO continues in this way, we will see a better year in 1977.

When there is an organisation like G.A.W.U. and the leader of the organization is the Leader of the Opposition, you do not know what to expect because it is not a difficult thing for the P.P.P. to interject unnecessary and unreasonable demands to incite the workers towards strike action. And so, I appeal to the P.P.P. to let the workers produce as they want to produce, to let them develop the kind of relationship with their employer that is good and necessary at this time. Don't let us talk about destabilisation and critical support and then destabilise ourselves by calling strikes in the sugar industry, our major industry.

**3 p.m.**

Now I say, we are doing the most that any Government can do in the interest of the workers, and not only that, we give serious consideration to matters in the interest of the sugar workers. We have been looking at relations. If there is a dispute and they come to the Ministry of Labour, there is never rejection. Right now there is an arbitration taking place on the question of profit sharing. That arbitration was set up by the Ministry of Labour. There is an arbitration on the dispute at Albion, set up by the Ministry of Labour. We are doing everything to satisfy the workers and so we expect that in return the G.A.W.U. and its political driving wheel would see our concern for the workers' interests and let us have maximum production and productivity.

**The Speaker:** Time!

**Cde. Ramsaroop:** I respectfully move that the Cde. Minister of Labour be given an extension of 15 minutes to continue his presentation.

**Cde. Rayman**            *seconded.*

*Question put, and agreed to.*

**Cde. Carrington:** Only a few days ago we agreed to up the means test for social security and social assistance. This means that more sugar workers will come into pensions directly from the Government. We believe that the question of wages is not all. Any social leader, any trade union leader, who takes the position that the question of wages is all, is wrong. Social security, job security, other social benefits, are just as important as wages.

It was a cry from the sugar workers and from the T.U.C. that, based on the conditions of work in the sugar industry, the workers will not be able to enjoy pensions at 65 years. The Government did not say: “No.” We said that we would examine it. It was examined by the actuary and the actuary has now recommended that the age for pensions should be reduced to 60 years. So sugar workers in 1977 will be receiving N.I.S. pensions at 60 years of age and that applies to all Guyanese workers.

There have been improved social benefits. Again, in the field of social security we set out in 1976 to improve the position of women with regard to maternity benefits. It is said that one will know that a Government is serious about the development of a nation when it takes the affairs of women seriously. It is said that the conditions of life and work from women in any country indicate in what direction the Government is going, and so again we moved for improved benefits for women under the social security scheme. I can speak for three hours on this particular matter but there are other speakers to come.

Let us examine the other areas of relations between the workers' organization and the Government. I have made reference to social security. Very shortly, pensioners will be receiving free travel. Now you may want to know, as was said in the past, forget about the old people, those who have retired. I said earlier that social security and other social benefits mean more than wages. It is known in the socialist countries that the criterion, the main consideration, is the level of social benefits for the workers not only when they are capable of working, not conditions when they are young only, but conditions when they are old, conditions when they cannot work, conditions for the disable. We are now working on a programme of integrating seriously the National Insurance Scheme into the social security system.

If this Government did not show this kind of regard for the workers and for the workers' organisation, one would not have seen the kind of relationship that exists between the Federated Union of Government Employees, the P.S.U. and the T.U.C. One has heard of strained relations but they are consulted at every stage. Cde. Speaker, you will remember that the Minister of Economic Development said that there is a plan for restructuring the economy. The T.U.C. is invited to serve there. The T.U.C. is serving on the Board of one of the largest corporations in the Caribbean, GUYSTAC. The T.U.C. is consulted at every level, but this is not all. The workers serve on various Boards of Guystac to the floor level.

So these relationships will continue to be strengthened. And why? Because of its policies, because of its understanding of socialism, that the roots, the history of the socialist movement commenced with the working class. There is only one class that can put an end to class struggle in this world of ours. It is the working class, the proletariat. That is why we can always count on the proletariat and the working-class people to rise to any occasion.

### **3.10 p.m.**

It is the T.U.C. and it is the President of the T.U.C., Cde. Basil who Blair, who heads the Committee for the raising of funds to help Guyana out of this difficult situation. I am sure they



would wonder why in 1966 the T.U.C. went with People's National Congress to demand Independence. Since then the relations between the T.U.C. and the Government have been cordial and are improving all the time.

I do not wish selfishly to discuss my Ministry's programme because this will be discussed when we are discussing estimates. At that time I will give an account of my stewardship and the co-operation of my officers in the Ministry.

At this stage, as I said earlier, the Government, through the Ministry of Labour, is doing as much for the workers as it possibly can and that policy runs through every Ministry. It runs through every corporation and every institution that the Government has control of.

Cde. Speaker, I will tell you something. Only a few weeks ago it was discovered that some of the trade unions had an Agreement with employers who used to be big employers in Guyana. According to the Agreement a woman must only bear a child every three years. If she wants she can bear a child every six months as far as we are concerned. **[Laughter]**

Cde. Speaker, I will give you an idea. I called in the employers' representative and I said that this thing must come to an end. This concern now belongs to the Government. The representative said, "We have an Agreement with the union." I said "I am not concerned with the Agreement with the union. The Government has a clear ideological position on the position of women and that must come to an end now." This is why we do not wait for the union to make demands and pressure the employers and pressure the Government; we give them most of the best conditions they want on a platter. Even before they wish it is there, because of our commitment to the working class organisation and workers generally.

I have been speaking of workers and one may want to . . .to feel that this Government and the Party are only concerned with workers. It is a fact that workers have to provide the goods and services and we must motivate them, educate them and influence them in this

direction. But influence them for whom? They must be able to provide for the masses and when we say the masses we mean all Guyanese people, including the Opposition. They get some of the best conditions, offices etc., good pensions too and they go and draw them. So this Government and Party are interested and committed to the development of the masses of the Guyanese people.

In conclusion I must go back to the Budget to say that the members of the Opposition must have their say, but in the final analysis I am sure they will conclude that they can really say very little on what was presented there, because they will have to find not Kalder, but Einstein to produce something better than that.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Minister of Information and Culture.

**The Minister of Information and Culture (Cde. Field-Ridley):** Thank you very much Cde. Speaker and thank you for having given me the opportunity to participate in this debate. I am particularly pleased at that because I think that now - - **[Interruption]**

**The Speaker:** The Cde. Minister has not stated and we already have been behavior.

**Cde. Field Ridley:** I was saying that to my mind during the debate we have had an opportunity to experience much particularly from our back benchers on both sides, which has been of benefit to this House. I do not think it is necessary for me to thank my colleague, the Minister of Finance. I think the masses of Guyana has done that more effectively than I could do because they understand the realities of the situation in which they live in a way that I wish Members on the other side would try to understand. We judge from direct contact with them, talking to them and listening to such programmes as Action Line, Road Talk and The Man in the Street.

They do not see this at all as a featherbed but they see it as a real challenge and an opportunity to make something of their lives, even in a year when the news stories from all over the world, from East and from West, tell us about the financial chaos that is the world situation from time to time. We have read the stories of people being retrenched and not being able to work . . . in that great bastion of democracy, the United States, because there is no place to employ them. We have seen the international community lose respect for the economy of England and, as a result, the pound plummeted downwards. But the picture has been the same on the eastern side of the world. In the U.S.S.R., they have had the same kinds of problems and right now they are in a situation with their COMECON colleagues where the debt burden 4400 billion, is so fantastic that I do not think we can even understand those figures. The point I was making is that the masses of Guyana have reacted to that Budget in a positive way. I would like to congratulate you, Cde. Speaker, on the fact that you have given eye to people who have been able to teach us. I have learnt a lot from listening to Members of this House like Cde. Gill who speaks from her experience in the market place and brings them before us. I would like to think that our colleagues on the other side have gone through that education process too. The only problem we have is that when that education process is completed with Members of the other side they tend to walk and cross the floor and come over to this side, or they depart from their ranks to other kinds of employment. I miss, with a great deal of regret some of my vibrant colleagues who used to sit over there but this is the process of education and these are the hazards that even they must face.

We were talking about education and I was a little worried at hearing the contributions on the other side. I appreciate, as Cde. Carrington does, the fact that there was very little they could attack on the Budget. But even so, I was very worried that friends of ours who share a similar ideology, I understand, could see education as something that is so narrow that they react with glee to what is a regret of this Government that we have to spend less money on one area of mass education.

I am a little worried at their reaction to institutions of education like National Service. If I, in my wildest dream, had ever thought that there could be a possibility thinking perhaps of supporting the Party on the other side, when I discovered that they were preventing people like myself, as women, from sharing the benefits of National Service, I would have put such thoughts from my mind. That, to my mind, is a form of their refusal to accept the equality of the sexes.

**3.20 p.m.**

National Service is a privilege for Guyanese and it is a privilege that should not be limited only to the male people in Guyana. It is a privilege that should be shared by the women of Guyana but they say “No women for National Services.” It is Chauvinist. I have never thought that there could be chauvinist socialists. The two things seem fundamentally contradictory to me but perhaps they can clear that contradiction as they manage so tortuously to try to clear other kinds of contradictions.

I am pleased, Cde. Speaker, to hear the call on the other side for us to use the mass media as an instrument for the education of our people. We on this side agree completely and I would like to congratulate them on that call. It shows that they have moved some distance away from the times when they barricaded themselves in those Public Buildings with barbed wire to keep the people out or to keep themselves in – I am not sure which. I am glad that at last they have come to a position where they respect the masses and are willing to cater for the education of the masses. It shows, too, an advance from the situation where they tossed out two Guyanese journalists from their press conferences to which they had admitted foreign friends. One of those journalists is a Member for this House, not in his seat at the moment. Perhaps the younger member, speaking on this subject cannot – and I do not accuse him of responsibility for that crime because he has an advantage which I do not have. He has youth on his side and cannot bear responsibility for those acts which show a complete disregard for the people of their own country Guyana.

I had the privilege, Cde. Speaker, of listening to you talk about radio time for the debate and for members of the Opposite. I think I heard several nights on G.B.S. the voices of the hon. Members on the other side making their contribution to the Budget Debate. That is a far way from the days when the Opposition was banned from the radio stations of Guyana. But this is how life goes and we on this side – and I am sure the members of the mass media themselves – will be the first to admit that they have a great deal more to achieve.

It is our policy that the media be one of the agencies for mass education of the people of Guyana. I would like to say that I welcome the thoughtfulness of the contribution of Cde. Feroze Mohamed. It gives me a great deal of inspiration to look across the benches and to see the concentration, the intensity, with which he listens to the contributions from this side. He is a young man who I believe is being educated. I understand he is chairman of the P.Y.O. If the Party is not careful he might follow in the footsteps of the previous chairman of the P.Y.C.

**[Laughter]**

But I was talking about education, using the mass media as an instrument for education. The hon. Member, Cde. Mohamed, called upon us to do that but at the same time he welcomed the fact that this Ministry has fewer funds to spend. Let us deal with a fundamental problem of the media. We who live in Guyana today have had the benefit of being able to say that we, the people of Guyana, own at least two areas, G.B.S. and the Daily Chronicle, in terms of the mass media. In spite of that, the fundamental re-organisation of the mass media to make them serve their true role, has not yet been achieved because of the constraints that are put upon us by the limitations of the objective circumstances of the time. We have a newspaper and a radio which are called upon to be self-financing. They depend, therefore, on advertisements to finance themselves. We in the Government, as a matter of policy, have said that it is the duty of the Government to accept responsibility for financing the media, so that they should not be dependent on the advertisements that come in for organising themselves, running themselves and educating the masses. This is fundamental.

If the radio station and the newspaper have to depend on private advertising funds to finance themselves, running themselves and educating the masses. This is fundamental.

If the radio station and the newspaper have to depend on private advertising funds to finance themselves then that is an inhibition to their ability to function as true instruments for the education of the masses. The members on the other side say they are glad that there are less funds to spend on information. But information and education go hand-in-hand. I do not, again, understand the contradictions of a Comrade who will stand and say we need a better service from our newspaper and from our radio but refuse to vote any money to finance them. We are getting accustomed to that kind of contradiction within this House, but let that pass.

We have done an in-depth study of the position of the mass media and in spite of our policy positions, they do not change overnight. They move, as I have described, from a position which we inherited to one where we are now. Training has been institutionalized and, as this House knows, there is now at least the kind of respect for journalists which has enabled us to have a communications programme at the University of Guyana. So that is some assistance.

Guyana has been in the forefront of the countries asking for the creation of a Caribbean News Agency. At last that has been created. CANA – it is pronounced Cay-na is a News Agency that services, to a large extent, our media but we do not depend entirely on it. We use our own initiative. For example, C.B.S. no longer slavishly carries the B.B.C. news; instead, it puts together its own foreign news programme because this is the kind of direction we believe we should go if the media is to be responsible for the education of the masses in the country.

Let me be frank. We on the Government side believe that CANA needs more improvement. They have made arrangements with Prensa Latina to use its wires to share its news but the arrangement has not yet got off the ground. In the meanwhile, our media are in direct contact with Prensa Latina and wherever it has news that is relevant they do use it. We do not have to use wires that come from TASS or Chinese News Agencies but nevertheless we

establish that contact and anyone looking at the newspaper or listening to the radio would realize that by direct contact with the missions, that by direct contact with the representative of TASS – and TASS has now set up an Agency in Guyana there is direct contact with the representatives of the People's Republic of China. We do carry stories in the Press depicting the kind of problems that are interesting and relevant to us; illustrating the kind of life that is lived in these socialist countries. We could do more, but the process is one that goes on and as I say are limited by the realities in which we operate.

The Mass media, however, must be seen as part of a total communications network, a communications network that involves the use of the cinemas. The hon. Member on the other side did make a point about the cinemas. He mentioned the undesirable films that are shown at the cinemas but, as you know, Cde. Speaker, and as the house knows, it is something that has been engaging our attention for a long time. We accept that there is no film-maker who is going to make films just for Guyana, a country with a population of under 800,000 people, but there are two things we have seen happening: during 1976 we, in Guyana, have been able to see a diversification of the kind of films shown on the screens of our cinemas. We have had a reasonable exposure of films that come from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, from the People's Republic of China and from Cuba. This process will continue. To support that, however, the Ministry has been directed to establish a distribution agency that will distribute the films that come through contact with friendly Governments as well as films that are made by us.

### 3.30 p.m.

That leads me on to the second plan of our contribution for this vexed period. I am very happy to say that in Guyana we now have all the technical equipment and expertise needed to produce our own black and white films, and in fact every fortnight we make a film called, "Guyana Magazine" which is shown in the cinemas. We now have all the equipment for processing in colour and next week we should start – perhaps I should say "continue" for some of that training has gone on – the training of our technicians to develop completely in Guyana

colour films, 35 mm, 16 mm and 8 mm. As a result of this, we have the potential for producing our own films or for giving technical assistance for those within the region who want to use the facilities. Whereas before the entire region went to Movietone or allied places for the development of their films, there will now be a studio in Guyana. By the end of this year we hope that will be a working reality.

I am proud to relate to this House that a few days ago the Ministry got a cable from Lagos, Nigeria, inviting our film crew to come to form part of a consortium to be responsible for the entire filming of that Festival. **[Applause]** I think we must be cognisant of this honour when we remember that this is a very small country and some of the participants in that Festival come from very large countries which have had film centres established for years, some representatives come from the Black communities in North America, where, as you know, they have been in the film business for very many years. I think Guyana has done well in that area.

In terms of the kind of film the hon. Member mentioned I will be frank; We have a problem. The distributors insist on bringing films which they believe will be beneficial to them in terms of the money returns. We have a Board of Film Censors that looks at these films; we change the Board from time to time but it is a question of education and orientation to get them to understand the kind of films we want. I really do not understand very clearly. One of the Members of the Opposition who is now a Member of the House was once a member of that Board. Generally, he gave very good service, but from time to time the kind of films that he approved for showing showed that something happened between the theory which he avowed to practice and the practical application of it as applied to films that are shown on the screen.

On the other hand, a very close relative, I could say intimate relative, of another member of the Opposition from a different party is a member of that Board. I would not have thought that her orientation judging by what her intimate relative says would accord with the socialist objectives of Guyana, but having attended the briefing session she understood the objectives and has proved to be a very good censor. I think if the member of the other side stays close to that



particular intimate relative there is a lot of hope for that particular opposition party. They, too, might want to cross the floor.

