

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME 7]

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

141st Sitting

2 p.m.

Thursday, 2nd March, 1978

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (49)

Prime Minister (1)

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

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Ministers (8)

Cde. H. D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives

* Cde. H. Green,
Minister of Health, Housing and Labour

(Absent – on leave)

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

- * Cde. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance
- * Cde. S. S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Works and Transport
- * Cde. G. A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
- * Cde. G. B. Kennard, C.C.H., (Absent – on leave)
Minister of Agriculture
- * Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, C.C.H., S.C.,
Attorney General and
Minister of Justice

Ministers (5)

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

(Absent – on leave)

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

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

- * Cde. V. R. Teekah,
Minister of Education, Social
Development and Culture

- * Cde. R. E. Jackson,
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministers of State (9)

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

Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State, Ministry of
Economic Development and Co-operatives

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

- Cde. K. B. Bancroft, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro)
- Cde. J. P. Chowritmootoo, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)
- Cde. J. R. Thomas,
Minister of State, Ministry of
Health, Housing and Labour
- Cde. R. H. O. Corbin,
Minister of State, Ministry of
National Development
- 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 (4)

- 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
- Cde. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Economic Development
and Co-operatives
- Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education, Social
Development and Culture

Other Members (21)

- Cde. E. M. Bynoe
Cde. W. G. Carrington

Cde. L. A. Durant
Cde. E. H. A. Fowler
Cde. J. Gill
Cde. W. Hussain
Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh
Cde. K. M. E. Jonas
Cde. M. Kasim, A.A.
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.
Cde. C. Sukul, M.S.
Cde. H. A. Taylor
Cde. R. C. Van Sluytman, J.P.
Cde. L. E. Willems
Cde. C. E. Wrights, J.P.
Cde. M.Zaheeruddeen

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. Jagan
Leader of the Opposition

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran
Deputy Speaker

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
Cde. I. Basir
Cde. C. C. Belgrave
Cde. R. Ally

(Absent – on leave)

Cde. Dalchand, J.P.
Cde. Dindayal
Cde. H. Nokta

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh, J.P.
Mrs. E. DaSilva

(Absent – on leave)

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F. A. Narain, A.A.

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

PRAYERS
ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
Leave To Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the Cde. Prime Minister, to Comrades Green and Kennard, and to the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh for today's Sitting.

Hours of Sitting

I also wish to announce that the Sitting of the House will be from 2 to 4 o'clock and from 4.30 to 8.30 o'clock, six hours of continuous debate, four hours to the Government and two hours to the Opposition.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS
OF THE ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

The Speaker: Cde. Leader of the House

The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde. Speaker, may I, under paragraph (3) of Standing Order No. 9, move that paragraph (2) of the said Standing Order be suspended so that the Sitting could resume at 4.30 p.m. and continue until 8.30 p.m., instead of being suspended at 6.30 p.m. for the usual 1 ½ hour break. This has been discussed with the Opposition Parties and has their full concurrence.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

2.3.78
2.05 p.m.

National Assembly

2.05 – 2.15 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS
MOTION
APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1978
BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed debate on the Motion moved by the Minister of Finance on 27th February, 1978, for the approval of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1978, totalling \$476, 515, 775.

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, last Monday, regrettably, this honourable House was reduced more or less to a circus and I do not want to say that the Minister of Finance –

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud, all over the Caribbean great dignity has been now carried out in these Parliaments and I am not going to permit any unparliamentary statements to be made by calling this house a circus or saying that it was reduced to a circus. I would expect the necessary decorum and dignity to prevail from now on. Please proceed.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, last Monday, we had the opportunity regrettably to listen to the fate of the nation by the Cde. Minister of Finance, Cde. Hope.

Cde. Speaker, I said regrettably because the essence of presenting a Budget, as was the tradition, has been lost in Guyana and the meaning of presenting that Budget Speech in

Parliament has also been lost. I say this because what should have been entailed in the Budget had been coming since the year started and that is, increase of taxation, withdrawal of subsidies, etc. The reason for this is that the Government, that it has grave financial and economic problems, realized that if it was to incorporate all those hardships, additional taxation, withdrawal of subsidies, etc., in the Budget, it would have been too much at one time for the people. For this reason, the Government started even late last year to withdraw subsidies and increase their prices of certain essential commodities. These things are normally done in conjunction with the Budget Speech.

Cde. Speaker, before I attempt to continue my speech, however, I wish to draw the House's attention to some grave errors that I have discovered in the estimates. In view of this, I do not know how meaningful the contributions in this parliament during this Budget Debate would be, since it is expected that the figures given in the Budget Speech by the Minister, more or less, have a bearing on the Estimates.

When we look at the 1977 Estimates, and we look at all the columns dealing with the actual expenditure and actual income for the year 1975, and when we look at the 1978 Estimates, these balances as they appear for the year 1975, are carried forward into 1976 which form the balance for 1976, which are again carried forward into 1977 and so on and so forth. This is why I am saying that we do not know whether the figures as given by the Minister of Finance – which differ because of the discrepancies that I am pointing out to you in this House – really will have any true meaning as far as the Budget is concerned. As I said –

Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud, that part of the matter you can deal with when we come to the Estimates. Today we are dealing with the policy speech. However, it is a matter entirely for you. I was just saying that you would have had your second bite then.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, they are at they are at the very beginning. I am not going into the Estimates proper. These deal with the balance of payments, the actual expenditure, balance brought forward, and so on. If we are to look, for example, at page 2 of the Estimates, where there is the actual for 1975 –

The Speaker: Page 2 of what?

Cde. N. Persaud: Page 2 of the Estimates. Cde. Speaker, I wonder if you will be able to follow if you do not have both copies of the Estimates.

The Speaker: May I inform you, I am a qualified Accountant.