It is a question of education and orientation. We have to continue the briefing, we have to continue experimenting. When the distribution centre is established then we will have in Government the facility for identifying the kind of films that we would like shown. Quite a few do exist. We have been looking at catalogues so I think it is more a question on time.

During 1976 we appointed a Cinematograph Committee under the chairmanship of Cde. Laurie Lewis who is President of the Students Association at the University of Guyana, and that Committee did very good work. It examined the situation that existed in the cinemas; it looked at the conditions of the cinemas, the kind of service they offered to their patrons, and it has put up recommendations which have been accepted by the Government. The recommendations call for a body to monitor the implementation of those recommendations. I have today appointed Cde. Laurie Lewis to be in charge of a permanent Cinematograph committee. That committee will be charged with monitoring the kind of service that is offered to patrons of the cinemas.

Cde. Speaker, as you understand and appreciate, the cinemas are a very popular source of entertainment, but I am afraid in many ways the services they offer leave a lot to be desired. The physical surroundings are sometimes unbelievable. During the course of the work of this Committee we had to close down about twelve cinemas because we felt that their state was so bad that we could not allow human beings to go into those buildings. All but one, have now completed the work that they were required to do and they are open again but there is still a lot more to be done. I think the working of that Cinematograph Committee will give us a better service from the cinema.

Of course, we have a problem here. In this transitional stage we are dependent up to now on private enterprise to provide a service which is really an educational service, but it is a question of timing and other circumstances within our community. I believe that these areas,

because we have made a plan and because we are following that plan, indicate the direction for the future of the cinema and that form of education in the country.

One thing about the Budget that I think all Members would react positively to is the fact that it again emphasises the concern of Government for the people of Guyana, for the quality of life and for the development of people. Of course, we have heard from the other side the stories of the rising cost of living, of the price of plantains – I don't know why the Member chose plantains – and the general rise in the prices of commodities of that sort. The Member could have gone further. I understand that when I was born my father did not have a job. I understand he got a job five months after that. He was a teacher, he got a teaching job at the princely sum of \$4 a month but at that time, of course, he could go into the shop – I think sugar at that time was a penny a pound – and he could say, "Please, Mr. Shopman, I beg you for a piece of salt-fish and a pat of butter." If that is all you are looking at – the cost of goods - you can compare it *ad infinitum* with other areas. It is not enough to look at the price of any given commodity in isolation. It is not enough to look only at the take-home packet of any category of worker. One must look at the totality of life in this country that is ours.

Government has taken the position – and Guybau took the same position recently – that there are two things that have to be looked at in terms of emoluments for workers. One of them, of course, is the money that goes home in that packet. The other thing is the improvement of the general standard of living so that while my father from his \$4 had to think in terms of how he would pay to get his child into a school – the salary might not be the ideal salary we want – services are being provided so that my child and your child and the other person's child can share these services on a basis of equality. I think, bearing in mind that we have been independent from 1966 and this Government took not office but power in 1968, we are to be commended for the kind of work we have done.

I was talking about total development of life. I do not understand how Members on the other side can even criticize or look adversely as they did in a publication that recently came out,

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**3.30 – 3.40 p.m.**

at the Cultural Centre. That Cultural Centre has been established with finances from all the people of Guyana. It already is beginning to play an important function in the life of the citizen. It is new and there are still adjustments that have to be made, but we have made a programme which gives us first of all a situation where there is at least every month one show lasting one week moving to a situation where we have two shows lasting one week each. The remainder of time will be used for rehearsals.

**3.40 p.m.**

Right now, I have been discussing with the Minister of Labour an idea that has come from the workers for them to put on a show at the Cultural Centre and we are going to work with them to ensure that the quality of performance is a quality that could have come from professionals because the only difference between professionals and amateurs in this area is that one does it full-time and the other does it part time. But we believe that the Cultural Centre should be what it is called, a “cultural centre” and not just a theatre. To this end, we have taken a decision that we will have a flat rate for the tickets in that Cultural Centre. In other words, whereas we started with tickets at different values, \$10, \$3, \$2, \$1, we now have a flat rate but we will ensure that about 300 tickets, at least, are reserved for \$1 seats – that is the only exception – so that there should be no one who wants to go to that Centre who is debarred from going because he cannot find the money. We believe, with that programme, we will start seeing a dream become a reality, the dream of having a Centre where Guyanese can come from all over the country and perform in good circumstances, in good surroundings, to a quality that is excellent.

This year, we have the second Guyfesta and already the regions are preparing for their part of that exercise. You will remember that Guyfesta is an exercise that takes place first in the regions where people who have talent in the area of creative arts and performing arts display that talent and then we award Certificates of Excellence and all the holders of Certificates of Excellence will come into Georgetown to perform, this time at the Cultural Centre. Then, there

will be follow-up in the regions where some of those who have acquired Certificates of Excellence can perform in the regions so that we decentralize the activities of the Cultural Centre because we believe that this, too, is part of education and we have recognised a long time this over-centralisation in Georgetown has not been good for the total development of people.

As a matter of fact, talking about the mass media, we have made important strides in that process of decentralization to cope with the need for the education of our people. Right now, for example, you will find that residents of Linden who previously complained quite rightly, that they could not hear the radio will tell you what perfect reception they get from the station, G.B.S. because at Linden we have just completed the installation of a transmitter. **[Applause]**

That is only part of the plan. The plan is to set up regional radio stations so that within, the regions, they themselves have an opportunity to do the programming that is relevant to life in that region. This is the direction in which we are going and this is the road along which we have started to travel.

For the moment, we have other problems. The hon. Member on the other side mentioned that now that there is a cut in the budget – and the cut in Recurrentincurred has not been very large – he wondered what would happen to the large “bureaucracy” as he called it, that existed. Now I am a little disappointed because when the Opposition does not attack the Ministry of Information I feel somehow that we have failed and have not been as dynamic as we ought to have been. I am very unhappy at this silence that has greeted the work of the Ministry of Information this year but what I want to say is that even when they attacked the Ministry for spending so much money, we were doing that with a professional staff that had shortages and indeed, we have a shortages of professional people in many areas. We have heard about the shortages of teachers; we have shortage of professional communicators but nevertheless those who work in the system have done well and have managed to extend themselves.

We have a system of Regional Information Offices. That is an essential area of the services that we offer because those offices maintain direct contact with people in the regions and then inform the intermediate group that discusses problems with those people and feeds them with answers and keep the dialogue going. That kind of structure calls for then Information Officers, ten Assistant Information Officers, ten Driver/Projectionists.

**The Speaker:** Time!

**Cde. Ramsaroop:** Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that the Cde. Minister of Information and Culture be given another fifteen minutes to continue her presentation.

**Cde. Rayman** *seconded.*

*Question put, and agreed to.*

**Cde. Field-Ridley:** We, at the moment in that establishment, have in place, four information Officers out of ten, five Assistant Information Officer out of ten, and five Driver/Projectionists out of the. We could have filled those slots if we had wanted to follow the example given us by our friends on the other side when they filled the post of Headmaster at Monkey Mountain School but we did not feel that that was the way to run Government business and so those four Information Officers who function, although they are four, have been properly trained at the University of Guyana. Their job is a training experience because they are supervised and get on-the-spot training and they have been identified for further training as we see the kind of potential they have. So, it is not a bureaucracy that causes problems within the Ministry; it is just a question of a few dedicated people doing work that has worried you.

Cde. Speaker, I am talking generally about the quality of life and that quality of life has been improving in many areas. I would like to mention too, the area of the Institute of Creative Arts, again, because it is education and, again, because the Members on the opposite side are a

little uneasy when money is spent on this Ministry because they do not recognize the importance of education outside of the formal institutions, that it is as important as education within the formal institutions.

The Institute of Creative Arts is a teaching organization but in the creative art it has five departments which are all functioning. I think everyone has seen the work of the School of Dance. I think people are becoming aware of the work of the Burrowes School of Art which is one of the departments and whose work was so highly commended at the CARIFESTA exhibition. We have seen drama workshops; we have seen music workshops; we have seen creative writing. Recently, the Ministry published a book collecting samples – they could only be samples – of the creative writing that has gone on in Guyana from 1966 to 1967. I would recommend that members read it because it gives an idea of the kind of creativity of which our Guyanese people at all levels and all occupations are capable of. Indeed, it is a monument to the kind of sensitivity of the Guyanese people who are alive at this time and who have been alive for the last ten years.

It would be impossible for me to talk about the quality of life and education without talking about this. I remember one Member on the other side raising the question of the Community Centres. I remember Cde. Green, the Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation making the point that he had already invited the Opposition to share responsibility for the running of those Centres. I should like to say that sharing, of course, is consistent with the way we behave but I would like to warn against going back to the situation which we inherited when it proved necessary to make the arrangement of handing over Community Centres to Local Authorities, where certain groups had got hold of those Community Centres and it was practically impossible for the communities themselves to have access to those centres even after they had been handed over to Local Authorities. I related in this honourable House at least one incident, if I remember correctly, where we had a coach in table tennis and on the instigation of the P.P.P. organisers they tried to deny admittance at one Community Centre to people of the surrounding communities because some of them came from the villages around.

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Community centres must be centres for the communities that surround those centres and not be the preserve of any group who happens to hold on to control. That is the only warning I would like to give because we have made the kind of strides in sport that I would not like to see lost. I am not referring to the kind of successes that we have had in the international arena during, let us say, 1976, or in the Caribbean arena during this last year. We have done well in the area of sport so many times. We are the winners of the Benson and Hedges cricket title for example. The match was played in Jamaica. We won the Brandon cup for men's lawn tennis. We won the Phillips cup for ladies; lawn tennis. I could go on through a whole list of our achievements, volleyball, CARIFTA athletics, athletics in Surinam, but to my mind that is not the real success of our sporting achievements.

There are two areas I would like to focus attention on because, to me, sport again is part of the education of our people. I would like to focus attention on the mass participation in sport and that, to my mind, is the greatest success we have achieved in sport. Recently the Ministry has been able to acquire equipment and we have been able to help groups that needed equipment, up and down the rivers, in areas where they have little contact with the organisations that exist. And we do have a lot of organisations, because in Guyana we play 36 international sports. We have been able to give assistance through the sports organisers, through the coaches who travel from area to area to help to develop that expertise. And the fact that so many young people crowd the National Park, crowd the ex-race course, out in village communities, out in rural areas, to my mind that is the success.

The second area on which I would like to focus attention is the fact that we have been able to produce sportsmen in Guyana of the caliber who have won international recognition for the courage of their stand at the Montreal Olympics. We had sportsmen who had spent a lot of time in training and preparing themselves and when it was a question of withdrawing from those games as an act of international solidarity with our brothers who are, like us, completely against

the principle of apartheid, especially apartheid in sport, that team that had left Guyana withdrew, even though many of the people whose orientation we believed was similar tours found that the attraction of the medals was so strong that they remained and participated. Little Guyana withdrew and I would like to record in this House the fact that as far as the party and Government of the people of Guyana are concerned, those people from Guyana who went to Montreal and withdrew are heroes of our society. There was one Guyanese living in Canada whom I would like to single out for special attention because he had been offered participation on the Canadian team and refused it to join the Guyana team, and he withdrew willingly and gladly like the rest of them.

Those are the two areas I think in sport that are important and indicate the kind of development ideologically because that is the basis for all the activity in this area of sport: (1) mass participation, (2) the ability to stand by our principles no matter what the inducement is to leave those principles alone. **[Interruption]**

National Service again: I think the success of National Service is what irks the members on the other side. Education of the masses, a process that is on-going. We are learning, all of us. We, the workers of Guyana, have been learning.

The film unit has been contributing by the kind of films it has been making. The Ministry has been working through the area of sport and of culture but I think finally I would like to take one look at the fact that we have made important strides in the participation of our women in all these areas that I have mentioned. I think it is a mark of pride, for us that we have been able to send one contingent to Lagos and that is a steel band. When we took this decision I confess I was a little concerned because traditionally our steel band has been made up completely of male participants but I think it is a matter of pride that we selected a steel band and then said: "Tell us your 25 members." Among those 25 members there were a little boy under 12 years of age, the youth of the country, and two females. I think this is a breakthrough that we have made because although we have had all-female steel bands, we have chosen the topmost



steel band in Guyana – there have been two close to each other – to represent us and women have made a breakthrough even in this area. **[Interruption]** I believe that some members of the Opposition are very familiar with some areas of education in which I do not have any expertise. Perhaps the hon. Member would like to take the Floor to enlighten this House about his experiences in that area. But I rather think you would not allow it, Cde. Speaker.

Women really have made a breakthrough. I make this point because the activities of the W.R.S.M. have been brought to the attention of members on the opposite side and I have lived to see them, again a contradiction, criticize the W.R.S.M. What for? Because the W.R.S.M. has been training women to take their places beside men in areas that have traditionally been reserved for men. The W.R.S.M. has taken up itself the responsibility to train our own comrades in driving heavy duty vehicles, in contributing through that to the development of Guyana. Perhaps because they had not thought of doing this, it irks them and they criticise the W.R.S.M. But I think we must recognize that one of the reasons why women have not achieved the position of equality in our community in the past is because the educational opportunities were not available to them and this Government is committed to redress that imbalance in terms of the educational opportunities for all.

I would like to close now but in closing to say that no matter what achievements we have heard in terms of the economic life of our community and they have been many – we heard Cde. Hoyte give us really a learning experience on what we had achieved and what more is likely to happen this year – I do not think even our successes in the field of agriculture, and these have been many, constitute the real success of this Government. I think the real success of this Government has been in the quality of the life of the people of Guyana. After all, we are the descendants, as somebody else said, of the labourers of this country who came as slaves and indentured servants and the quality of life has improved over these last years in a way that gives us the real success, so that the person in Guyana now is a person who can stand tall and take pride in himself, who is a self-reliant individual who does not wait, as Cde. Belgrave seems to think, for Government to create jobs for him, to get jobs for him, to put him to work with

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somebody else. But who, through a learning experience, creates opportunities for his own self. And learning opportunities for that process come through Kuru Kuru College, the formal education institute, W.R.S.M., the National Service, the Creative Institute of Arts. That is, to my mind the real success of this country. [Applause]

**The Speaker:** Perhaps this may be a good time to take the suspension. The sitting of the House is suspended for 30 minutes.

*Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.*

4.30 p.m.

*On resumption - -*

**The Speaker:** When the suspension was taken the Cde. Minister of Information and Culture had concluded her contribution. *Cde. Janet Jagan.*

**Cde. J. Jagan:** Cde. Speaker, there has been a lot of discussion around this table about women and women's rights and I thought it might be an interesting point to start out with the remarks made by Cde. Bynoe which were well thought out as she went into her subject. I found them very interesting, but we have to keep in mind that women struggle for equality at various levels and the question of attitudes of men to women, of course, is important. These things must be corrected.

Fundamental to women's right is the economic question because women cannot be free if they are economically not free; if at the level of employment they suffer, as women do in Guyana, from unemployment, far more severely than men. And although it is a trite saying, it is a true saying that women are always the last to be employed and the first to be dismissed. Women have moved into more valuable fields of employment, and as some of the women

speakers here have noted, new areas of employment have been opened to women. This is very good because it proves the point that all women know, namely that women are capable of practically all forms of employment.

But it still does not solve the problem that Guyanese women face, that is, that on the whole most women who can find work in Guyana have the lowest form of employment, the form of employment that pays the least and gives the least satisfaction and that is of the lowliest social order. We know as a fact that domestic employment provides jobs for a great number of Guyanese women and it is perhaps the lowest paid form of employment and the most disgusting. But many of our women are employed as domestics. Many of our women eke out a terrible existence as waitresses working in sweat shops, working in laundries which are literally sweat shops and carrying on this kind of employment which does not pay good and which has terrible conditions.

The other side of the House keeps harking back to the past. I do not want to waste a lot of time harking back to the past because there are a lot of things that can be said. I can say an awful lot of things that would embarrass many people right here, but that is not the purpose of Parliament. In this particular case, I will hark back to the past because it concerns women who need a better deal. I have been most unhappy – my Party has raised this issue over and over again and I am glad to have the opportunity to raise it here in Parliament. I hope it is the last time it has to be raised. It is this question of establishing maximum hours of work, minimum pay and better conditions of work for domestic employees. It should be done. Let us forget about all the excuses that members on the other side of the House can give. The fact of the matter is that domestics are oppressed. The fact of the matter is that the P.N.C. in the 1964 elections promised that domestics would see a better day and they set up the Campbell Committee. The Campbell Committee gave its Report and that Report has been gathering dust ever since. Why? Let us have no excuse, just get ahead with the job. We would be satisfied if you could just go ahead and solve the problem. We will not rub it in. But try; you are overdoing the thing.

We hear about women's rights. Well, women's right include the right to work, the right to decent employment. It also includes the woman's right to see that her children are brought up under good conditions, free education, free medical services, the right to see her child live strong and healthy. As every women in this room who is a mother knows, there is nothing more agonising, there is no torture greater than that a mother suffers when she sees her child starving or her child not having enough.

I heard a lot of fine words said in this Chamber but in their hearts, those who have uttered them, knew that they are not true. I quote some of the Members who have told us how fine things are. Minister Hoyte said our children eat well; they wear shoes; they have a new quality of life. But he should have qualified it by saying that **some** of our children eat better, **some** of our children wear shoes and **some** enjoy a new quality of life. Minister Wills said that the Budget provided the finest hour for the P.N.C. and Minister Kennard said the farmers are better off; sugar workers never had it so good.

If all of this is so, why do people go to bed hungry? I am not exaggerating. These are facts. Are our children getting what they need to survive? Did someone say they are getting too much? He should be ashamed if he said it. Are our children getting what they need? A pint of milk a day is the minimum requirement for a growing child and I ask how many children in this country get a pint of milk a day. Most of our milk is not fresh milk because the dairy industry has flopped. I shall not go into that. My colleagues have made the point and it serves no purpose to make it again. But the majority of children who drink milk drink either powdered milk or tinned milk, either evaporated or condensed.

Let us settle on evaporated milk. A tin of evaporated milk is 50. that provides a little more than a pint. Let us take a family of four, a mother, father and two children living on the husband's earnings which will vary from the very lowest to the highest rate workers get. But let us settle on \$40 a week which can be considered an average. Two children is a low amount for

an average family, it is a little more. If you give two children a pint of milk each day, that would be 1/6 of the weekly earnings spent just in providing a pint of milk a day to two children, forgetting about the number of families that have a lot more than two children, Working class families and families of working people, as we all know, are generally larger. Smaller families are usually found in the middle income and upper income groups, but the working people generally have larger families and so you generally get an average of 2.5 children for each family.

Eggs are a marvelous form of nutrition. I do not have to tell you about that. Eggs and milk are whole foods and they provide a lot to the diet. They are expensive now as a result of this Budget. “Our finest hour”, as Minister Wills said, has raised the price of eggs and poultry considerably.

But let us take the same family and give them one dozen eggs a week. That means that three days a week each once can have one egg. Under better conditions we would like to see each person in all our families have an egg a day. Give hem each an egg a day for three days a week. That is a dozen, and gives them one chicken a week and that expenditure would be 1/5 of the weekly income. So you have 1/6 of the income for milk, 1/5 of the income for chicken and eggs and, really, one chicken a week in not that much and it is not a big chicken I am budgeting for. You still have to buy flour which is going up in price, bread which is also rising in price, rice which has not gone up, greens and beef. Beef is an expensive product. How many of the Members of this House go to the butcher’s shop or t the market where beef is sold to see what a husband and wife in a working class family buy for beef? They cannot afford a pound of meat. Even though the family may be six or eight persons, they buy by the ounces. Hon. Members are laughing, but let them go to Bourda or Stabroek Market tomorrow and they will see what people are buying because the protein content of the average diet of the working class is very low.

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For this weekly income of \$40.00 a week our family has to buy salt, coffee, sugar, soap and fuel to cook with and clothing and they have to pay rent. Rent takes an enormous slice of the monthly income. There may be a rent freeze but then again I do not think that some of the members on the front bench know what life is like in Guyana today. I know a young man who has to pay, in the city of Georgetown, \$60.00 a month for a small unfurnished room, without toilet and bath and without a kitchen. And that for the young person is almost 50 per cent of his income. Rents can vary. I would say for those who are fortunate to have a low rental it can vary from 15 per cent of one's income up to 50 per cent. This is a fact in the city of Georgetown and elsewhere. So that rent takes a big chunk out of income.

What do people do then when they find that they cannot meet their requirements? They have to pay for electricity, the cost of which is now going up. They have to buy bread and flour, the price of which is now going up according to this wonderful Budget that we have before us. They have to have certain basic articles of clothing. Anyone who goes into the shops knows that the cost of clothing has gone up tremendously. Shoes have sky rocketed in prices. One can manage only if sandals are being worn. The end result is that a cut is generally made in food. The amount of food and the quality of the food has to be reduced if people are to survive with the rising cost of living and the fact that wages cannot match the rising cost of living.

Since 1972 we have seen prices soar. Evaporated milk in 1972 was 39 cents for a large tin; condensed milk was 48 cents. Evaporated milk is now 50 cents a tin and condensed milk is now 63 cents a tin. Black-eye peas which used to be 70 cents a pint in 1972 – I may mention that black-eye peas were only 18 cents a pint in 1964 – are now about \$1.00 to \$1.20 a pint. In spite of all the noise and everything we hear, the fact of the matter is that we are bringing in black-eye peas from the United States of America.

Split peas which were 23 cents a pint in 1972, that is, not so long ago, are selling for 62 cents a pint now. Cheese which used to be a food people could eat – when I say so I mean that they “could afford” to eat, because in the 60’s we used to get cheese for 64 cents a pound. In 1972 it jumped to \$1.17 a pound and now, as members know, cheese is about \$2.42 a pound. I am talking about plain white cheese. If you want red cheese you have to pay more. Cheese has been removed from the diet of the working man and woman, perhaps not from the diet of those in the Chamber. Garlic, Channa have both gone up in price as well. Wages have not met that level. So you find that working class families have to follow the Prime Minister’s slogan of eating less, sleeping less, but mainly eating less or eating less quality foods.

It is fortunate for all of us, and perhaps more fortunate for the other side of the House, that rice has not gone up because rice is the food that people are surviving on today. We think it was a wise decision not to raise the price of rice because I don’t think people would have survived it. What are people eating? They now have to eat more rice and more foods that they can make with gravy to doctor up the rice. Provision which used to be a staple part of the diet are now too expensive, as we all know. I won’t go into the figures of provisions because that has been done before. Provisions that used to be part of the poor man’s diet, are no longer part of the poor man’s diet. Cheap fish now and again but not all the time. **[Interruption]** I am sorry. Every day, but to certain places.

Now the 1977 Budget has meant more burdens on the working people of this country. This is a pity because we had hoped for better times ahead. We have been told that there will be no retrenchment this year. It is good news to hear that there will be no retrenchment. If there is no retrenchment that is one thing but does that mean that there will be methods of absorbing the thousands of people who enter the job market each year? All we have is the assurance that there will be no retrenchment. But do we have the assurance that the thousands who enter the job market every year will be absorbed?

In spite of the fact that we are told that there will be no retrenchment I want to know if this is entirely true. I hope I am wrong and if I am wrong I will be glad to be wrong but I have heard that already 300 road workers have been retrenched. I hope it is not true. If there is any possibility that it is true, I hope you will prove me a liar by putting those 300 workers back on the job. I prefer to be called a liar; I prefer the workers to have the jobs.

The Prime Minister is now telling us – I think he said it last month – that there is only 7 per cent unemployment. Now this is an interesting figures. It keeps changing. Early last year I understand he said it was about 14 per cent but in the space of less than twelve months we made the remarkable achievement of reducing it from 14 per cent to 7 per cent! Quite a drop! But what really is our unemployment figure? I have never seen any official figure published. I peruse the Statistical digest and all these various publications and I cannot find any figures.

My impression is that this is one of the big, deep secrets of the administration because it is like a naked person trying to cover his nakedness with a fig leaf. The shame of the nakedness is the high unemployment figure which I believe, and which my Party believes, ranges in the 20 per cent area and certainly no where below that, absolutely not the 14 or 7 per cent that we have heard about recently.

So that unemployment is one of the problems that face our people and particularly women. Where there is no economic foundation on which women can build their struggles for rights they cannot make great strides. In spite of the optimistic notes heard from women speakers – and I support whatever advantages or any strides women have made – the sad fact is that the economic question must not be overlooked because that is basic to any discussion. We could lead a discussion on women's rights into a level that is not basic to women's needs. How equal are women, when we have two women seeping in one bed in the maternity ward of the Georgetown Hospital? If there is equality why don't we have equality in our medical services? Why don't they have the opportunity of enjoying the fullest that the society can provide in the way of social services?



4.50 p.m.

And that brings me to this question of health. What is the state of the health of the Guyanese community? What is the state of our medical services, which we hear are free? I challenge this claim that we have free medical services. We have a long way to go to be able to boast that we have free medical services. The Minister of Health has a long way to go to improve the medical services as they exist today.

I have sat here and listened to grand speeches about bursting open the interior and all the great things that are being done in the interior, but let me tell you this: if you do not bring adequate services to the pioneers in our interior and riverain area, whatever efforts you make to settle people there will wash away, there will be nothing left unless you give them the services they need, and I put medical services at the top of the list.

Most of your interior and riverain area are the most neglected areas of the country when it comes to medical attention. Doctors rarely go into your riverain areas, nurses only occasionally, dentists rarely, dispensers, of course, go into these areas because most of the responsibility for medical attention rests of the dispensers who certainly are one of our most important workers in the medical field. They do a fine job; they are the ones who service the interior areas the most. But there are many areas that have no doctors, no medical services.

I listened to one of the speakers talking about the Bartica Hospital. I remember there was a very long period when there was no doctor at Bartica, when emergency cases had no attention, they had to be flown, whenever arrangements could be made, to the City. Now you have a doctor, but there was a long period, thanks to the P.N.C., when there was no doctor. As far as my information goes, there is no doctor at the Lethem Hospital. The Leguan Hospital went for approximately eight months without a doctor. The Berbice river used to have good

medical services – doctors, dentists, well staffed health centres. All have gone. The Government has forgotten all about the farming section of the Berbice River.

Why do we have this shortage of doctors? Why are doctors leaving? There are various reasons, as they say. One of them is that it is hard for a good doctor, a doctor who takes pride in his profession to work under some of the conditions that he or she has to work under. Conditions must be improved. I think they can be improved if we really made a serious effort to improve these things. I would urge, as one of my colleagues urged, the Parliamentary Secretaries to get from behind their desks and go into the field. I would urge, particularly the Minister of Health, to get from behind his desk, get into the field, lead the medical workers, show them what to do, help them, encourage them, inspire them. It can be done. You can bring medical services, if you organize them, into all the riverain areas, into the interior areas. You can bring pre-and post-natal care into these areas if there is a will to do it.

Instead, what do we find? They have been unable to repair the launch in the Pomeroon river for months so that the doctors and the dispensers cannot go in there. **[Interruption from Gallery]**

**The Speaker:** Sergeant-at-Arms, please put that person out.

**Cde. J. Jagan:** I mention before that I did not believe we had free medical services in Guyana. Are our medical services free when patients have to go out and buy the drugs? When patients inside our hospitals cannot get drugs they need and their relatives have to purchase the drugs? When people go to the Out Patients Department and are given prescriptions for drugs and when they go to the dispensary for the drugs they are not there? When I raised this matter in this Assembly at the time we were considering the Supplementary Estimates, the Minister of Health said that my allegations were false, that there was no drug shortage. I do not wish to be rude, but outside of this Chamber, the Minister's remarks that there is no drug shortage are generally met with laughter; he is not taken seriously. I am sorry for that.

I was invited recently to speak on a radio programme with a group of pharmacists and doctors during Pharmaceutical Week and the question of availability of drugs came up. I mentioned that only that very week the Minister had said that there is no drug shortage and it precipitated general laughter, I am sorry to have to say this.

I want to take the Minister up for something he said to this House when I raised the question of the shortage of Streptomycin which is a very important drug in the treatment of tuberculosis. The Minister said, "It is not a drug of choice." But I think the Minister is wrongly advised, because it is the drug of choice in the treatment of tuberculosis and I ask him to think it over again and not given as an excuse for shortage of a basic drug the fact that it is not a drug of choice. It is a drug of choice.

What will the Minister tell me now when I say that there is a shortage of another very important drug, soluble insulin? Is he going to say that soluble insulin is not needed for the preservation of the life of diabetics who may be in trouble with infections or wounds? Is he going to say that it is not a drug of choice and you can manage without it? The fact is you cannot, a country cannot get on without soluble insulin. Why do we have a shortage of soluble insulin and other drugs? What is so hard about ordering drugs well in advance?

If we have shortages due to transportation problems, then after a few experiences one would know that you have to place your orders maybe six months earlier than before. We do not know what the cause of the shortage is. All we know is that the shortage is there and it is no use saying it is not there because it is and I have personally inspected a number of doctors prescriptions, usually a doctor prescribes one, two or three drugs per patient and generally only one of the three is available at the Pharmaceutical Department belonging to the Government. The patients have to buy the rest of the drugs. We know that the cost of drugs is excessive. This brings me also back to the point that we were discussing earlier when we said that people have it so good, everything is so fine. This is another aspect of the high cost of living, an important aspect of the cost of living – and I do not think there is anyone in here in all sincerity

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who could deny that medical expenses from an important part of the budget of just about every Guyanese family. Yet we are supposed to have free medical services.

5 p.m.

**The Speaker:** Time!

**Cde. Narbada Persaud:** Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that Cde. Janet Jagan be given an additional 15 minutes to continue her speech.

*Cde. Belgrave seconded.*

*Question put, and agreed to.*

**Cde. Janet Jagan:** I was talking about free medical services and I want to raise a matter which is a running sore, the Suddie Hospital. The Suddie Hospital is owned and run by the taxpayers. It is a Public Hospital. It has doctors; it has nurses; it has equipment and drugs etc. I wonder if this House is aware that the free medical services of the Suddie Hospital are very restricted. They are in fact restricted to a possibility of one hour a day. Between the hours of eight and nine in the morning the Out-Patients Clinic is open and patients may present themselves there for free treatment. Any time after that hour, no sick person can enter the Hospital unless he is on his back half dead as was Isahak Basir when he was peppered with bullets in his abdomen recently. That is the only way you can get into the hospital after nine o'clock – if you are flat on your back and almost dead. Aside from that, to get into the Suddie Hospital or to see the doctor attached to the Suddie Hospital, you have to go to his private surgery and you have to pay a fee. [**Cde. Chowritmootoo:** “That is untrue.”] That is not untrue; it is a fact and you know it!

I do not know, Cde. Speaker, if I am allowed to read a letter – I do not know if that is permissible – from someone living on the Essequibo Coast whom I thought had set it out fairly well. It is a letter addressed “Queenstown, Essequibo, 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1976.” The person had asked, because he works - -

**The Speaker:** I do not think I can allow that unless you name the person because the rules say you have to quote the source. Perhaps you will consider that you can use it in the form of notes.

**Cde. Janet Jagan:** Thank you. Someone has communicated to me what I know is a fact, because I know the Essequibo Coast quite well, that you have to pay anywhere from \$20 to \$40 for doctor’s fees. You have to pay surgical fees at the Suddie Hospital; you have to go to the private surgery of one of the doctors attached to the Hospital. I know this because I was Minister of Health for a period in the ‘50s and at the same time I was the elected representative for the Essequibo Coast and I bumped into this situation when I was a Minister.

If you will allow me, Cde. Speaker, I will tell you awful the situation was. I was travelling on my monthly visit to Essequibo on the steamer and there was a woman in a very bad condition who had had a spontaneous abortion and she wanted to go to the hospital. So, I put her in my car and I took her to hospital. I was Minister of Health. When I went there the man at the gate said “She cannot enter, she has to go to the doctor’s house first.” I said: “Oh no! She has to enter the hospital.” We had a big fight and it was only when I get hold of the head nurse and told her how serious the case was that they allowed the patient to go into the hospital without going to the doctor. It was then and there that I tackled that whole question of Suddie Hospital being a preserve for doctors to literally mint money. Making counterfeit is against the law but they are literally manufacturing the money there because they have the whole place to themselves. There is no competition. Everyone has to go t these doctors.