Cde. N. Persaud: In the 1978 Estimates, on page 2, under the heading, A. CONSOLIDATED FUND (CURRENT ACCOUNT), 1975 Actual, the balance as at 31st December reads, \$179,390,862. If we were to check the Estimates for 1977, under the column 1975 Actual, the figure is \$175,649,044 a deficit, or a difference of \$4 million. On that same page in the 1977 Estimates, Capital Account 1974, the figure reads - \$294,857,102 but as you will observe in the 1978 Estimates, the figure is \$294,280,521 and that is a difference of \$28 million. This difference, as you will have noted on the same page, of a deficit of \$294,280,521 has gone forward to 1976 and so the figures as I have pointed out, have come forward with the difference. This happens not only on that page but on all the pages until we reach right down to Division I, dealing with the President. For this reason I raise the point.

I have discovered some other errors. For example, there is an error in the addition of \$10,000. I made an attempt to have these errors in addition cleared with the office of the

Secretary to the Treasury, but I got nowhere. I spoke to the Deputy Secretary to the Treasury, Cde. Murray, who agree that there were differences and he said that Cde. Wilkinson will have to look at it. He promised to call me back; he did not call. I called again, he was not in. When he called, I was not in and that is how the matter ended. So, Cde. Speaker, I want to point out from the very beginning, as I said, this is the situation as far as the figures are concerned. They differ by \$28 million, \$30 million, \$4 million, \$6 million, etc., and I do not know how we are going to really carry out a proper analysis on the basis of these figures. Cde. Speaker, as the Minister pointed out in his budget speech, the economy is faced with serious economic and financial problems. This started not in 1978, not last year, but before then.

In 1976, the total deficit in the Budget amounted to \$214 million. In 1977, there was a deficit of \$144 million and in 1978, it is anticipated that it is going to be \$160 million. Cde. Speaker, with your permission, I just want to mention some slight quotations from the Budget Speech for the year 1976, page 59, paragraph 3, where the Minister stated that there will be no additional taxation measures:

“It is true that there is a large financing gap with which we have to cope. It is, however, the Government’s view that additional taxation is not the answer.”

In 1976, additional taxation was not the answer. However, it has become the answer in 1978. The paragraph continues:

“We, as a Nation, have built up over the last two years substantial external reserves. We did this partly by our own sacrifice from 1974; partly they were the result of remunerative prices for our exports; in part they represent the result of careful management of our resources.”

That is what the Minister said in 1976 as regards the state of the economy.

2.3.78
2.15 p.m.

National Assembly

2.15 – 2.25 p.m.

In his 1977 Budget Speech, page 64, the Minister said:

“This year the economy of Guyana is in temporary recession; but all the forecasts suggest that 1977 would see an improvement and 1978 given good weather could positively be prosperous. Therefore let us face a temporary difficulty with resolution in certain knowledge that a better period lies ahead.”

How hopeful was Cde. Hope when he made those statements. Unfortunately, his hopes had been shattered when he had to present a Budget last Monday contrary to those statements, contradicting these statements I have just read out. It is so. I want again to quote from page 64 of the 1977 Budget Speech.

It states:

“The Budget that I have presented Cde. Speaker, does not call for increased taxation.”

This statement he made in 1977 and in 1976 he said that the Government was satisfied that taxation was not the answer. However, as I said, circumstances have proven the Minister’s prognosis, the Minister’s analysis, wrong and he has been forced to make statements contrary to that. The hopes that Cde. Hope had were all shattered last Monday.

Cde. Speaker, the Minister and the Government saw the difficulties and started a few weeks or a few months ago to remove the subsidies and increase taxes. Subsidies were removed from milk, flour, oil and rice. Prices went up, costs went up, charges went up for telephones, drainage and irrigation, rates and taxes, travel tax, airport tax, steamer fare to Bartica and some

others. Why? They fooled the people at the beginning of the year by saying there is no taxation, taxation is not the answer. The public would be relieved that there would be no taxation. But before the year is finished, there comes the axe with taxation even heavier than one would have anticipated at the beginning of the year. This has not only been for this year, it has been for the past two years. In 1978, we have seen that allocation has been made for a total of \$462 million on the current account and the amount of \$181 million on the capital account making the total budget a sum of \$643 million. Current receipts are calculated to reach \$332.3 million, a deficit on the current account therefore by \$130 million or 28 percent of the current estimates; capital receipts are calculated at \$181 million, a deficit on capital account, therefore, of \$30 million or 16 percent of the capital budget, making a total deficit of \$160 million or 25 percent of the total national budget for the year 1978. The current account is estimated at \$462 million. The personal emoluments vote has taken up \$175.9 million of the current budget of \$332.3 of 38 percent of this budget.

I want to point out that in 1964, 45 percent of the current budget was put for social services. As I said just now, 38 percent of the budget will go for personal emoluments. The amount of \$154 million is allocated for debt charges which is 33 percent of the budget, a total of \$329.9 million. Current receipts are \$332 million and personal emoluments and debt charges are \$329.9 million, a clear difference of about \$2.1 million. When we add personal emoluments of 38 percent and debt charges of 33 percent we get a total of 71 percent leaving thus 29 percent for social services in the year 1978. As I said, in 1964, 45 percent of the current budget was allocated for social services; it dropped in 1974 to 35 percent and in this year it has dropped further to 29 percent. To finance social services and other charges, only \$44 million can be seen, as pointed out by the Minister, to be through additional taxation. It means that of the deficit of \$132 million only \$44 million can be seen, thus \$88 million is nowhere. What does it mean? It

means that despite the Minister has failed, on purpose, to put it in the Budget Speech to deceive the nation, it will be additional taxation come the end of 1978. How else are they going to obtain this money? He has said that from the \$132 million he is going to get \$44 million from additional taxation. He has not told us from where they are going to get the remaining \$88 million. As has happened in the past, surely it is going to come from additional taxation.

I want to turn very briefly to the question of subsidies. In 1976, subsidies stood at \$37.8 million. In 1977 there was a withdrawal of \$26.1 million of that subsidy, leaving \$21.7 million. Now, for 1978, an additional \$15.1 million has been withdrawn leaving only \$6.6 million as subsidies for the essential items in the country that the poor people must have; from a high of \$47.8 million at the 31st December, 1976, to a low of \$6.6 million today. What does it mean to the cost of living when we withdraw a further \$15.1 million and add \$44 million in taxes? It is anybody's guess what is going to take place as far as the cost of living is concerned.