I cut out the practice which was very bad. It took an awful lot of energy; it took constant vigilance. It was very difficult to prevent these gentlemen from operating as they were because they had been accustomed to raking in thousands of dollars above their pay and allowances from the Government, but I was able to control it by perseverance and I can only offer, from the wealth of my experience, the same advice to the present Minister. I hope he does something about it, because the people on the Essequibo Coast are very poor people. Essequibo is a very poor area of the country and anyone who goes there knows conditions and knows how people live. It is hurtful to see people having to take money out of their pockets and pay doctors, who are already paid by the State, for any medical service that they are to get. It is unfair; it is wrong; and if you want to say that this country has a free medical service, you will first have to wipe out your areas where it does not exist and try to improve the situation. It is very hard on the people. It is one thing to say we have free medical services but do our patients who suffer from mental disease really have free medical services? Do they have anyone to take care of them or are Guyana's mentally ill literally forced to live in a snake pit? They are living in a snake pit now; they do not even have proper medical supervision; they have no real hope. The only hope is if they have a relative with enough money to send them to Trinidad or some place else for treatment. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say there are probably more mentally ill people walking the streets of Guyana than are in the institution, for the simple reason that being in the institution is almost a waste of time – not completely, but almost a waste of time – and that is a serious indictment.

People have a hard life, many problems, poor economic conditions. Unemployment creates conditions that make people go off their balance mentally. We have a lot of people who are off balance, who are mentally ill because of pressures; but they must be given a chance. Think of the hundreds of youths in our country who are suffering from mental diseases and cannot get proper treatment. It is really a shame and I think that every effort should be made to try to solve this problem because some of us know – and from just reading popular literature you can know – that many of the mental diseases can be helped and cured. People can be put back on their feet to live an absolutely normal life and we should give them that opportunity.

What about our training facilities? There have been improvements made in the training of medical personnel but we need more trained personnel in all fields. I was dismayed when the Prime Minister announced that they are thinking of setting up a Military College. I would think that a Medical College would have priority over a Military College. *[Applause (Opposition)]* those of us who were part and parcel of creating and germinating this idea of a University for Guyana – our Party began the University, small though it was – those of us who thought about it had always envisaged that when the University got on its feet it would have a Medical College. Surinam, Smaller than Guyana, has for many years had its own Medical College. I see no reason why Guyana cannot make a start and I think it would be money better spent and it would be more helpful to the country to think in terms of a Medical College.

**5.10 p.m.**

We've heard a lot about National Service around here. Those who are not supporting National Service have heard that this is against the concept of women's equality. I have written my views about National Service and they are available for anyone, and if the Speaker so permits I am willing to distribute a booklet I wrote on National Service so that my colleagues in the National Assembly can have my views and I do not have to use up time expressing them. But at no time have we said that we are advising women not to go to National Service. There is a big difference. We have never advised anyone at that level.

What we have said is that National Service should not be compulsory for women. That is a different concept. No one has said that the P.P.P. is against voluntary National Service. If a woman wants to go into National Service, that's her business, but compulsory National Service is something entirely different. It means that a woman has to go into National Service whether she wants to or not.

The Minister is heckling me about that and I will remind him, because it arose out of my discussion about training. Women who wish to train as nurses, women who wish to train as

medical technologists, women who wish to train as dental technicians must sign a paper that they are willing to go into National Service and if they are unwilling to sign the paper, they cannot get the training. This is a shameful situation. I means that women are being coerced against their will and they are being told if they do not sign on the dotted line, as they must do also at the University of Guyana, they cannot get this training.

We have to examine many factors in relation to compulsory National Service for women. Our Party has clearly stated that it is wrong, that it goes against the mores and customs of the community. Why is it that most countries of this world who have National Service or military service do not have it compulsory for women? **[Interruption]**

The U.S.S.R. does not have compulsory National Service for women. Not one socialist country has compulsory Service for women. This is important to know, and we may ask ourselves: Why is it so? It is very important. No one says they mustn't go into any service if they wish to. If it is their inclination, their desire, they may go, but to force a woman is something else and what is happening in Guyana with this compulsory aspect of National Service, fewer women are going to be made available for higher education.

This is not what we want. We want our women to be educated. We want our women to have every opportunity for mental growth, for development, and I am advising that it is callous, that it is unrealistic, and it is very narrow to take this dogmatic position. I give you the advice. The end result is not one that we would like to see.

I would say this, that one of the problems we have in our medical services comes back to administration. We need an improvement of the administration of medical services, an improvement so that we do not have the horrors of two women in a bed, the horrors of the mental institution, the horrors of seeing more and more people coming down with tuberculosis, with greater medical problems facing the country and with not being able to solve them.



**The Speaker:** Time!

**Cde. R. D. Persaud:** I beg to move that Cde. Janet Jagan be given an extension of 15 minutes to conclude her contribution.

*Cde. Ram Karran seconded.*

**The Speaker:** It is refreshing to hear the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I thought he was asleep.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

**Cde. J. Jagan:** I think that we can do better when it comes to administration. I agree with Cde. Oscar Clarke who was talking about officers of the Government and said that they must live and work with the people in the regions. We must have fewer armchair generals and more people out amongst the people so they know what is going on. We must be able to see the needs so that we can bring medical care into the remote areas of the country and not just make promises.

For instance, the **Daily Chronicle, Thursday, July 12, 1973**, four days before the General Elections, promised that new district hospitals would be built at Kurupung, Kato, Acquero, Upper Mazaruni, the Pakaraimas, and the Pomeroon. Where are these new hospitals? What are we doing with some of those we have. Go down the Mahaica Creek, you will see at Handsome Tree, a medical centre unoccupied. No midwives. All over the country you find a situation like that--in the Pomeroon River, in the Berbice River. What are people to do? You tell them to go in there and plant, become farmers. They do that, but they must have the services if you want to keep them there, and you must provide the equipment, the boats, the aeroplanes, the proper equipment for your health centres.

Looking at the estimates for 1977, I shudder to think what is going to happen. We find that for dietary for hospitals the amount of \$2,900,795 was provided for 1976 and for 1977 for dietary we have gone down to \$2 million. That means almost a million dollars reduced in dietary for hospitals. How are our patients going to survive? Aren't there better places where we can cut out the money? Are you going to starve the patients? The food prices are going up. Flour is a basic that will be used there. What are you going to do? Is the quality of the food to be reduced? Is the quantity to be reduced? Less milk, less eggs, less proteins! Sick people have to have good food. **[Interruption]** The Minister is suggesting fewer sick people but that has to do with the quality of your health services, and unfortunately the quality of health services is not high enough to prevent a reduction of the intake of your hospitals.

The reduction for the subhead for Drugs and Dressings for all institutions including Medical and Surgical Instruments is also stunning, astonishing and depressing. The revised 1976 estimates provided \$3.5 million for this item and now for 1977 I see it is reduced to \$2.7 million. That is a drop of over \$800,000.

### 5.20 p.m.

If the Government spent \$3½ million in 1976 for drugs, dressings and all these things and we had a shortage, a real shortage – I have not even called the hundreds of drugs that were not available, I just named a couple – what is the situation going to be for 1977 when you are spending less? Or is it that it is just a sop to fool us all and later on in the year the Minister will come back for supplementary estimates? I don't know, but when you are using the pruning knife I think it should be used correctly, fairly and logically. I see no logic in reducing the amount of money for diet and the amount of money for drugs and other related things.

I would strongly urge that something very drastic be done to correct this and to cut out some of the other extravagances that exist throughout the Budget, extravagances which we can pinpoint. So let us hope we will be able to find a way of having at least a little better situation

than we have at the moment. I hope the Minister of Health will promise this House that he will do better this year than he did last year. I do not want to be too hard on him but I think he did a very bad job last year. On this note I take my seat.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Deputy Prime Minister.

**The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development** (Cde. Reid):  
Cde. Speaker, it is not usual to respond to some of the allegations made here when my colleagues will certainly do that, because much of what has been said concerns the Ministry of Health. However, according to how the debate is going, very often you get remarks, direct and indirect, about your Ministry and for that reason I have been attending very regularly, trying to get here on time so that I could keep in mind some of the things that have been said. But I want to say one thing about medical college and military college and I hope we will remember this: If we are to have anything to develop, then it is the country we must have. If we lose the country then that is another story. You can think about that: having all the facilities but then you cannot defend this country and you lose it. Other people will have different views but I just put that out for serious consideration.

What is it we are going to develop if we are in a position where people can frighten us, where people can take control of this country without even a sign of resistance? What will our position be? Sometimes we hear that the prices are high and at another time you hear the farmers are suffering and it is difficult to decide, from what has been said, what should be done. But one thing comes out pretty clear: That if we carry the line of checking on the price of food and the services and the wages, and we do that arithmetic correctly and, according to what the last speaker has said, I do not even see from my arithmetic how we are going to manage with the survival diet. There will not be anything with which to buy that survival diet and if you do not have that survival diet at all, then we ought to see this country with a high percentage of people who are suffering from malnutrition. You ought to see a fall in the birth rate and those practical evidences that will give the lie or support the truth in what we are trying to do in this country.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you behaved very exemplary. Please go back to sleep. **[Laughter]**

**Cde. Reid:** It is unfair to ask him to behave when the deputy is speaking. He must say something now and then.

**The Speaker:** From one side or the other you want co-operation. You got that co-operation when Cde. Janet Jagan was speaking and now the Deputy Prime Minister is speaking and there is cross-talk from one who should know better, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I am sure he will now remain silent.

**Cde. Reid:** Thank you, Cde. Speaker. Sometimes we compare equality of our women not with equality of man here, as far as I have been hearing, but equality with men elsewhere. I thought we were measuring equality in our own country. But that is another matter. During the debate, the Leader of the Opposition found it fit to give me a dismissal notice. The whole House heard that he dismissed me. There is no need for that Ministry, there is no need for an allocation. He followed this up in the **Mirror** and so I would want to say something on some of the things we are doing, as a matter of fact on what this Ministry is doing for the country as a whole.

I, too, however, would want to join in saying that a great job has been done in fashioning a Budget for a period like this. What is even more interesting is the understanding of the majority of people in this country of what we have to do if development is to proceed. I do not think in this development we are looking for perfection. Probably, many generations to come would enjoy perfection and if we believe in this ideology I do not think we would ever view any situation as being perfect because it has to be made better and better.

In the Third World, however, there is no difficulty in identifying what has to be done. In some developed countries, it might be difficult to know exactly what has to be done and so for us

it seems simple to know what has to be developed. You must feed the people, they must be clothed, they must be housed. We have heard a lot about medical facilities and things of that kind. I sometimes think that is a point for unity. But instead of that, even though we are having very important discussions, time and time again we hear great abuse, not only of the Party itself, this Party that is the Governing Party in this country, but also abuse of the Leader of this Party. I want to support what my hon. Friend, Cde. Jack, has said, that for us on this side there can be no compromise with that kind of behavior. Unity we dearly want, but we will certainly stand firm that there can be no unity with people who so regularly say that we are the group who commit all sorts of irregularities and all sorts of fraud and then you say you want to be with us. As one comrade has said, this is the time to share power and we will talk about that later on.

**5.30 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, the struggle for self-reliance in this country and new relationships demand changes. Some of them have to be very fundamental changes. We have dreams and sometimes we hear the dreams being set out not only from this side but from the other side as well, where new horizons, new vistas have to be penetrated so that the development can reach the very heart of the working class. All of us must admit that there is much more to do. So that there can be a richer form of life for all the people of this county especially for the working class that this Party, a working class party, must represent, the working class to which this Party has a commitment. In helping to do that task, this Party has seen the need for making a change in an area that the Ministry of National Development must deal with and that is administrative budgetary control.

We have heard so often here that it is not a right thing to do to have any Ministry with a block vote but the Ministry of National Development, from its very inception has the arrangement where a block vote has to be used and from the time of innovation I made it quite clear why it is necessary. Today, I will take this opportunity, notwithstanding the limited time, to try to explain in as great detail as I can, how important it is for at least one Ministry to have a block vote.

In the developing countries developmental constraints abound. You can find all sorts of constraints. Some of them are so complicated that sometimes even professional people cannot identify them. Sometimes trained technicians themselves cannot identify them and even though we believe in the ideology of socialism where you plan as carefully as you can, there are times when there will be a shortfall for all sorts of reasons heavy rainfall, emergencies and things of that kind. And unless you have the ability to persevere and do some organisation of the work, the very value that you want to promote, the nurturing of those values in human beings sometimes is superseded by other priorities. For us we must make sure that when such is threatened we have the facility to act promptly. In the final analysis what is the measure of development? It must be a steady progress toward the social development of man himself. In the final analysis that should be the test whether money has been properly spent or not. We should use the development of man so that we can evaluate what we have done.

We know too that in this evaluation, as we have heard so often from the other side, the worst is selected as the yardstick. If you want to talk about housing development in this country then you have to go to Hope and look at those shacks and that is how it is assessed. If you want to talk about food prices then you must not talk about 35 cents a pound fish because that is not protein. You must talk about the price of beef because beef is protein and if man does not get protein then he suffers from proteinemia but no reference is made to the fact that fish is protein. It is the cheapest fish in the world 35 cents a pound. Nobody talks about the greens that people can get easily if they want food and that it has some of the nutritive value that even milk has. The emphasis is laid on milk. These people have grown up and have been deceived and they still continue to accept what they were told about food. We here ought to let people know what the basic elements in food are and how and where there could be a start. Once again I say that in the final analysis it is development of man himself, how active is he, how involved he is, how you see the children growing. Already reference has been made to all this. I need not go back on that. There is one assurance we give that whenever that expenditure is completed we can bring that evidence to this House and I believe this House will be fully satisfied once there is reasonableness in this House.

In the Ministry of National Development the working man has a school of life that cannot be replaced by any other school, a place where he learns for socialist action; where he learns not only to consume but to create more and more for himself. Where he can test his self-confidence and his dignity by living in an environment away from home; by mixing with people probably with whom he has never mixed before. This great educational experience is afforded him through the Ministry of National Development. People who have lived in water-tight compartments, in office, people who have survived in ivory towers all their lives get an opportunity to live in communities and rub shoulders with other people so that when they return to office or factory they would have an appreciation more and more for the other man.

The People's National Congress has already declared that all should be involved in constructing this socialist State. And so we must utilize all our potential to make sure that all Guyanese can make a contribution. Socialism is the chosen ideology; co-operativism is our mechanism and it is not a mere description of a set of ideals but it is something that has come from our very history. Like other people in the Third World, our culture is a complex thing. It is very different from what you experience in some other parts of the world for so many different people, different ethnic groups and people from different back-grounds must live together. What we have to do with this ideology is to give it an opportunity to find roots in this culture that we know so well so that there can be enrichment all around and in that we see National Service playing such an important part, a service that some people would want to describe as compulsory. But for us National Service is voluntary.

**5.40 p.m.**

National Service started as a voluntary service and unto now it has not changed. We must therefore maximise our resources for development, not only human resources but also the non-human resources that we have. The Ministry of National Development is helping to do just that. There must be identified a set of goods and services that citizens of Guyana have the right to enjoy at this time in our development. We hope that these goods and services would increase

more and more as development takes place. For now we need to emphasis food, clothing, shelter, education, Medicare and recreational facilities so that we can think of sports and games and things of that kind. This is not for some people but for all the people.

The Developers Training Centre at Timehri has been organised to help to do just that. We cannot deal only with youths or the children at school. We need to deal with the adults who are the ones who are now producing so that we can have the goods and services in abundance. From the time we have started over 900 persons have participated. It is quite a mixture of people from all walks of life, a very interesting mixture. In that mix you have the professional workers, you have the unemployed – we still have unemployed people in this country. We have never said that we have no unemployed persons. The housewife is there with the high ranking officer who may be working in industry and commerce; the farmer is there, the office assistant, the teacher, the policeman, the soldier and even ourselves, the politicians, find a place in the course. And together we all learn to share our skills so that we can grow and develop as brothers in this land of ours and so that we may become aware, probably for the first time for many people, that we are all Guyanese committed to the development of Guyana by ourselves Guyanese.