I want now to turn to something that is really hidden and I am going to deal with the Consolidated Fund. We tell the nation that the country is in crisis: financial crisis, economic crisis. What must the nation understand by this? What does the small man understand by this? We must be able to prove to the people where this financial difficulty is and what economic problems are there. The Consolidated Fund, known as the 400 account, is the fund into which all revenues are paid. That fund now, after this Budget is passed, would be at the discretion of the Minister of Finance, if he is still the Minister of Finance. Now he draws from that fund and that withdrawal goes into the general account which is the 405 account. From that account withdrawals are made to the various Ministries which operate separate accounts, various other accounts.

2.3.78
2.25 p.m.

National Assembly

2.25 – 2.35 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, according to the 1978 Estimates, and that is on page 2, it is anticipated that at 31st December this year the Current Account of the Consolidated Fund will be in deficit to the extent of \$109 million. For the same period it is noted that the Capital Account of the Consolidated Fund will be in deficit to the extent of \$555,343.706. What does this really mean? Does this tell the financial position of the country? No! The answer is as simple as that. It does not help.

I want to tell this House and the nation today what is the financial position of the country. According to the Cash Book Balance lying at the Accountant General's Office at 31st December, 1977, the 400 or the Consolidated Fund was in deficit to the extent of \$379,900.000. Call it \$380 million. The figures are there. The 405 account is the general account and this had a surplus of \$211,627,000. It means that at 31st December, 1977 the financial position of the country was in the red to the extent of \$188,000.000. That is the true position of the country's finances today.

The Minister did not give us these figures and perhaps some other Minister in a reply would wish to deny them. The 400 account is \$379 million in the red, and the 405 account has a surplus of \$211 million, leaving a deficit of \$188 million. It means that the country is bankrupt; it means that the country is in the red; it means that we have problems because we are living on overdrafts. The Government knows that fully well and this is why the Minister is asking more and more in his statements that the public must tighten their belts, eat less and save more. Save more for whom? For the Government to get it to squander it as it has been doing all these years?

The Minister bemoans the fact that only \$55 million was saved during last year. Why? I will come to the others later. He told us last year that he is going \$30 million from defence bonds. He got \$2.7 million. What does it show? It shows that people have no confidence whatsoever in this Government which claims to be a socialist Government, which claims to be a Government for the working class, which claims to have the confidence of the majority of the

people, when the majority of the people have refused to stay with it despite its lucrative terms. This is a fact.

According to the Minister the impression that was given last year, when we were dealing with the 1977 Budget was that the defence bonds were going to be only for last year. But when we check the 1978 Estimates, what do we find? The Estimates for 1977 of \$30 million was revised to \$2.7 million. The Government has also put another \$2 million for 1978. It means that these defence bonds that the Government embarked upon last year will be brought over in 1978. At least, the nation did not get that impression. How are they going to get it? In spite of all the coercion used among the civil servants, used among public servants, used among the military, the Government has not raised it. They have boasted in here, “We are going to raise \$30 million. We have the confidence of the people.” Where is that confidence? If there is that confidence, call an election this year and we shall see who has the confidence of the people in this country. The Government has become a disgrace to this country. That is why it is moving now to shelve elections. Anyway, we will talk about that later.

If I may go back to the Consolidated Fund for the year 1976, what was the position then? It was worse. The 400 account was in the red to the extent of \$400 million. The 405 account had a surplus of \$187 leaving a deficit of \$282,969,000 at 31st December, 1976. Let them check the books. What has caused this position? It is largely due to constant borrowing from internal services particularly where the interest charges accumulate. If I invest \$100 the Government will have to find \$105 or \$110 to give me when that would have matured. Because the Government has been in this precarious financial position for over the years, it has been and has to be borrowing all the time from the people. This is why we find ourselves in this position.

Cde. Speaker, I think that the public, since we are talking about economic crisis, should be aware of what is going on. I wish to suggest that some ways and means be drawn up to simplify these accounts that are being kept. The reports of the Accountant General, the accounts

of the Accountant General, the balance sheets of the Accountant General are not made known to the public. Why is it that so many civil servants also cannot interpret what these accounts really signify? I want to suggest that these accounts should be made up in such a way so that John Public, whose money is being spent, must be able to interpret them because these Estimates do not tell the true position. These Estimates cannot be interpreted by the small man in the street. Therefore, ways and means should be worked out to justify the expenditure of the people's money so that the people themselves should be able to understand what is going on.

I move to Public Debt. Cde. Speaker, this in the 1977 estimates is in the vicinity of \$915.6 million. It is now revised to read \$971.2 million, an increase of \$55.6 million. Now \$154 million will now have to be put aside to go towards repayment of debts which is 33 per cent.

The Speaker: Your half hour is up.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I beg to move that Cde. Persaud be given an extension of 15 minutes to continue.

Cde. Mohamed seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

2:35 p.m.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, 33 per cent is \$154 million of the 1978 Budget. In 1977, it was 28.9 per cent which is \$125 million.

I am told that I cannot really understand what is in the Estimates. Fortunately for us, I have come here and received this, this afternoon. This is the Bank of Guyana Annual Report for the year 1976. It estimates that the Public Debt for the Year ending 1977 will be \$1,471.3 million. I am reading from the column, Total Public Debt on page 99. Public Debt, total internal and external, \$1,471 million. When are we going to tell the people the truth? Why don't we stop fooling the people? Of course, the Minister will tell me that this includes – I am talking about debt. We do not separate the external from the internal. We are talking about debts. The country is indebted. You could make a differentiation if you have to pay some in foreign currency and some in local currency but at least the public must be aware of what is the total debt. That is nowhere at all in the 1978 Estimates. Why?