The activities are many. We learn all sorts of things in practice and in theory but this work is just at its infancy. We learn all sorts of things in practice and in theory but this work is just at its infancy. There is much more to do. We do not deny that some people leave the course, after spending some few months, probably no better than when they joined but that does not affect us seriously. What we want to be sure about is that we are persistent in what we are doing because education itself is a slow process. Change indeed is difficult and so we must persist in this endeavour and let it grow more and more in intensity so that all the people of this country will be able to embrace very fully the new ideas that are now put forward in this country. We have lectures, we have workshops, we have practicals, all sorts of activities. We learn there about the Party and Government; we learn about co-operatives, even first aid is taught there, both



theory and practice. The geography of Guyana, the political as well as the economic geography of Guyana. We learn how to mobilize and how to inspire people. We take a chance to compare what we are doing now with colonialism with imperialism, neo-colonialism and things of that kind. We learn how to develop leadership and then after the sixth week we do an experiment in some district or area where those participants must spend one week living in the homes of people in the community.

This course is not happening by chance. It is planned very deliberately so that you can have a real life experience of the several communities in this country, so that you can get to know people not in your office or in your factory or in your field but in their homes and their little farms and whatever they are doing in that community.

It is interesting to know how many things have happened since this course has started. I should like to mention just a few. Developers in their live-in exercises have been too many places like Golden Grove, Buxton, Mazaruni, Black Bush Polder. In those areas they have helped to build roads with the people. In other areas they have helped to build bridges at places like the Canje. Painting of buildings is a common feature. They even helped in the extension of buildings in some areas even the putting up of new structures. In some areas they have taken to shovels with the community to dig ditches so that they can lay pipes for people to get water at places like Overwinning, Angoy's Avenue, Crane on the West Bank Demerara. In some areas they have even helped to fashion outlets for drainage. They have gone into the Anna Catherina area to help people to drain it better. They have worked in a squatting area at Leonora where they helped in fashioning drains so that conditions can begin to improve. At the Training Centre itself several things have happened so that now we have buildings for pigs and for poultry as well. Over the period, through their efforts from construction work and the production of goods, they have been able to accumulate over \$150,000. **[Applause]** This is a kind of work experience. They have self-help in many of these places so that when those with professional skills visit like doctors and nurses they make sure that they demonstrate to the community what we mean by free medical services.

5.50 p.m.

Probably unlike my good friend, I have no reason to doubt that in the organisation, this structure that we are working in, there are physicians who will do all sorts of maneuvering so as to charge people exorbitant fees and to charge those who should not be charged at all. We must remember we have grown up in that kind of society where we have been accustomed to grab and grab. We never get enough, so it would not be surprising if a doctor practices that kind of capitalist behavior. I hope that the time will not be far distant when we strive to stamp out that kind of exploitation. I hope that our friends on the other side will find one area for unity and that they will give support not only in words but in deeds.

Those areas, too, are visited by lawyers who can provide some free legal advice. Bankers visit and give their skill free of cost, qualified teachers do the same, even policemen and soldiers mix with the people and help them in National Service training and in the People's Militia. Experienced farmers help people in communities where people who have not got the kind of experience that they have are trying to farm. This programme itself is demonstrating to the communities in a very practical way what we mean when we say we want to stamp out the exploitation of man by man.

**The Speaker:** Time!

**Cde. Ramsaroop:** Cde. Speaker, I beg to move for an extension for the Cde. Deputy Prime Minister to facilitate him to continue his speech.

**Cde. Rayman** *seconded.*

*Question put, and agreed to.*

**Cde. Reid:** People have learnt how to make a will because in some areas, people charge you a large sum to make a will. Many people die interstate. So, lawyers help people make out affidavit and prepare wills because in some communities people are exploited. When the developers leave their substantive jobs there are several areas in which they can be of service to the communities.

By earning and sharing and evaluating by growing and understanding together, we hope unity will be established at that level where it means most. The new society will be seen at that point of our development, by people eating the same food, sleeping and living together under the same conditions, participating equally and equitably in work, not cheating one another in the field, in the classroom and elsewhere. For all these activities we hope they will leave better prepared than when they first entered. We hope that a massive group spirit will develop and their individual hopes and aspirations, their individual spirits, so to speak, will be further developed where they will have more confidence in themselves and, as Cde. Field-Ridley has said, will be able to walk the streets feeling confident, feeling that they belong, that they are involved in what we are doing.

They also learn how to operate co-operatives because this is an area where we need more and more people who would be able to manage these projects in all the forms that they can take. By ringing all these people together it is our hope that we will experience probably at some time this new and just society that we are trying to fashion, that we will be able to bridge some of the gaps that we have heard about because on the People's National Congress' side we believe in action, in doing things in a very practical way and not confusing people with theory and then there is no practice to follow up.

I have probably said enough on this aspect of the Ministry, on this kind of training which is most important as far as I am concerned. But, it might be better to listen to what one participant had to say because, after all, it is the participant who can really tell the story. I speak now of a head teacher who has been in the teaching service for over 24 years and who took the

**10.1.77**

**National Assembly**

**5.50 – 6 p.m.**

opportunity to go through the course at Timehri. This head teacher used his vacation period for building school furniture and has set the pace in the field of co-operative self help for these colleagues to follow. This is the Sunday Chronicle, November 28, 1976. This is what is even more important. No wanted to do something to help but was waiting for the urge. “That urge”, he said, “I did not get until I became a pioneer and learnt a few things about nation-building and co-operative self-help.” He pointed out that as a pioneer he attended a Developers’ Course at Timehri where he was motivated to go into the venture. This he said resulted from the exposure he had at the course and even though he has been working for 24 years it is good to see that it is only after attending that course that he had the kind of urge that made him start a project that he was thinking about for so long. This for us is very important and meaningful and so more and more we are endeavouring to get people to appreciate the fact of this new social order and many of the things that have to be done if we are to develop.

If we are tied on to the routine kind of allocation where everything has to be itemized, where a change would call for a variation and probably weeks of waiting, then we cannot move on as fast as we would like. For we believe that wealth is not produced only by machines and by new technology. We have learnt that if you have the wherewithal like machines and new technology in the capitalist world you can become wealthy. We do not accept that because in the final analysis it is people who must make the machines work. It is the ingenuity of people, the hours of sweating they are committed to give that will make things happen.

I now want to make reference to an event that can be a lesson to us in Guyana because we so often hear inside and outside of this House of this new thing, critical support.

**6. p.m.**

Up to early in September of 1973 the Chilean communist Party boasted of its large support. The party in Government, United Popular Party, led by Allende, was toppled that very month, to be exact, on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1973, and all of us, I think, have described that as a tragic

setback, not only for Chile, but for the peoples of Latin America, as a matter of fact, for the socialist movement in the entire world. It was a right-wing group that toppled that government and I am certain that my friends on the other side would not dare to suggest that Allende carried a non-socialist programme. None would dare to say that Allende was pro-imperialist. We would not want to say that he was neo-colonialist and that is why they toppled him. But in that country at that time there were those who were posing as critical supporters and, remember, Cde. Speaker, that I am speaking about Chile.

Many critical supporters were discrediting that Government, that regime, so much so that it became difficult for the Government itself to proceed with its programme, to mobilize people as we are trying to do now, to expose them to the knowledge that they must have. He couldn't move. He was bothered by the critical supporters who were always getting at him. They really never wanted to see a centralized political leadership in that country. It was a mixture of all sorts of things. The critical supporters were urging that there should be dual control in that country. We have heard here about the sharing of power. But I am not talking about our Opposition. I am talking about Chile.

Those were the days when they were talking about dual control in that country, but when that Junta took over, when that Government was toppled, this is what the workers experienced, the working-class people had this kind of experience and they described it like this, and I quote:

“They can kill whomsoever they want to kill.”,

referring to the Junta.

“There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that we can do about it.” This is taken from **Disaster** in Chile edited by Lee Evans, Second Printing 1975, page 236. I have reason for quoting in detail.

That Junta also announced on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1973, that they had captured the General Secretary of the Communist Party and that Junta intended to try him for treason, a capital offence. **[Interruption]** I am not talking about you. But instead of passing judgment on him, Cde. Speaker, he was imprisoned. Not so long ago we have seen his picture in the paper. He was freed by some exchange arrangement. But Allende is dead. This is what the workers go on to say:

“Under the first few weeks of the military government a rigid labour discipline has been put into effect. Union activity has been suspended.”

Food went up in price by over 1,000 per cent as reported by Marvin Howe of the **Times** in the October 7<sup>th</sup> issue.

I have said already, that through an exchange arrangement the General Secretary of the Communist Party was freed. Allende is now decomposed.

This socialist People’s National Congress party must continue to make changes with courage, with boldness, changes that would inspire the workers, changes that would speed up production, changes that would stimulate people toward total development, and the Ministry of National Development can only pursue this effectively if it has the kind of vote that gives it minimum administrative budgetary control, so that what happened in Chile would not be repeated in this country.

There is no hiding place about what we do. All over the country one can see what is being done. The records are there, they can be examined, the auditor goes in, but we need flexibility if we are really to prepare our workers so that they can effectively defend the gains that are already made in this country.

It is not unknown in this world of ours that there are socialist groups that denounce all the others as frauds and the more substitute proletarians they have, the more anti-socialists they promote, the more loudly they shout in denouncing other people.

The task of transforming this country is riddled with constraints of all kinds and sometimes I see those constraints as variegated as our flora and fauna. We must be conscious of these constraints and must not blindly follow any country, socialist or non socialist, applying all their strategies and tactics to do some of the things that we want to do because there is a prerequisite about what we must do and that prerequisite is that we must appreciate the facts around us. There is one fact that we on this side must never forget to appreciate, that we have on that side some critical supporters.

**The Speaker:** Time!

**Cde. Ramsaroop:** I beg to move that the Cde. Deputy Prime Minister be given an additional 15 minutes to conclude his contribution.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

**Cde. Reid:** Cde. Speaker, I will try to conclude within the next 15 minutes. But I want to say at this stage that Allende and the revolutionary workers of Chile were destroyed because the Communist Party of that country with its critical supporters were of absolutely no use when the confrontation came in life and death. When that crunch came between life and death, those critical supporters were absolutely no use. The critical supporters indeed had wasted their own time and the time of other people in all sorts of responsibilities instead of organizing to give genuine support.

In Chile, the Junta did not stop to find out who belonged to the Communist Party and who belonged to the Socialist Party. They slaughtered all. I think I have said enough on that matter. He who hath ears to hear, let him hear. Road, mark and inwardly digest!

**6.10 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, the Ministry of National Development is concerned with injecting great striking force in the people of this country. In this psychological warfare, in this ideological warfare, in destabilisation, our people must be prepared and be ready. Destabilisation is current, it is real and what we say is not to frighten them; it is to give them knowledge how to fight, give them courage how to resist. It is not only a matter of arms and ammunitions, it is more than that and other than those evils that we must face, we have all the various forms of the capitalist ideology to fight.

But we also have, in this country of ours, those who are sick with infantile disorder, those who have come together in anti-socialist groups. Probably, a better description should be anti-socialist socialism groups. They have come together in such groups. Some of them are already crippled with dogmatic, rigid and intolerant concepts. I will come to that. Some of them are already cadaverous. They are dead bodies that are smelling in the country, and all they see is what our comrade on the other side has already indicated to us, probably by a slip of the tongue, power. That is all they see in this struggle: that they must get power.

As Cde. Jack has said, every little dissatisfaction is escalated because they see that as a chance to take over Government so that the P.P.P. would be in power. They act like cameramen who are assigned by the imperialist to take destabilization photographs and that is why they will visit every area which probably is the worst as far as development is concerned, and take pictures of it. If you look in today's Mirror, you will see one such shot on the front page of the Mirror. That is what is happening, they are working with those who want to destabilise the country. It is on the front page of the Mirror. I have already talked of how they do it by showing up what is



happening in Hope Estate and Hope Estate is a place where some of those very people, the heads of those shacks, have houses, decent housed, not so far away. But this is the one they show.

These are critical supporters, Cde. Speaker, who are tied to the umbilical cord of East or West. When people are so tied they are not free to face any concrete situation in their own country so that when confrontation depends to acuteness between capitalism and socialism they cannot really play any meaningful part.

We might ask at this stage: How can one cope with these anti-development forces unless there is in the P.N.C. Government some allocation that has budgetary flexibility, as we hope this block vote would allow? That is why they do not want this Ministry at all because it has this kind of flexibility so that we can really meet these forces that are prone to destruction, forces that have no will and no capacity for the development of all the people in this country. See them build roads and see them bypass a little area because they believe no black top must go on that. They are supporting the P.N.C. But I want to say this: If we do not do what we are doing by giving ourselves flexibility, people would come into office – the powers are there – who would bathe the face of this land of Guyana with warm blood, not of cattle, not of sheep, not of goats, not of swine and poultry, not even of the fish that is sold at 35¢ a pound, but of some of our daughters and sons of this country from Pakaraima's peaks of power to Corentyne's lush sands.

Once the P.N.C. is in Government, it is our solemn task to rally the people together to make sure that there is no dual control in this country, to make sure that there is no dual leadership. There must be one leader and we have got a proven leader, Cde. Prime Minister, who moved this country from infamy to fame and now he leads along the socialist road.

I want to assure this House, if further assurance is necessary, that this vote in the past has been used, and in the future will be used, to stimulate Guyanese in any part of this country to strive and strive and never cease with strength beyond the slave. Among conspicuous examples we can find irresponsibility, we can find responsibility, we can find eradication of poverty, we

can find no eradication of poverty. The people of this country can judge by what they have seen over the last twelve years. But there are forces totally opposed to the construction of any new system through human inertia, lack of imagination and things of that kind. We hope that we will be able to so organize our budgetary arrangements that we will not have that kind of obstacle so that when a trench is silted up and the cleaning was not in the plan, action can be taken; so that when a koker is bad, prompt action can be taken; so that when people need, in their areas, resource persons we can send them in, where the routine people would never want to go. We must be able, therefore, at all times to interpret what we are doing correctly.

I want to tell a story because I see the time is moving on. In 1775 there was a man called Priestley who was a scientist. He did an experiment and something was found but he did not really know what it was even though he had done that experiment, even though he had isolated that something. In 1777 another scientist La Voisier carried out the same experiment. He knew all the details about his experiment, he knew, when he got the result, what it was. He was not confused. He saw that new product as a distinct gas and that is the familiar gas we today know as oxygen. In the history of the world the discoveror of oxygen is not Priestley, the discoveror of oxygen is La Voisier.

**6.20 p.m.**

Why? Because he was able to conceptualise better. He was not inadequate in conceptualising. And people in comparing these two men would say that one did not have a nimbleness of intellect but the other had a nimbleness of intellect. I leave that just as it is. You can think about that. But I want to say if we are to succeed in doing what we are trying to do, then it is not a matter of just running all over the world and talking in and out of Guyana on the theory about socialism. That really is not going to help us. We must be able to understand what we are doing so that when we get the answers from the experiment we will know how to interpret those answers.

The People's Progressive Party in this debate, through the unruffled voice of one of its members, demands the sharing of power. I thought that that was a matter for the electorate, for the people to decide. For me that call is like a declaration of war. I want to advise my comrades on the other side that "mouthtar" and guitar are not the same things; they are two different things. One thing is clear that the comrade had a slip of the tongue and I want to read something about when you get a slip of the tongue: "Those who study psychology contend that unconscious slips of the tongue do in fact have meaning and are often the product of some deep psychological conflict."

There is no challenge to identify the document unless you really want to, but in keeping with the rules of this House – I am a very disciplined speaker, I don't want to break the rules, I want you to know that this was written in the Mirror of Wednesday I am not saying it was a slip of the tongue, but that was the muffled voice of the People's Progressive party.

People in this country need to understand, need to know, the seriousness of this crisis. It is not that we went to frighten them because we never really want our supporters and the people of this country to be frightened. On Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1976, in a message to the people of this country I said,

"Today at the textile mill construction site, let us assemble, not to lick our wounds and cry the lamentations of the mourners and the pitiful and the mournful, but the cry of the unafraid, the determined and defiant, the courageous and the brave."

It is said that without the People's Progressive Party nothing really can happen. It was said in 1964 that this country would have been burnt from the Demerara River right on and you would see from one end unto the other. Nobody else could control it; nobody also could manage it. It was like magic when the Leader of the People's National Congress came into Government that promptly all the conflict ceased, not by chance, not by spontaneity but by a programme, when he visited all these areas. As a matter of fact, from his thank you speech he gave notice to the

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6.20 – 6.28 p.m.

country how people must behave. When you compare that with the victory parade of 1961 you come to your own conclusion.