Cde. Speaker, I want to ask again of this Government that it should continue not to fool the people. If not, the Government will have to discipline the Governor of the Bank of Guyana because we have to get these reports. Perhaps at this stage it would be proper to mention that attempts were made in order to secure more loans from the I.M.F. and other place to remove all these deficit accounts that stand at the Bank of Guyana and which appear in this report to the Co-op Bank. Why? So that when the I.M.F. people come here and they call for the Bank of Guyana report, those big deficits will no longer be there. They are concerned with the Bank of Guyana report. They want to know what is going on. It must be at the Bank of Guyana. An attempt was made to take them across to the Co-op Bank.

When the man turned up for the instructions from the Accountant General at the Bank of Guyana, Bank of Guyana objected to it. "We have to be told!" As a result of which, tails between their legs, they had to retreat. That is what is going! They are deceiving the people. They want to deceive people. They want to take the account, hide it from Bank of Guyana, put it into Co-op Bank. When the people come, they do not look at the Co-op Bank's books. They look at the Bank of Guyana books which are now reflecting deficits on all the accounts. In order that the Government could get loans, it was attempting to hide this bad picture. Let the Minister

deny it. Cde. Speaker, it is a shame to know the different things that this Government is attempting to do because of what it has found itself in.

We have no quarrel with the Government. We have been talking all along that we want increased production and increased productivity to solve the problems. It is the Government which does not want to solve the problems. How are you going to solve the problems? The Minister said on page 7 of his Budget Speech:

“Accordingly it will be the core of a democratic de-alienated process of determining what should be done with the Guyanese economy, how it should be done, and what adjustments need to be made in the light of actual monitored results. The application of truly democratic co-ordinated planning and monitoring involving the TUC, Consumer organizations and Producer groupings is one of the fundamental changes without which an orderly and systematic approach towards the kind of society we want cannot be achieved.”

What “producer groupings” was the Minister talking about? What “democratic de-alienated process” was the Minister talking about? What democratic application was the Minister talking about? He talks about producer groupings and the Government refuses to recognize the R.P.A. which is the body that has the confidence of the majority or rice farmers in this country, the farmers who produce. The G.A.W.U. which is recognised, which again produces in this country, is being treated like a door-mat. Unless the members of the Government stop that, this production that they are calling for will not be. Unless they stop rigged elections at GUYMINE, they will not have what they want or desire. They must recognize the majority of the people and stop rigging. It is said that they did not rig the elections, they rigged the nominations. What nonsense! Rigging must stop and then you will have the involvement of the majority of the people who will produce to have that increased

production that we talk about, that we want to take this country out of the doldrums that this P.N.C. Government has put it into.

We are with you. We want to throw out an olive branch to you today. It is up to you to take it. We have always been doing that. But remember, we represent the majority of the people of this country and if you fail to accept that good hand that we offer you, it is to your own detriment. Cde. Speaker, it might be good at this stage to quote from what a very well-known British personality once said:

“Dictators ride to and fro upon tigers which they dare not dismount and the tigers are getting hungry.”

The tigers are getting! Let them demonstrate. Those same people are going to be affected tomorrow and when they turn against you, do not regret it. Force them to go and demonstrate but they will turn against you.

Cde. Speaker, as I said, I do not know which figures are correct. According to the Minister’s speech, it is estimated that in 1978 the Public Debt will reach the high of \$1055.7 million. When we add, I am sure, the loans for the State enterprises and Corporations, it will reach, perhaps what is here if there is nothing to hide. The lending agencies give for development, not for the financing of current budgets. Of this, I think, the comrades are aware. I wish to quote from page 22 of the Minister’s speech in relation to what he said about borrowing:

“Nevertheless borrowing in the Euro markets achieved a new record level of US\$72 billion in 1977 representing an increase of near US\$111 billion over 1976. Both socialist and non-socialist, both developed and developing countries were in the market to borrow. The industrial countries accounted for US\$39.3 billion (or 54.6%), the non-OPEC developing countries for **US\$3.1 billion...**”

The Minister justifies this by saying on page 25:

“Indeed most countries both developed and developing, irrespective of their chosen path of social and economic development, find it in their economic interest to borrow, or to permit, or to guarantee, the borrowing by enterprises owned and controlled by the State or located within their national borders. The reality of the situation is that until now most international private lending institutions are owned and controlled within non-socialist countries. The fact has not however deterred many State Enterprises in a number of Socialist States from tapping these resources of capital for the economic advantage of their people.”

One over-night Economist also wrote an article last year and justified the Government’s borrowing from the Euro market. Yes, he is a Member of this House, and overnight economist. He justified the borrowing by the Socialist countries from the Euro Market. **[Interruption.]**

I must not leave this as stated in the Budget, untouched by the Minister. The point is that the Socialist countries are also borrowing. This is what the Minister wants. What happened? We can borrow, that is nothing for us. Even the Socialist countries are borrowing. That is what they rationalize and that rationale is far below the normal. One basic difference is that in the Socialist countries the cost of living, the standard of living and everything else should not be rated with countries like Guyana. We have to tax the people. We have the amount of \$44 million. We do not know where we are going to get the rest to finance the Budget. But we have to find \$154 million to repay at the expense of the working class. What happened to the Socialist countries? Cde. Teekah who wrote the article should have told the public. Perhaps he may wish, later on when he is speaking, to divert a little from education to answer.

The point is that the Socialist countries borrow strictly for production. From increased production they generate surpluses, from those surpluses they repay, obviously, to the advantage

2.3.78
2:45 p.m.

National Assembly

2.45 – 2.55 p.m.

of the nation. It is not done as it is done here in Guyana where the man at the bottom has to sweat out his brow to pay back. That is the basic difference. It should not be rationalized the way Cde. Hope wrote it here and how Cde. Teekah wrote it in the article. That is wrong. Cde. Speaker, I wish to inform the Cde. Minister that he is a technocrat and if he is going to stay in the Government he should stick to finance, to the technical aspect of it. He should not allow himself to dabble in politics. He is a technocrat, he cannot go and face the polls, he knows that. He cannot stand up on a public platform. This is his forum and he should speak here. He has never done it and will never do it because his time is running out. These are the main facts of like and these are what the Government should really understand. As I said, we agree with increased production and increased productivity.

How on earth are we going to get increased production and increased productivity when really and truly the people who create the wealth in the country are not given an opportunity? The I.L.O. Report of 9th February, 1978 recently stated that one billion people will be unemployed in the developing countries by the year 2000.

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada you will have to get another 15 minutes.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I beg to move that Cde. Persaud be given an extra 15 minutes to conclude his speech.

Cde. Mohamed seconded.

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud you have 15 minutes in which to conclude.

Cde N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I wish to refer to an article by a distinguished guest in the lobby. It is an article in the Chronicle of Thursday, February 23, “Approach to the new economic policy.”

The Speaker: I am not going to allow any member of the public, who is not in a position to answer, to be accused or criticised.

Cde. N. Persaud: I am going to read what appears in the Chronicle.

The Speaker: The gentleman in the shirt-jac and with the long side burns to who Dr. Jagan referred?

Cde. N. Persaud: I am saying that the photograph of the person is here, the name is here and the person is here too. In this article, Dr. Fred Sukhdeo of the University of Guyana wrote that it is now time for self-examination of the contemporary forces that inhibit development:

“...it is now time for self examination of the contemporary forces that inhibit development. These have to be fully recognised and placed into proper perspective in order to achieve the planned socialist objectives.

The new economic policy should create the opportunities for an increasing role of capitalist principles investment, accumulation, distribution and management. The state sector except a few enterprises in its existing content and organization has not demonstrated its ability to generate profits at the required level for national development. Instead, massive subsidies are required for the operation of many of these enterprises.”

What Cde. Sukhdeo actually says here is a reversal of the path that the P.N.C. had actually chosen.

The Speaker: Eminent economist.

Cde. N. Persaud: Yes, Cde. Speaker, we have eminent economist, eminent bourgeois economist, eminent socialist economists, eminent solicitors and barristers and eminent Finance Ministers. What he is saying that this economy wants is capitalist principles for accumulation and generation of wealth. I have read this article to show that given such prominence in the Chronicle proves clearly what the Government's position is. Now they are calling for foreign capital to come back into the country and this, undoubtedly, is the reason why the ketchup factory set up by the Government has now been handed over to the Guyana Manufacturer's Association. This Government has set up a ketchup factory which it cannot run and now it is going to hand it back into private hands. I can go on and on.

I want to turn my attention for the last few minutes, if you permit me, Cde. Speaker, to the Public Corporations since I see that they are featured in this Budget Speech very prominently. It is evident that some of the Public Corporations are running at a loss. Emphasis is placed in the Budget Speech on expansion in agriculture, forestry and fishing.

The figure for the Guyana Forestry Corporation for 1978 is \$.1 million. For 1979 it is anticipated to be \$.4 million and in 1980 it is anticipated to be \$.4 million. We are going to expand, we are planning now for four years. Here in this estimate we have seen clearly where the Approved Estimates for 1977 spoke of a total deficit of \$72,343,000. This had to be revised to read \$143 million instead of \$72 million, an increase of 100 percent. In one year they are not able to plan properly, they are having 100 percent discrepancies. Now they are attempting to plan for four years. I am not saying for one moment that we should not plan and plan in advance. But this is a reflection of what the planning is going to be and the catastrophe and the chaos we are going to have in this country. Cde. Speaker it is only clear.

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The Guyana Transport Services in 1976/1977 has accumulated a deficit of \$1.2 million. In the Budget Speech, it is stated that they are asking for an increase. If you are going to increase the fares it means that it is additional cost on the small man. That is not in that \$44 million I spoke about, it is additional cost. The Guyana Airways Corporation in 1976 made a deficit of \$1 million. In 1977 it made a deficit of \$1.1 million. It is Cde. Hope's hope that in 1978 they will turn that deficit of \$1.1 million into \$1.1 million plus \$1.1 million, making it \$2.2 million. They are running at a loss and he just concludes that from last year to this year they will move from a deficit of \$1.1 to plus \$1.1 million. In 1977 the Guyana Marketing Corporation had a deficit of \$5 million. It is hoped that in 1978 the deficit would be reduced to \$3.7 million.

2:55 p.m.

I deal now with the Guyana Food Processors Limited. We talk about cheap food; we talk about being the food basket of the Caribbean, yet we cannot produce and even what we produce we produce at a loss. In 1977 there was a loss of \$1.2 million. It is hoped that this year they will move from \$1.2 million to half a million. As I said, Cde. Hope is in hope and I only hope that his hopes come true, if not, God help us. It is projected that in 1978 the Guyana Marine Foods Limited will have a deficit of \$1 million. For 1979, they have projected a further deficit of \$1.5 million. For 1980, a further deficit of \$1.7 million is projected. These are all Corporations run by this Government showing these losses. There is the Guyana Broadcasting Service with the Post Office Corporation. The Guyana Broadcasting Service that gets all the Corporation's advertisements, and is paid by the Corporations', is running at a loss. For skilful and obvious reasons the Government has linked it with the Post Office Corporation so I am not in a position to say how much the Guyana Broadcasting Corporation has lost, but together, the Corporations have lost \$400,000.

Cde. Speaker, this is how the Corporations are being run. It is a clear indication that this Government, because of its incompetence, because of its inefficiency, has been running this

country down to the drain. It is because of squander mania; it is because of corruption in high places. How many of us in this honourable House are aware of who are the present owners of the Rossfield Estate in the Abary Creek? How many of us in this House are aware that Government machinery is involved in doing work there and these people in the Abary Creek are being paid out of Government funds? When are these things going to stop? How many of us are aware that a Minister of this House has a brother in Berbice who has been given a combine and is using that combine for personal gains? Year after year we come in this House and call upon this Government to investigate certain allegations. Last year, I recall very vividly, I called upon the Minister to approach me in private for certain information I have. I was that patriotic but he has failed to respond to that call.

They can investigate the matter. If I am wrong, I am wrong. But if my information is correct it is detrimental to the State. I am sure if they did not want to be exposed they would have come but they did not come. I spoke, to Cde. Jack in the Lobby, I told him I was willing, yet no effort was made. Quite recently a man took 210 bags of rice to the mill at East bank Berbice to be milled. Records are there to show. When the man went back for the rice, it was not there. Who is to look into all of these things? I can go on and on but what will happen?