These innovative budgetary arrangements presented by this Government, through the Ministry of National Development must help to enrich and deepen the people's gains through deeper and wider and wider and higher total involvement of the people for our Motto is "In Service of People." [Applause]

**The Speaker:** I think perhaps this is a good time to take the suspension until 8 p.m.

*Suspended accordingly at 6.28 p.m.*

*On resumption - -*

**The Speaker:** Cde. Ramsahoye.

**Cde. Ramsahoye:** Cde. Speaker, for the past few days unfortunately we have listened to too much of comparison of past performances. It is not for me to enter the lists when the knights of the Front Table belabor each other on the dead hand of the past but I think it is our duty to do what we can to see about the future. This is an hour of economic crisis for us which we share with the rest of the Third World. There is also political crisis. Guyanese gave their lives not so long ago. Let not that sacrifice be in vain. This is a time when our very survival is at stake. This is not the time for petty politicking. This requires the combined efforts of all of us. It is a time for discipline, a time for sacrifice, a time for courage, a time for boldness. If we are to transform this economy we will have to harness our human and our material resources.

We have vowed to use the principles of socialism to harness our human resources. We shall have to depend heavily on technology to harness our material resources, and on these, the fruits of technology, we are dependent, almost most completely, on external agencies. We cannot have agriculture unless we import fertilizers, pumps, tractors, and this situation will continue until we become self-reliant.

We have vowed in our Party to own and control our resources and to endeavour to be self-reliant. When the bauxite company was first nationalised it was an extremely difficult undertaking. I believe that it was comparatively simple to nationalise Bookers. Lots have happened since then. The capitalist world is becoming accustomed to nationalisation; that is not a problem any longer. We are allowed to nationalise but are we being allowed to control the price of sugar? We own the sugar industry, but if somebody tells us what the price of sugar is, what amount of control can we say we have?

It behoves us, therefore, to be able to understand the capitalist system properly, to know exactly what is going on if we are going to make any attempt to control. This morning I read an

article in the Daily Chronicle entitled, “Is Healey’s Bite too Feeble?” and I should like to quote the Daily Chronicle of Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January, 1977, page 10:

“Today there is more than ever before a cry for sanity and stability. Floating exchange rates may be grist to the mill for the foreign exchange dealer but they play hell with a country’s efforts to crawl out of recession.

Fixed . . . international exchange rates between the end of the World War II and the early 1970s produced the longest sustained era of international economic growth ever recorded.

Since the collapse of this system with the devaluation of the dollar in 1971 and the floating of the pound in 1972 the world has successively enjoyed an unprecedented followed by record and massive international recession. . . .

Obviously something had gone wrong, . . .”

Cde. Speaker, I mention this because these are events of recent vintage. We are talking about the 1970s. We are not blessed with fostering influences of the writings of Marx and Lenin. We are on our own, we have to think for ourselves. These recent events of inflation, floating currency, the oil crisis demand that we devise some strategy. We need to put our thinking caps on.

To get to the root of the matter! Cde. Speaker, I hope you will bear with me if I digress a little to give a short introduction for the analysis which I propose to make. The introduction is on early banking, the development of banking, because herein lies the key. For a long time the use of coins as a medium of exchange has been employed, there is no problem there. But in the 1600s the banking system was to be developed, from that time the seeds of inflation were to be sown. It started by the rich merchants needing some place to put all these coins they had. The

goldsmiths were people who keep vaults so the goldsmiths were given these coins to keep and the merchants were accordingly given deposit receipts for them. Now in dealing with each other, instead of going to the goldsmith with deposit receipts to take out your coins and pay another merchant, they just transferred receipts, so that it became convenient just to deal with these pieces of paper rather than the bulky coins. So far so good, the goldsmiths were acting just as safety deposit boxes.

**8.10 p.m.**

But at this stage, the goldsmiths became very clever. The goldsmith realised that he had all the coins there in his possession and he could lend them out. He could issue his own notes and he could extend. At that stage, he ceased being a goldsmith and became a banker. He had \$100 in coins deposited with him and he issued notes for as much as a thousand dollars. Now, he could afford to do this because the bank is a place where people normally keep their money. If someone comes to me to borrow some money, they borrow it and then put it in the bank and then draw cheques on it. So, although the money has to be used, very little of it is in circulation, only about 10 per cent on the average. You can afford to have a hundred dollars and lend out a thousand because the demand would only be about 10 per cent. So, these early banks started issuing notes. Obviously this was a very lucrative business and a lot of people got into the act. There was, as you would expect, the danger that everybody would come and demand their money at one time. That was the danger that early bankers faced so that a lot of banks broke up.

The development came with the establishment of what is known as the Bank of England. Now, they did a very smart thing. One of the British monarchs wanted to borrow – I think over a million pounds – so they said: “Okay, we will lend you a million pounds on condition that we get our bank incorporated and only we could issue notes.” It was a very crude attempt to monopolise the situation. They succeeded to some extent and these notes that they issued became Bank of England notes, the pound note that we know about. “I promise to pay the bearer . . .”

Now, Cde. Speaker, you could see what would happen, therefore, if you have the system whereby credit can be created, it can be overdone. If you are going to create notes, you must have goods to back it. Now, external trade entered the picture and whereas you could do this with our own funds, what happens when you want to exchange between countries? You must have some standard. At this stage, a gold standard was adopted. The Bank of England adopted a gold standard and they promised to back all their notes with a certain amount of gold so that externally each note was backed by the required amount of gold but internally you could develop whatever you like. In other words, a heavy dependence was laid on the confidence of the economy of the country with regard to currency and the British Empire. Of course, being one on which the sun never set, there was a lot of confidence. Indeed, sterling was better to keep than gold. Sterling could get you interests, gold could not. Sterling was easier to walk with than gold. So, we have the sterling developing as what is known as a reserve currency, all other currencies being related to sterling, all other currencies being dependent on sterling and if somebody wanted something, a country with a reserve currency could always print its own notes. And when I say print its own notes, it is not the crude way of printing it. You issue bonds and so on. In other words, these things do not have any real backing, but they can be issued whereas the countries that do not have reserve currency cannot do that. So, it was advantageous to have a reserve currency.

As you know, Cde. Speaker, the situation was dominated by Britain until the end of the second World War after massive destruction, with the economies of Europe in shambles, reconstruction became necessary. Nobody believed in sterling any more so all the giants met at a place called Bretton Woods, and the U.S. dollar became “The reserve currency” backed by gold, \$35 to the ounce. The U.S. dollar at that time was better than gold. You could buy goods and services with it. America had all the goods and services; Europe did not. Europe needed a lot of money to reconstruct and America herself devised a way of doing it. The thing was called Marshall Aid. Marshall Aid consisted of the Americans “printing” a lot of dollars to give to Europe so that they could buy American goods.



This printing of dollars obviously is going to dilute the value of the dollar. If you keep printing them it is like printing counterfeit money. These dollars incidentally came to be known as Euro-dollars.

It was inevitable therefore that when the call came for the conversion of these dollars to gold, when Europe would have reconstructed, a crisis would ensue. But this crisis was delayed because of war in Korea and war in Vietnam. The economy of America was grinding out ammunition to provide materials and engines of war. But, in the early seventies, the chickens began to come home to roost and everybody started to try to get his dollars converted to gold, gold then being all important. We got the battle of the giants.

At this stage, the Americans were in a quandary and the Americans when they met had a very simple solution. They said: “Do what you like; it is your problem; we are not converting dollars to gold; we are coming off the gold standard. We don’t care what the conversion is; let your currencies float.” That, crudely, is what the Americans did.

### **8.20 p.m.**

So we have this era of floating currencies and the development of money markets where currencies can change value and are bought and sold. This is new, this is 1972. There was all the instability connected with markets; a little rumour can cause the buying of currency to change. Inflation at this stage of course, was running on but it was not too large. But then, on top of it, in 1973, or towards the end of it came the oil crisis when the OPEC countries decided to quadruple the price of oil.

At first, this caused consternation and there were crises of how there was going to be so much deficit and so on. But the western countries decided at this stage to use their banking system. All the techniques and expertise developed in this way were used – printing money and exchanging money and floating rates and so on. They decided to use this weapon against the

rising oil prices, and in the melee that followed, the buck was passed to the developing world. We have to pay the price for increased oil prices. We had to pay increased prices for manufactured goods whereas there was a fall in prices for raw materials.

How did they succeed in having this fall in price of raw materials? Early in the business it was decided that this floating rate system was going to be used. The price of sugar, the price of copra, the prices of most of the raw materials are quoted on the London Stock Exchange in pounds so if the pounds were to go down, then the price of raw materials in constant dollars would go down. This roughly is what happened with our raw materials. The pound was going down.

There were all sorts of other devices by which they could put pressure on the poor developing countries. Goods were stockpiled. Disunity developed among the Third World countries so that they played one against the other but it is instructive to remember that although the pound was going down the British are protecting themselves. They have what is known as the green pound. It is different from the ordinary pound. It has to do with their farmers, they pay their farmers the green pound. When the pound goes down that doesn't go down. And when they export their materials they quote it in dollars. It doesn't matter if the pound goes down. The countries that had sterling reserves, their reserves go down. When the dollar goes down their money goes down. If you had a thousand pounds in a British bank a few years ago it would not be worth as much in dollars now as it was worth then.

There is also the question of the recycling of all this money that came to the Arabs by the oil crisis. This was considered as cheap money, and it was used to finance western industry. Herein lies the clue to what we ought to do. A lot of dollars, because of the oil crisis, are circulating in places where they have not traditionally circulated. Banks have to find new uses for all this money. In other words it is, relatively speaking, easy to borrow money, oil money, Euro-dollars. We couple with this the fact that inflation is high, that is between 20 and 30 per

cent. If you want to buy a car now it costs at least 20 per cent more than it cost last year. All imported goods are going up 20 to 30 per cent but you can borrow at less than 10 per cent. So what is the answer? The answer is to borrow now and pay later. This is the only door open.

We have to be bold. This is no time for saying that our external debts are going up. We are in a hole. Now is the time to borrow. We borrow as much as we can. We borrow because we know what we are going to use it for. We are going to use it to reconstruct. We are going to use it to develop. We borrow now and we pay later and we are going to pay less. Because we are going to pay with all this inflation, so we will pay less. Now is the time to stockpile. We borrow now on supporters' credit or whatever credit we can get. We borrow; we stockpile tractors, we stockpile cement, we stockpile fertiliser we stockpile pipelines, we stockpile everything that we can stockpile.

**The Speaker: Cde. Ramsahoye,** I do not think you will be able to stockpile time now. Two minutes more to go. **[Laughter]**

**Cde. Ramsahoye:** The message I want to convey is that now is the time when we should remember that our debt burden is 8 per cent of the G.N.P. In most countries it is 20 per cent. There is no need to apologise for running it up. There is good sense in trying to borrow as much as we can if we can borrow now because already it is becoming difficult to be able to borrow. Let us use this opportunity to borrow. It is not going to last for ever. We must use this opportunity to borrow. **[Applause]**

**8.30 p.m.**

**The Speaker:** Cde. Harripersaud Nokta

**Cde. Harripersaud Nokta:** Cde. Speaker, I rise tonight to give my little contribution to this Budget debate. I sat here for four days and I listened to the very many speakers on that

side of the House. I listened to some figures, so many million pounds of pumpkin produced, many hundred thousand pounds of corn, many hundred thousand pounds of eddoes etc. But when we examine it in reality what do we see? All the production that this Government through its various Ministries, has done in this country has been done on the Minister's paper in the Parliament of this country, produced in the Parliament advertised on the radio and passes on to the people in the Chronicle and New Nation newspapers. This is production on paper. One speaker advised that we should not harp too much on the past and I do not want to indulge in that. I do not want to compare pre-independence with post-independences but what I would like to do tonight is to compare what the Government promised the people with what it has given the people.

In 1961, we were told free milk, free cassava and free bread. In 1965: Carifta will save us. In 1966: Eat less, sleep less, and work harder. In 1970: The small man will be a real man. In 1973; Feed, house and clothe the nation. Look at it. They said we will feed ourselves by 1976 we were supposed to produce enough food to feed Guyanese. The Prime Minister, in an effort to make the world and the Guyanese people feel that so much production will come about, trying to play the role of Almighty, lengthened the day by manipulating the clock, a new feature of slavery. You remember the old days when people said, "We wake up when cock crow and come out of the field when lamp light"? Six o'clock in the morning you have to jump out of bed in darkness. My friends are feeding the nation.

It is rather surprising that the same year when this Government is supposed to feed the nation, two hundred nurses from the Public Hospital Georgetown masqueraded on the streets of the city. They brought a plate of food into the Parliament compound to show the Prime Minister, they described it as prison diet. That is how we feed the nation. Why did they have to demonstrate? Because of the poor food which the nurses called prison diet. Nurses are people who contribute from their salaries. I have here clippings from a report presented to the Trades Union congress of Guyana by Dr. Clive Thomas, known economist of the University of

Guyana. It states that calculations, using the Government's estimates, show that beef production represents an average of twelve pounds per person per year for the entire population, a consumption level of three to four ounces per person per week. Pork production represents consumption level of about 1½ ounces per person per week. Poultry production represents a consumption level of about three ounces per person per week. Milk production represents consumption of only 4/5 of one pint per person per week and eggs about 35 per person per year.

All the production that we hear about, where it is going? I listened attentively to the Minister of Agriculture and I heard all the production in his paper. I told the **reporter** that his paper produced a lot. Let us go to the hinterland.

I have here another clipping from the **New Nation** of Saturday, April 8, 1972. It states "Agriculture revolution – referring to Matthews Ridge." The beef and dairy herd which now numbers 300 is being increased with an **eye** to local consumption and export to Trinidad, only 300 miles away. In 1973, they told us about exporting beef from Matthew ridge to Trinidad. I would like the Minister at another stage, not tonight, to tell us how much beef we have exported from Matthew Ridge to Trinidad.

Other major products of the complex are soya beans, blackeye, turmeric, tilapia, plantains, bananas etc. There are 300 acres of citrus. There are schools in the North West area. I heard the Minister of Education talking about schools and free education. But I wrote her a letter in September when I returned from the North West explaining that the Hobediah School on the Aruan River is being run by one headmaster alone and that man has five classes to run. There is one teacher running a school with five classes and no staff.

There is another school, the Sacred Heart Government School in the Aruau River and one teacher is teaching eight classes. That is free education.

I do not want to mention the secondary school. In the whole of North West, from Moruca to the Barama to the Imbiteru, there is one secondary school. I would like to ask the Minister to investigate. The Government Secondary School at Mabaruma has been operating for years without a toilet. Teachers of the school have to use neighbouring facilities and children have to use the bush. I would ask the Minister to investigate that.

Agro-based industries: What does it say: Canneries, factories for cornmeal, soya bean etc. In 1974, a minister of Agriculture of the P.N.C. Government went to Morawhanna and promised the people a saltfish processing plant. The people were vigilant and all the fishermen formed themselves into co-ops. When I went back to the North West in September 1976, after more than two years, I enquired about the saltfish processing plant and a P.N.C. Councillor from the Morawhanna Local Authority said, “Comrade, this is we saltfish factory”.

#### **8.40 p.m.**

Let us go to Mabaruma and talk canneries. In 1971 the Government started construction of an orange juice processing plant. We were told during the 1973 elections that we will get eight gallons of orange juice per minute. That was an election gimmick. When I went up there in September, the orange juice has not been completed. What is the position? When I enquired a very big orange producer told me “Comrade, this thing is a real confusion. We don’t know when the orange juice processing plant will be completed.” But the worse part of it, he said, is that the engines which they are putting in to this building can only process a certain size of orange. So I asked “What is the position?” The men jokingly said “Comrade, for s orange producers to make use of that plant to go down to the orange trees every morning and pray that they bear one size of orange.” That is agricultural development.

Let us deal now with the Moruca area, a place called Kwebanna. In 1974 the people of Moruca were promised a lime juice processing plant, as a political gimmick. They brought and

old condemned lime juice plant from a man called Badrudeen Khan at Mabaruma and transported it to the Waini River at heavy cost. They threw all the things in the grass and up to this day the equipment is rotting in the grass. A man named Stoby from moruca can substantiate this.

It seems as if people are fooling people. Let us deal with Wauna. During the 1973 elections campaign we heard much about milk and dairy products. The people at Wauna were told that government would set up a dairy farm and all the settlements of Wauna must prepare cow pens. Government advised these people to plant a special grass called lacoonto grass. They built the cow pens; they bought ropes; they planted lacoonto grass but up to this day there are no cows there. Lacoonto grass is taking over the residential area. This is how the society is being fooled.

What about medical facilities? I was in the rupununi district about a month ago. I went to Macushi Village, I went to Ambrose Village, I went to Moco-Moco. I spoke to the captains and people of the area. This is what they told me: “Comrade the only type of medicine we can get now is these villages is malaria tablets. If your head hurt you, or your kidney is bad; you get malaria tablets. If your ankle is sprained or your elbow fractured you get malaria tablets.” He said “Comrade, I do not understand socialism. It seems that in this type of socialism you have to tell Mr. Sick what type of illness to get.”

I am not laughing, I am serious. When these people present papers nobody laughs at them. They put everything on paper. This is reality. The society is being fooled.

What about transportation? I heard one other speaker over there saying that they are going to burst open the hinterland; and they are going to build more roads. Roads alone do not make development. I wish to ask those persons who spoke about roads to tell us if a person who leaves Georgetown to travel to Bartica via the road does not have to take the following route:

Go to Mackenzie, then to Rockstone, cross at ..... then to Bartica. Ask them how much it will cost a small man. This they didn't tell us. It cost one \$40.00 to leave Georgetown and get to Bartica. How many small men can afford that? So the road is of no use to anybody.

They are telling us about the Mazaruni/Potaro development programme. I met a farmer by the name of Oliver Lewis at No. 2 Miles Potaro, who said that one Minister of that area encouraged the people to bulldoze the land and plant cassava, saying that Government would give them tractors, bulldozers, fertilizers. The government even promised them markets for the cassava. Oliver Lewis expended over \$300. Other farmers expended cash to develop lands and up to this day they cannot even get cassava sticks. This is their idea of development.

What about Bartica? The Members of the Government are saying that people are glad to go to the interior. First let us ask them what people will eat in the Interior. People today are afraid to go to Bartica because it has become a shanty town. The roads are bad; transportation facilities are inadequate; sanitation is bad. As a result Bartica has become deserted. There is no lighting. In other words, no development! Long ago there were three trucks to dispose of garbage. Today, there are two donkey carts. There is garbage all over the market square. Virtually the only changes that have taken place at Bartica over the many years are these: First this Government has thought it fit to condemn a steamer called "Ambrosio" and they have it parked right now in the Bartica area in front of the Mazaruni River. It lights up the river at nights. Taxpayers have to pay about \$16,000 a year to keep that ship floating. The Government does not have the courage to sell it or the will to scrap it. Secondly, those people who know Bartica will know that there was a clock that could be seen across the road as soon as you get off the stelling. Some big boys wanting to write their names in history, broke down the clock and built a monument. When I went to see the monument I saw the names of Bancroft, Romain and Thakur. That is what is written on the monument. Those are the changes in Bartica's development. Reality is a different situation.



Let us deal with transportation. Amerindian people, in the North West specifically, about five years back were given a sloop as a gift from the Canadian Government. That sloop used to take people from Kwebanna along the Wainni River right down to morawhanna and back again. Amerindians who live all the way from Barama, Kwebanna, Warapoka used the service every week. Today, that service is withdrawn. And if an Amerindian wants to buy ammunition he has to paddle 130 miles down to Morawhanna buy ammunition and then paddle back again. This is how they are making the small men real men.

**8.50 p.m.**

What about the cassava factory? Government is telling us that it is producing cassava in bulk in the North West district. It spent thousands of dollars worth of hard-earned cash to buy cassava sticks and they sent it to Port Kaituma. This is about three years ago. Every week we see cassava going up to Port Kaituma but we cannot see any coming out. That type of cassava takes three years to bear. The Government is fooling the people in the North West. In 1971 it promised the people at Kumaka a market. The Community Development Officer went around and collected money from the stall-holders and up to now this market has not been completed. I went there and I enquired about the market. Do you know what a P.N.C. man by the name of Mr. Van Sluytman told me? He said, “Comrade, these people are fooling us. Since 1971 this market was a baby to be born and we the P.N.C. people are left sitting down like midwives, mother in labour “pains, but the baby can’t born.” **[Laughter]**

This is a serious matter. These comrades are talking about the Interior. I understand the Minister of Agriculture is making tours all over this country visiting agricultural stations. At this stage I want to invite him to go to the North West District and examine his failures. And when I say so I do not want him to go like the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister went in one plane, three houses went in another. This is how they were wasting taxpayers’ money in the past and now they are coming to tell us we must tighten our belts. I want to advise him that

when he is going to the North West District he must make certain he buys a first-class ticket. Of course he does not have to buy a ticket; he is Minister and will get a free passage. Take the North West steamer from the Kingston wharf at one o'clock on a Monday afternoon spend 19 hours on the steamer and get some stench. That is how the small man has to live.

What about Bartica? If you want to go to Bartica make certain that when you get into the Bartica steamer you are equipped with your rain coat and umbrella so that a shower of rain will not wet you. Transport services in the Interior have gone to nothing. In this afternoon's issue of Citizen, on the first page, we read: "Captain of ship out on sea refusing to come in". He said he would not come in without a pilot. Pilots are reluctant to go out and bring in ships because the vessels are all bad. What a disgrace: Amerindians who live in interior areas and apart from the economic conditions, we are expecting that the Government will break through the 1973 elections. For that matter 12,000 voters were registered, 13,000 voted. How come you do not know? Ballot boxes were opened up, 13 wads of ballot papers were found. They cannot say people sabotage. The Minister is making the excuse. He cannot say at Hosorroro the gas run out. **[Laughter]** He can't blame the weather.

Cde. Speaker, this is a serious business. Amerindian people, this House has two Amerindians I can see them now and I was expecting that somebody would have been saying something concerning Amerindians, how they live. Amerindians today are being treated like dirt. Police oppression by this Government. **[Member: "Shame!"]** One man say, "Shame." I have a newspaper here, Chronicle Friday, 17<sup>th</sup> December, 1976. Police Constable Nolan Collins found guilty of shooting an Amerindian in his back." Here what the trial Judge said. "Any court will find it difficult . . ." - -

**The Speaker:** Cde. Nokta, I think that case is under appeal.

**Cde. Nokta:** I am sorry, Cde. Speaker. Let us go on. I have here other information. One Amerindian fellow by the name of Pedro De Souza, this person was known to the people of the area to be mentally sick and on 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1976, two policemen armed with guns left Mabaruma Police Station, travelled over thirty miles to that home and shot the Amerindian dead in his house. What has happened? Has anybody been charged? Up to this day nobody knows. What a disgrace! **[Interruption]** I am telling you now, ask the Minister of Home Affairs. A Deputy Commissioner of Police, by the name of Raghubir went up to investigate the case, but he has not heard anything. It is like the Basir shooting.

There is another case, I would not want to call this girl's name. A 24-year old Amerindian girl on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1976, was going across from Guyana to Venezuela in a little boat and the Guyana policemen at the Imbotero border took the girl into the station for questioning and it is alleged that a policeman attempted to rape the girl, and in order to get away she jumped through the station window and fell 14 feet around 8'clock in the night. She ran for safety and fell into the River that divides Guyana and Venezuela, a River called Imotero creek, and she was nearly drowned because she could not swim, she shouted out, and the officer who stationed on the Venezuelan side of the Border, Venezuelan officer, had to come to the rescue of the girl. I am asking this House, has anybody been charged? Any investigations were made? Let them tell us.

When it comes to the hinterland and the North West District there is much to talk about. People who live on the Border are living at the mercy of nature. There is not only poverty but advantage is taken of the poor Amerindian people. When the Ministers go up there they leave their air-conditioned offices and fly by plane and come and say "All is well." All is not well. When will these things be remedied?

I do not want to talk more about agricultural production. But in conclusion having summed up everything about production and agriculture, what do we see? Government's

agricultural policy has slumped so much that even the Prime Minister has become confused.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Nokta, please withdraw that remark.

**Cde. Nokta:** I am sorry. Let me put it this way. The Minister of Agriculture I supposed to produce coconut oil, soyabean oil and all sorts of edible oil. He I supposed to encourage coconut production and, as I said, another Minister of Agriculture is bulldozing coconuts. "What happens now? In fact, the oil industry in Guyana is in such shambles that the Prime Minister in his New Year Message as reported in the Chronicle, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1977, has to tell the nation that he will bring experts to examine cocorite seed and wild farm oil. This proves that agriculture has failed. Sooner or later he may come to tell us about wild potatoes.

**9 p.m.**

Mr. Speaker, I see my time is up and in view of this I wish to say that there is no point in our quarreling because unless we stop all this nonsense that is going on, Guyana will never develop. They are telling us now about austerity budget, war on waste. What waste? A war on the waste of water in a country that is regarded as a land of many waters! Is that all the waste the Government can find? Do we need two Ministers of Agriculture? That is a waste.

**The Speaker: Time!** Cde. Carmichael.

**The Minister of State – Regional (North West)** (Cde. F. U. A. Carmichael): Cde. Speaker, when I was a little boy – and that is a very long time ago – I learnt that all the world's a stage and the men and women are merely players or actors and over the past thirty minutes, I wish to submit humbly, Cde. Harripersaud Nokta acted his part well. **[Laughter]** We were in

for a real treat. He did say that he did not want to go into facts and figures but because of the fact that over the past half an hour he tried to mislead this honourable House, particularly in relation to what happens in the North West, I will have at a later stage to go into some facts and figures because I am on the spot quite unlike Cde. Harripersaud Nokta who left there some years ago, around 1972. We were told that he went back there last September. I wish that his colleagues would go out there and see for themselves because he is misleading them.

However, Cde. Speaker, I rise to give unequivocal support to the budgetary proposals so able presented in this House on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1976. I think that the highlight of these proposals was the degree o which the socialist reconstruction of this nation will be guaranteed and the willingness of all Guyanese to lift themselves up by their own boot-straps – through self-reliance.

My colleague, Cde. Clarke, dealt comprehensively with the functional aspect of the regional system and so over the next few minutes I wish to relate what he has said and the sensible spending of this Government as they affect the North West Region. I wish to talk about what I know, Cde. Speaker.

With the institution of the regional system – a system that ensures the development of people – and of course, established by the People’s National Congress Government, the North West Region can no longer be regarded as the “remote bush.” We have heard quite a lot about transportation and communication and I shall deal with that later. In fact, through the leadership of this Government and its progressive policies including improved communication, several small communities have been brought closer together and this closeness and togetherness have been a positive and deliberate plan by this Government to regard every community, even the smallest and most secluded, as a very important contributor to national development.

Every since the People's National Congress Government came into office some twelve years ago – and particularly over the past year – there has been remarkable development, manifest to all – of course none so blind as those who will not see – in favour of several communities within the region of which I speak. I refer to places such as Hotakwai, Kamwatta, Barbina, Hosororo, Kwebanna, Port kaituma, just to mention a few.

Of course, Cde. Speaker, these beautifully sounding names are just names to the entire Opposition because they really have not got the facts from Cde. Harripersaud Nokta. A few weeks ago, one of the Opposition Members, as a matter of fact, Cde. Singh, who is absent, visited the North West. Perhaps he heard so much that he really went to see for himself. The invitation is still open to the other part of the Opposition because it is in the North West at the present time, if you were to visit, that you would really feel the development of people, people who were hitherto regarded as second-class citizens.

Today, Cde. Speaker, I wish to bring to the attention of this honourable house and the nation at large, the progress that has been made and is still being made in the North West Region engineered by this Government.

As you are aware and for the sake of geography – because we need to put the picture in its true perspective – the North West Region is divided into three distinct sub-regions, namely Matthews Ridge/Arakaka/Baramita/Kaituma, and I know that particular area is of keenest interest to Cde. Harripersaud Nokta who never visited there. This area is shortly to be known as Matarkai. Secondly, we have Mabaruma/Morawhanna/Hosororo/Wauna/Yarakita of which he spoke and thirdly we have Moruca including Acquero/Kumaka/Kwebanna.

What has happened is that we must recognise in this House that the North West district is pregnant with possibilities; it is full of potential and we are sure that this Government sets out all the time to exploit these possibilities. We, on this side of the House, have realised that the

agricultural resources including forestry can contribute significantly to the socialist programme of the Government, that of feeding and housing the nation. The farmers of this region responded admirably to the agricultural production drive during 1975 and when in 1976 when we had the bad weather, which has been spoken of so much in this House, when fears lingered around for some time, this Government, through the A.P.D. programme and the rehabilitation scheme provided some quarter of a million dollars and the farmers were able to produce over four million pounds of food.

**9.10 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, this fortunate position for comrades who have contributed, and will continue to contribute at maximum, was not the result of empty and unfulfilled promises. It was due to the fact that because of the Government's policies they demonstrated faith, the farmers, who we believe are one of the greatest contributors to national development.

The Cde. Minister of Agriculture remarked that over the past period farmers have been given a square deal and farmers in the North West were no exception. It was because of this concern for the farmers that this Government provided for those two schemes \$121,648 and \$97,036.15 respectively. We believe that the North West is destined to be the food bowl of the Caribbean. This is because, in addition to the food from our crops, livestock development, to which Cde. Persaud alluded, is gaining momentum.

The Cde. Leader of the Opposition mentioned that livestock development on the coastland was neglected but the progressive policies of this Government dictate that we look into areas of specialisation and we exploit the resources where they can be pursued at their maximum. At Arakaka alone, within the Matarkai area, the herd was increased from 45 in 1971 to 1,059 by the end of 1976 and it is anticipated that by 1976 the herd will number 1,751 with 1,228 acres of pasturage provided.

Over this five-year period calving has been at a very high rate, 70 per cent, and by 1982 we estimate there will be a natural increase to the tune of 5,685. The total sales will be something like 1,288 head bringing a revenue of \$790,230. By 1979 we should be self-sufficient in beef and the excess shipped to the CARICOM area.

Housing this nation is one of the top priorities of our national endeavours and it is common knowledge in this House that the People's National Congress Government has a very fine record at building. During 1976, a number of new units were constructed by aided self-help using unfired clay bricks particularly in the Matarkai area. In addition over a quarter million dollars was spent on maintenance and repairs to existing buildings.

Another significant achievement in relation to improved housing conditions has been the works done to the upgrading of sanitary facilities in the Matthews Ridge area. The history of that area reminds us that it was a Minister of Health in the administration of 1960 – 1962, a person who is present in this House today, who approved of one of the most primitive toilet facilities after the expatriates had generously offered that type of facility. It would be surprising to visit Matthews Ridge now to see the pit latrines, holes within the confines of the buildings. We still have some. But it was the wisdom of this Government that decided a few months ago that a substantial sum of money be spent towards correcting this health hazard. For that reason, \$0.4 million was spent last year to correct this very low standard of toilet facilities and we hope that before the end of this year all the homes there will have decent toilet facilities.

Logging and sawmilling during this period have had attention. This will be made possible since we have two sawmills within the area. There is one at papaya, and towards the end of last year an Amerindian community, a community according to Cde. Persaud that was neglected, a thriving Amerindian community at Kwebanna just registered its sawmilling co-operative. It would be interesting to note here that over the past year some 960,000 cubic feet of logs were extracted from the forest.



I referred earlier to the fact that our development work touches various parts of the region. The use of local lumber was indeed widespread in providing social amenities for many communities. I wish to list a few of the projects because we are presenting facts all the time, and we don't come here to make a lot of noise, long-sounding words, and mislead the House: headmaster's house, Kwebanna, Amerindian community; construction of bridge, Kumaka; Medical rangers' quarters, Barama; construction of sports pavilion, Kumaka; air terminal building at Benichi; health centre at Waramuri; community centre at Mabaruma; community centres at Motakwai and kamwatta; Papaya training centre of G.N.S. and the nurses' hostel at Pakera.

This list, Cde. Speaker, is not exhaustive but represents just some of the community development projects which have been completed. What is noteworthy here is the degree of the involvement of people of each of the communities in the true spirit of self-help and self-reliance. Who can deny, Cde. Speaker, that this spontaneous response by the people was the direct result of their faith and belief in the declared philosophy of this Government? **[Applause]** Region No. 1, much attention was directed to these important social services. With regard to health, there is an adequate number of health stations including general hospitals. I was rally waiting to hear what sort of attack would have been made on the health services within the region because we are sure that all the communities within the region because we are sure that all the communities within the region are well serviced. There is a special river dispenser who spends weeks on trips. Living out there for five weeks is a small matter. It was only a few months ago that the first resident public health officer was appointed to take care of the health needs of the region it was in April last that the residents of Wanaina, Mosororo, and Barbine, all Amerindian communities, received copious supplies of potable water. This was referred to earlier. Hitherto, the comrades had to go down a steep hill to the springs to collect their water. Now they turn on taps.