I want again to let this Government know that it is the People's Progressive Party that controls the productive forces in this country. If the Government thinks that only these two, increased production and increased productivity, are going to take this country out of the problems that it is in, then obviously, it will have to recognize the P.P.P. for what it is. The Minister got up there last year and said we are going to – **[Interruption.]**

The Speaker: Comrades, please allow Cde. Narbada Persaud to speak, he has only 5 minutes more.

2.3.78

National Assembly

2.55 – 3.05 p.m.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: The Minister got up there last year and said, “We are going to do it alone, but if you are willing you can come along.” We offered them National Front. They have rejected it. They rejected it and yet they are throwing the country deeper and deeper into debt - \$1,471,000 in public debt. When are you going to find the money to pay? You are living in hope.**[Interruption.]** Do it. You have been doing that all the time and you can continue to do it.

Cde. Speaker, as I said, the Government should really and honestly recognize who are the people to produce what it wants. It talks about diversification. That is all a joke. That is all a dream. If in one year it has failed so miserably that its deficit has increased by 100 percent from what was estimated at January last year to December, one can very well imagine what is going to happen to this country.

In conclusion, I wish once again to call upon the Minister of Finance, to urge this Government, to change its policies. It is a waste of time to come here and to tell the nation to tighten its belt and save more. How are the people going to do that when they have lost confidence in the Government? The \$30 million that it has boasted about in 1977 has been reduced to \$2.7 million. The Government must face the fact that despite its corruption, despite its coercion, it has not been able to get more than \$2.7 million from the \$30 million target. Why is this so? Has the Government really made an analysis of the reason? If not, let it do so and come to grips with the realities. Face them and whatever it does, it must realize that, in the final analysis, it is the people who will have to take this country out of the holes that the Government has put it in.

The Speaker: Cde. Hoyte.

The Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives (Cde. Hoyte): Cde. Speaker, there are certain events in the history of a country which historians seize upon as landmarks in the development of that country. Those landmarks are said to indicate the end of era and the beginning of a new epoch. In a real sense, the Budget Statement read by the Cde.

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Minister of Finance on Monday is such an event, marking the end of one phase of the development of this country and ushering in a new phase.

In the course of my intervention in the general debate last year, I remarked that 1977 was going to be a watershed in the history of the development of this country. That remark was not by way or prophecy, but was a factual statement based upon knowledge of the strategy and tactics of the Party and the Government.

Over the years, the Party has sought to follow a well-defined course a development recognising that there were certain tasks to be undertaken – tasks which were necessary for the real development and progress of this country towards goals which the nation had set itself.

3:05 p.m.

Indeed, Cde. Speaker, in his Address to the 15th Annual Congress of the Party in April 1972 the Cde. Leader adverted to this point in clear and unambiguous terms. He said, and I quote:

“The first task we undertook in the P.N.C., and are still in the process of carrying out, was and is to restore self-confidence and self-respect to Guyanese through self-reliance. Real achievement is impossible if, as a people, we were to feel inferior and incapable while being convinced that all excellence comes from without. To my mind, the most pernicious concomitant and legacy of colonialism is psychological and intellectual subservience which in turn breeds inferiority complex and creates a very real problem. It appears in various forms but perhaps two are note-worthy. The one is exemplified in an attitude of clinging to old colonial habits and regarding the former social structures and institutions as sacrosanct. Property, for example, in such a context is more important than man, instead of property being for the social needs of man.”

It was against that background and in the light of what was, in fact, a policy directive from the Cde. Leader that the Party intensified its activities between 1972 and 1977 in removing those pernicious conditions to which the Cde. Leader had referred, conditions which were inimical to the real development of Guyana. We, in the Party, recognize that development is not only about people and for people, but that development takes place through the instrumentality of people. Therefore, the task of development can only proceed apace and significantly if the political consciousness and awareness of people is raised so that they understand their task and accept the direction and goals which the political leadership indicates.

Cde. Speaker, it was this task to which the Party had set itself. From time to time, there have been criticisms of the pace at which the Party proceeds. Those on the lunatic fringe of the ultra-Left claim that the pace is too slow, and those who are inveterately committed to the old ways, conservative elements in this country, complain that the pace is too fast and that the processes are too radical. The Party recognizes that while it cannot lead from behind like the Duke of Plaza-Toro, it cannot, at the same time, be too far in advance of people. Its task is not to run ahead of the people and get lost, but rather to bring the people along through firm leadership and through clear directions by precept and example.

What has the Party done during the years 1972 to 1977 (and indeed in the period before that from the time the Party acceded to office) to create the environment and climate to which I have referred? It set itself a number of tasks: first, to restore and maintain political and economic stability within the state; to inspire in the Guyanese people a spirit of self-confidence, self-reliance; to lay the foundations for the material growth of the economy; to lay the foundations for the cultural development of our people; to diversify and expand our international links at diplomatic, cultural, economic and commercial levels, not only to promote our internal policies but also to ensure that Guyana plays its rightful role in the Councils of Nations in the great task in which so many countries, circumstanced like Guyana, are engaged in an attempt to influence changes in the world economic system.

In all of these tasks which the Party has undertaken through the Government, there has been a continuing pattern of success. But more importantly, Cde. Speaker, the Party laid the psychological foundation for the development of this country by the Guyanese people. The catalogue of achievements is a long one. I would content myself merely with referring to some of the highlights because as we face this new era to which I have referred, it is important to understand the background, to understand the process of development which has preceded it and to understand the strategy and the tactics which had informed the policies and programmes of the Party.

The Party, in the face of strong opposition from those who did not have faith in themselves and in the Guyanese people, led this country into independence and underscored the fact of independence by acceding to republican status. Moreover, it inspired in the people a sense of their ability to perform through a process of resuming for the Guyanese people their patrimony which had been given away by the former colonial administrators. I refer, of course, to the succession of nationalization policies and activities which led to the eradication from our economy of foreign ownership and control.