9.20 p.m.

This is testimony to the fact that this Party and Government have been working assiduously to lift the standards of the Amerindian comrades, standards which were perpetuated by colonialism of yesteryear and the neo-colonial policies of the former administration.

I would like to say something more of the Amerindians. Here again, we ask: what has been responsible for the response of people who were disadvantaged for so long? They were victims of total neglect. We can recall the historical event of April last year when in this honourable House history was created at a special conference<sup>3</sup> of Amerindian Captains and Leaders. It was this Government, in this Chamber when the Amerindian (Amendment) Bill was piloted through all its stages successfully, that made provision for Amerindians to secure title to their lands, through their Village Councils. Amerindians all over this country were given a new status. They are no longer wards but are now citizens of a sovereign state. They can now walk with their heads held high, with dignity and confidence and because of this they have sought to improve their housing conditions and this Government will continue to give assistance to them in the form of power saws, outboard engines, small tools and sports equipment.

Education: We will describe education as a revolution. The year 1976 may be described as a revolutionary year for education in Guyana and, indeed, the North West has felt the impact of this revolutionary change. The comrades in this region have lauded Government's decision to assume full control of all formal institutions of learning. In fact, it is commonly believed that this move should have been made long before now. Children within this region, including Amerindians, receive free text books.

The schools within the area have a new approach to Agriculture. Cde. Persaud did not mention the education complex at Port Kaituma. He spoke of one secondary school in the North West. That is not true. The new school at Kaituma is residential, of the work/study type, and it is the first of its kind in the country, established in the Port Kaituma area. In his budget Speech

the Cde. Minister of Finance re-emphasised the need for greater production and productivity as a pre-requisite to self-sufficiency. We believe that one of the best places to nurture this idea is in our learning institutions.

We have another learning institution, the Burnham Agricultural Institute where young people are trained in practical aspects of farming. This government, over the past four years, during the existence of that school, has seen it fit to have the graduates settled in and around the region with the necessary assistance. Co-operatives, the vehicle that will be used to achieve our socialism, has made an impact in the region. Cde. Persaud spoke about the establishment of some saltfish centre at Morawhanna. We prefer to have the people involved in a co-operative and already at Morawhanna we have a Fisherman's Co-operative Society to provide fresh fish which is better than salt fish.

Communications: I said earlier that the whole of the North West is being brought closer to the coastlands. It is good for the comrades over there to know for they only see coastland development. This is a legacy from the old colonial masters. But we are talking about communication for socialist development and at this moment we can boast of a sophisticated system through the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation. We can boast now of direct distance dialing from the North West to any part of this country. I remarked that there is an improved communication system. At this point, to put an extension to that by stating that the North West has come closer to the capital city.

The Guyana Agricultural Products Corporation has been contributing to the development of the North West. Cde. Harripersaud Nokta spoke about Wauna and some suggestion about making Wauna a dairy area. We are not aware of that. We know at Wauna there is a thriving cultivation of oil palm to take care of our edible oil needs. At present, there are 1,000 acres of growing palms some of which have been fruiting. By the end of 1976, 1,800 acres of forest lands were cut.

The cassava mill at Port Kaituma is 70 per cent complete. But let us understand in this honourable House that that is not a case of the project being shelved. We expect that within a few weeks the cassava mill will come into production. Already, we have over 1,000 acres of cassava under cultivation in the Matarkai area.

I should not end without touching briefly on Matthews Ridge, the Port Kaituma/Arakaka area. That is known as Matarkai.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Carmichael, you have to be very brief indeed. You have only two minutes more.

**Cde. Carmichael:** Matthews Ridge has been the subject of attack by the Opposition ever soften. We are sure that at Matthews Ridge there is a thriving and developing community. When the Manganese Company left we had hundreds of people there from the coastland who had spent some then years away from these parts. They needed to be provided for and it was this government in its wisdom that decided that at Matthews Ridge we can produce quite a lot of food. Had I the time I would have given the figures of production at Matthews ridge. I spoke about beef and the secondary school. This Government, which is never afraid to make decisions, has been looking at the Matthews Ridge area and very soon there will be a restructured administration. We will establish a Board which will be manned by a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, workers' representatives who will further ensure that this community is provided for, with social facilities and be a viable one.

In conclusion, I would like to say that we must not be naïve to suggest that everything went well, while our comrades on the other side try all the time to say that nothing was achieved. But the difference between us is that while our ideals are lofty they fondly embrace mediocrity. We have courage and we sometimes take the bull by horns with no regrets. While we strive

**10.1.77**

**National Assembly**

**9.20 – 9.30 p.m.**

after total development of this nation, theirs is coastal and sectional. Ours is not a cock-eyed approach to development. The North West has its peculiar difficulties of geography, transportation, communications, weather, but we firmly believe that the difficulties were not made for men but men for the difficulties and we are men on this side. **[Applause]**

**9.30 p.m.**

This Party and Government will continue to motivate the people of this nation to create new institutions for themselves. Farmers Association and Co-operative societies, small businessmen Co-operative Societies are formed and the result of these organizations will surely be to tap the resources of the region.

This type of mobilisation will make the people more productive and less dependent on aid from outside and from the State and will banish paternalism. During the embryonic stage of these organisations this Government will continue to give the necessary assistance to the comrades in the form of tools, equipment, loans and so on. As we see it, this democratic and socialist approach will stimulate both the physical and psychological transformation of our people and their communities and it is with this background that we the members on this side of the House are confident that all working class people of this country will demonstrate their faith, loyalty and commitment to the People's National Congress and will rally to the call for increased production and productivity which is the essence of the budgetary proposals scientifically prepared and presented to this House by Cde. Frank Hope on the 30<sup>th</sup> December. **[Applause]**

**The Speaker:** Cde. Sukhu

**Cde. Sukhu:** **Cde. Speaker,** much has been said within the last four days and, as I have said, it appears that we have come to grips with an irresponsible Opposition and an Opposition who, I believe, have come to their senses by demonstrating here tonight a bizarre

approach to a Budget that means well for the working class in view of the challenge of the times. I quote from the **Chronicle** and I read these words for the benefit of the House.

“An Army in battle has to be well armed and properly fed and its morale has to be kept high by the inspiring leadership of its General. A nation at war against its economic problem has correspondingly to have its morals high being free from additional tax with the cost of living kept within the reaches of the earning power.”

This is exactly the condition of the fighting fitness in which the long awaited Budget Statement by Cde. Frank Hope, Finance Minister, put to the Guyanese people. The Budget was true to the exclusive forecast in the **Chronicle**, that though it would be an austerity Budget it would not impose additional taxation on the people.

This shows clearly that when the People’s National Congress took up the challenge from the masses of people in this country it took the chance of pledging itself to improve the environment of the people of Guyana and with this it has accepted the challenge in no uncertain terms.

Much has been said against the proposals in the budgetary approach but I would like to highlight some of the achievements of this Government comparing them with the seven years of misrule and misdirection of the people of this country by the People’s Progressive Party. Let us look at roads. The fertility of the P.P.P. can be best gauged from the failure of the party to work out hand pursue a programme to improve the road communication system in the country. Such a programme is clearly a pre-condition for the county’s economic take-off. Many of you will remember that it was burnt earth roads that this party advocated and today you can go and look on the Corentyne where there are all-weather roads; not roads we used to see on the Corentyne. Tractors had to pull out the cars and had to assist the farmers. Today under the People’s

National Congress Government, there are all-weather roads not only on the Corentyne but in Black Bush Polder and in every other area where a road development programme has been started by this Government.

The P.P.P. which mismanaged the administration of this country has only built 51½ mile roads. The P.N.C. in view of its commitment to the people of this country has built over 500 miles of road. It has also been assisted by institutions like the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committees which has assisted the villages by building 25 miles of road in villages in the various areas of this country. Can the P.P.P. show where it was working in the interest of the common man? All that it was able to say was: “Comrade, hold on, fight and struggle.”

What have been the realities? We have seen the reality of the change of the environment of the working-class people in this country. From 1964 to 1976 we have not only built roads in this country, we have improved on the rural electrification and today I can show you that in this county we have not only talked but we have acted. In areas like Versailles, Anna Region, No. 53, Rosehall, Onverwegt, Bartica, Garden of Eden, Canefield, Wakenaam, Linden, Sophia, in all these areas there are pumping stations generating a good system which is able to give rural electrification, decentralising the system of administration, improving the working class and improving the life of the people in the rural community.

If many of you remember well, it was the P.P.P. leader who said that too much money is spent in the urban areas. He asked: why don't you stand up and fight for decentralisation? The P.N.C. Government with courage, vision and foresight, thinking of the common man has decentralised these sources in the interest of the ordinary man.

9.40 p.m.

I have listened tonight to some remarks with regard to the medical services. Let me ask the P.P.P. and let them be quite honest, did they built any hospital in this country? No. I can tell you this, the P.N.C. Government is now rehabilitating and improving the medical services and I can say safely that in Berbice we have the Skeldon Hospital just completed with a new nurses hostel. We are thinking in the new year to implement the building of a hospital in Black bush Polder; the new regional hospital will be built in the Corentyne. The members of the Opposition do not even know about that; it is news to them. We have been able to build health centres, we have been able to improve the new Amsterdam Hospital and equip it with specialists when we were not able to put those specialists in the Hospital. We have surgeons, a Gynecologist, an Obstetrician, eye specialists and every type of specialist in the New Amsterdam Hospital, all for the ordinary man. We are improving the environment of the Mental Hospital and my visit to Cuba made me feel that this Government is going in the right direction in improving the lost of those mental patients. We have carried out a \$3 million rehabilitation programme in the Mental hospital, and in a matter of months that institution will be properly looked after. At the present moment let me give you some idea of what is happening. Many of you stand and are critical. That is good. Criticism is the basic for strengthening the arm of the Government. But many of you who have stood up here and called for national unity are people who have got - - As the Deputy Prime Minister reiterated, the lesson of the Chilean affair should be taught in the education structure. No amount of threats and no amount of attacks can bring down this Government. It is as solid as the rock of Gibraltar. **[Applause]**

I can say quite clearly that the intelligent electorate of this country are going to give us 80 per cent of the votes at the next general elections because of our performance. We were given a mandate in 1973 and we will continue for 2,000 years and show the people of this country that our performance is unique in the history of this country although we have got economic challenges and internal and external enemies in this country. At the present moment, while we are talking of communications let me just reiterate for the information of those individuals who



warm the benches; our development progress is great. Many of you talk about the bridge going across the Demerara River and criticise it, but I will tell you this: communication is an important link in rural development. I say this without fear that we have started on the Canje Bridge and in the future we will see the Berbice River and all the rivers of this country bridged. You would not have to cross by boat because this Government believes in technological development in the interest of the people of this country. To provide communications is important. **[Applause]**

Many of you stand up in this House and attack the rice industry, but I would tell the Members of this Assembly that they do not have to sit and criticize and say that we do not have sufficient rice. What has happened in this country is that some of our own Guyanese people who are supporters of those on that side of the House are exploiting the majority of people by buying the rice cheap and selling it dear. Many of you do not know but many who buy tractors for Black Bush Polder, pass bridges and say, “Put the necessities on it.”

Quite recently there was a case in Black Bush which the man admitted. He said, “Comrade, I was misled by my Party supporters.” I could call the names but this is not the place to do that. [Members: “Call names.”] The comrade who received the thing was Rutherford. I can tell you that.

We have looked at a very important blue-print. Many of the Members who sit on the opposite side stand up at the street corners of the country and tell the people that services are wanted. This Government is the only Government that has acted intelligently for the masses of the people. \$78 million is placed in this Budget for free education. When members of the P.P.P. were in Government over the last seven years they did not put seven cents for free education of the people of this country. **[Interruption]**

The former Minister of Health jumped up and started to criticise. What has been happening in the Berbice River? \$134,000 is being spent in rehabilitating and improving those dilapidated health centres that they built in the Berbice River. We have to improve them. I may say this: they were not properly staffed, they were not even built in localities where people live, people have to travel far distances to reach them. I cannot imagine what type of imagination they had and they say they are thinking in the interest of the people. [*Cde. N. Persaud*: “Where were you then?”] I was in the Corentyne, I was at Sheet anchor. Tonight, through the dynamic statesmanship and leadership of the People’s National Congress, I am standing up in Parliament speaking for the rural population of this country. We have been getting an improved standard of living through the People’s National Congress of this county.

This is a serious situation. We look at it from the point of view that we must think in terms of our country’s development. What I have observed here is that there are people on the Opposition Benches who are bringing their narrow political ambition to try to thwart the aspirations of the people of this country which are being fulfilled by a progressive Government which is implementing the needs of the people of this country.

I am saying that this is not a lie. In every sector of agriculture members of the Opposition are working relentlessly to disrupt the economy of this country so that the elected Government, would not be able to implement its plan. But I will tell you that this Government, by its national and international connections, will succeed in implementing the necessary reforms and development for the people of this country and with that you will see that on Elections Day, whether it be in June or December, we will get 80 per cent of the votes. [**Applause**]

**9.50 p.m.**

I am just an ordinary individual from the country but many of the hon. Members should sit and listen to the advice given by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice. I am no Marxist or

Leninist but what I believe is that we should think of improving the human environment of the people. I think the members of the Opposition are trying to thwart the aspiration of the people because they are using the type of tricks which I believe will not be in the interest of the people and the time is now coming when they will be found out.

I have made my contribution to this very unique budget debate in view of the economic challenges that are posed not only to Guyana, but to even capitalist and communist countries. All of them owe money; all of them want money but I can tell you this quite clearly: this country will continue to produce because it has the potential. Many of us might live to see that it is the P.N.C. is working for the development of human beings and not one group or one race.

**[Applause]**

Comrades, as we move forward in debating this Budget, I would like Members to think in terms of approaching it with a conscience. Look at the situation in the light of the realities. There is to my mind a threat in view that Guyana now has joined the anti-imperialist campaign forging ahead to implement the socialist policies which are expected of the Government. We should think in terms of working out a formula which is not based upon threats. If you feel that in the interest of the working-class people there must be a consolidated approach to the issues of the situation, do not let a few people talk about it. Let us get together and work in the interest of the country. Remember: it is Guyanese. But I tell you this, comrades: you might not know it, but the P.P.P. is failing. Don't they know that? Don't they know they are all fading? Why? Because free education today is going to cause the masses to take an interest in people. The children in the homes will influence those elders that they depend on. And this is what many of them do not know! The children are the people who are going to influence the voting structure and this is causing the P.P.P. to fade away.

This being my very short contribution, I would like to speak of some of the things, particularly the roads that we have been building in Berbice. **[Interruption]** In New

Amsterdam we have the new bicycle plant going up; the roads are completed, the bridges are completed. We have just extended the road from Fyrish, the West Canje Road. The road approaches to the Canje Bridge are completed and we also have the leather factory the site for which is being prepared. We are now erecting the X-Rays for the Port Mourant/Skeldon and the Fort Wellington Hospital. The Nurses' Hostel at Skeldon is now completed and at the present time we are carrying out a new approach to these hospitals by providing the chain-link fencing which will make these institutions far more secure and permit them to be better handled.

I think this is very important: a budget like this should be supported. Many of you say that this budget is an austerity budget but I remember well as a country boy coming to town we would have seen "Axe the Tax" long ago. It appears to me this is quite clear. If the Opposition had any support in Georgetown, people would have been picketing long ago but it appears to me that they are losing touch with the people. This is the situation. I want to urge those who are thinking inimically and attacking the leadership of this Party to support this Budget in the interest of the working-class people of this country because when we do this, we will be doing a job not only for ourselves but for our country. [Applause]

### ADJOURNMENT

**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Cde. Ramsaroop):**  
Cde. Speaker, I beg to move the adjournment of this House to Tuesday, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 1977 at the hour of 2 p.m. when we will conclude the general debate of the budget.

**Adjourned accordingly at 9.57 p.m.**

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