There were several supporting policies and programmes in aid of this strengthening of the national fabric. Investments were made over a wide field not only in promoting material growth, but also in strengthening the will of the people, in promoting national culture and in fitting the people psychologically for the tasks which lay ahead. In this respect, the Party played a crucial role as an agent for the mobilization, education and motivation of the masses.

3:15 p.m.

I stated that during the Party's period of office, there has been systematic growth and development of our economy – and it may be apposite to mention some of the major indicators, to educate those Members of the Opposition who allege, despite their confession that they do not

understand statistics and figures, that there has been no growth in the economy. Between 1972 and 1977 – I choose this period as being the period covered by the last D-Plan – the gross domestic product rose from \$531.7 million to \$1,006.5 million at current factor cost, representing a rate of growth of 13.7 percent per annum.

During that period, gross investment totalled \$1.6 billion of which the public sector accounted for \$1.3 billion or over 81 percent of that investment. That investment is reflected over the whole field of economic activities in this country: In schools, in housing and health facilities, in electrification, in pure water supply, in agricultural infrastructure, in agricultural development and diversification, in roads, in air, water and road transportation, in social services. In fact, Cde. Speaker, it is difficult not to find in any part of this country the real tangible and visible reflection of the investment made during this period.

During this period, too, gross capital formation amounted to \$1.5 billion. The volume of international trade rose from \$604.4 million in 1972 to \$1,215.7 million in 1977, reflecting an annual growth rate of 28 percent per annum. In the various sectors, Cde. Speaker, the growth was equally satisfactory: Agriculture, growing at 15.3 percent annually and agriculture (excluding the traditional sub-sectors of sugar and rice) growing at even a higher rate of 17.6 percent. In forestry, the annual rate was 12.2 percent, mining 12.9 percent, non-traditional manufacture 14.6 percent.

While there was investment in these productive sectors, there was investment in an equally important sector; that is, the sector of human resource development. There was investment in a whole range of cultural and people-oriented activities which, as I said before, were basic to the real development of this country. We saw during the period the construction of the National Cultural Centre, the construction of the Film Centre and Dubbing Theatre, the Sports Hall. We saw, too, the establishment of the National History and Arts Council, now renamed the Department of Culture, with its several schools of creative activity – the School of

Dance, the School of Creative Writing, the Burrowes School of Art and the other activities which cannot be measured in hard material terms, but which have immeasurable and incalculable repercussions throughout the society in terms of raising the consciousness of our people and investing them with a feeling of self-worth, self-respect and dignity.

There were, too, other institutional developments such as the establishment of the complex of financial institutions, the Agricultural Development Bank, the Mortgage-Finance Bank, the Guyana Co-operative Insurance Services which joined the G.N.C.B. in a national complex of financial institutions established to serve the various productive sectors of this country.

I may mention, too, some specific industrial projects which have been completed, which are in production now and which are contributing to the development and expansion of our gross national product. These projects are providing employment, generating surpluses and are not, as the Member Cde. Narbada Persaud was alleging a moment ago, unviable enterprises. I would refer, for example, to the Claybrick Factories, one at Bel-Lu which produces some 10 million bricks annually and the one at Coverden, to the Guyana Fish Processors Limited, to the Fish Net Factory which services the Fisheries Industry, supplying some 1500 nets annually; to the Radio factory at Victoria; to the Fish Plant at Kingston, to the fish Port Complex, Phase I of which has been completed; to the Cheese Processing Factory; and to the number of Cassava Mills which are now in production, processing not only cassava but plantain into flour. I would mention too, those industrial projects which are on-going, which were started during the period and are now in the process of construction: Phase II of the fish Port Complex which, when completed, will increase berthing facilities for our fishing vessels and provide processing and distribution facilities for forty million pounds of wet fish annually at a total investment of some \$36 million.

I would add to the list the textile Mill at Ruimveldt which, when completed, would process 11 million square yards of cotton annually and provide employment for nearly one

thousand workers; the Glass Factory at Yarrowkabra on the Linden Highway which is well advanced towards completion. It is expected that production should be on stream at the end of this year starting with the production line of bottles and glass containers. The Factory would have a capacity to produce 4,725 tons of glass containers, and 11 million square feet of sheet glass. Moreover, the Upper Demerara Forestry Complex which has been started will double the annual production of lumber in this country; and the bicycle factory, the Tannery, Leather and Shoe Factory in New Amsterdam, the Forestry expansion project, into which some \$8 million (Canadian) worth of equipment is being injected in order to modernize and accelerate the pace of production in the forestry sector; the vegetable oil plant at Farm, requiring an investment of some \$10 million and having capacity to produce up to 50 tons per day in vegetable oil; and the Clinker grinding Cement circuit with a capacity of 140,000 tons of cement annually – all of these, Cde. Speaker, are projects which have gone beyond the planning stage and are in the course of physical implementation.

3:25 p.m.

I refer to these matters to emphasise the fact that massive investment has gone on during the period 1972 to 1977 in major projects which have a great potential for generating jobs, for generating exports and, therefore, earning foreign exchange and for adding substantially to the total stock of goods and services produced in this country. I refer to them, too, to emphasise the point that over the period there has been institutional development taking place, sometimes imperceptibly, but over time becoming quantitatively so large it has reached a magnitude which reflects itself in a qualitative change in the lives of the people. This qualitative change is so deep and extensive that we can rightly say that a period of our history, a period of our development, has finished and a new era has dawned.

The Budget Statement read by the Cde. Minister of Finance and the Estimates presented by him to this honourable House indicated a number of important departures from the past. In

the first place we have abandoned the one year type of Budget and have instituted in its place a financial programme which coincides with a development plan period. The figures presented by the Cde. Minister of Finance obviously are not a development programme; they are merely a financial programme within the limits of which the development programme will be elaborated.

Secondly, Cde. Speaker, the Budget as presented is no longer a central Government Budget. It takes into account investment not only in the Central Government, not only in the entire public sector but, indeed, in the country as a whole. It therefore ties together Central Government, the rest of public sector and the private sector. This is significant in the light of the decisions we have taken to institute a system of central planning and to exercise a more rational control over production and consumption of goods and services in the country. Unlike the previous Budget, this Budget gives information about the sources, quantum and application of the funds which will be allocated over the next four years; indicates the direction which the economy is expected to take; and gives national accounts projections, the investment emphases and the priorities which the Party and the Government have adopted as being essential to achieving the economic objectives which have been set.

But the Budget, Cde. Speaker, is more than a mere financial plan. It is first and foremost, in addition, a programme of economic recovery. Undoubtedly the economy has been buffeted by a number of internal and external factors resulting in certain economic difficulties. In confronting these difficulties we have devised a medium-term strategy aimed not merely at correcting the imbalances which appear at the moment, but at ensuring that the economy gets back on to an even keel and becomes less and less vulnerable to these external and internal influences to which I have referred.

The Budget Statement sets out a programme of ensuring the stable and systematic development of our country; it indicates the investment emphases, and priorities which are clearly growth-oriented. Notwithstanding our wishes for the development of the social sector we

recognize, as all responsible people do, that social services can only be financed out of material production. And therefore, while not neglecting the development of social and people-oriented .programmers, the Budget seeks to put the major emphasis upon the productive sectors in order to ensure the material base capable of continuous expansion to provide not only for the material needs of the people but for their culture and social development.

A brief analysis of the figures will show that the productive sector has been allocated some 66 percent of the total investment outlays. People-oriented and social services sector will absorb 26 percent, and other sectors will take a mere 8 percent. Of the productive sectors, agriculture alone will account for 35 percent or more than one-third of the total investment to be made over the Plan period.

This pattern of investment is consistent with the firm view of this Government that the development, the expansion and the continuous improvement of efficiency of the agricultural sector are all vital to the development of the country in the long run. The Budget sets certain targets and has certain implications which we have to understand, because it is the achievement of these targets and an appreciation of what is implied in achieving these targets which will decide in the long run whether we succeed or not. In broad macro-economic terms, the investment programme is intended to achieve a number of things.

The Speaker: Cde. Leader of the House.

The Leader of the House (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that the Cde. Minister be given an additional 15 minutes to continue his presentation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Hoyte: It is premised on an annual growth rate at current factor cost of 10 percent or in real terms, using 1977 prices, about 5 percent annually. It is premised upon the achievement of reasonable growth targets in all the sectors, some of which I will mention.

3:35 p.m.

In the agricultural sector, for example, the investment is aimed at achieving an annual growth rate of 18 percent. Forestry is expected to achieve an annual growth rate of 25 percent. Manufacturing, excluding sugar and rice processing, 10 percent; mining and quarrying, 15 percent. And, it is expected too that there will be growth in our exports. Exports are expected to grow at between 12 and 15 percent, starting off fairly sluggishly in 1978 but picking up in 1979, 1980 and 1981 when much of the investment will begin to yield fruit. All of this implies that the rate of average output of G.N.P. will be between 8 and 10 percent between 1978 and 1981. There have been some criticisms about borrowings. I shall not waste any time to deal with that because every single country in the world is borrowing, including the COMECON countries which have external Euro currency debts of US\$45 billion. I say this not by way of criticism but merely to state a fact: every single country borrows, including the United States which borrows by reason of the fact that its currency is used as an international reserve currency. So we make no defence, we make no apologies for borrowing on the international market.

I can spend a long time going through recent – when I say recent, I am talking about 1978 – statements by Ministers of Finance, Heads of Central Banks, in many socialist countries pointing out their own need to borrow on the world money markets. Those criticisms by Opposition members are uninformed and ill-informed.

At the bottom of it is this central fact: that whatever our access to credits and loans might be, we have to start off on the basis of self-reliance. We have to generate our own savings as the first and necessary condition for the development of this country. It is expected therefore (and

planned for) that our domestic saving rate will be, during the period 1978 to 1981, at a level of some 16 percent, that is, an average level over the period I have referred to. But savings having been generated must be used constructively. We cannot utilize our savings for consumption and at the same time expect that we are going to have development. Consequently, as a matter of conscious policy and, indeed, as a matter of firm policy, we plan to impose a restraint on domestic expenditure. Domestic expenditure will have to be restrained below 10 percent growth annually, both private expenditure and public expenditure. We must ensure that our savings are channelled into the investment sectors for further growth of the economy.

The Cde. Minister of Finance referred to certain disturbing trends in the national accounts of the country; trends which have developed over the years because of the structure of our economy, a structure which we are about to change by reason of this programme and by reason of the institutional re-organisation which is ongoing. He pointed to the gaps both in the Central Government Budget and in our balance of payments. This programme which has been presented to this honourable House is designed to correct that imbalance and progressively reduce both the Central Government budgetary gap and the current balance of payment gap to manageable proportions by the year 1981.

In 1977 the current gap was \$77 million, which meant that on the current side of Government's expenditure we spent \$77 million more than the current revenues which we collected. That surely is an undesirable, if not an intolerable, situation. Ideally, the current revenue should not only finance current expenditure but there should be some surplus for investment. At the very minimum there should be a balance between revenues and current expenditure. The total gap on the Central Government Budget for 1977 was \$144 million and the programme outline by the Cde. Minister of Finance is designed to eliminate that gap by the year 1981. The balance of payment gap, that is, the current gap which in 1977 was \$235 million is expected to be progressively reduced to the manageable figure of \$59 million by 1981.

I want to say something about the current gap to which I have referred because it impinges upon many of the actions which have been taken recently by the Government and many of the policies and programmers which will have to be put in place in order to achieve our objectives. Over the years the Government services have been growing at a rapid rate because of the way in which the Public Service, including the whole public sector, has been structured. There was an autonomous growth of personnel within various Ministries, agencies, corporations without control from the centre. The result has been this alarming situation in which the current expenditure ran away from current revenue. But more than that, it led to a situation of massive over-staffing, wrong placement of labour, both within the public sector and within the economy as a whole. For example, personal emoluments in the Central Government rose from \$25.9 million in 1972 or 5.1 percent of gross national product, to \$153.5 million or 16.1 percent of G.N.P. it is this imbalance which has had to be tackled in a firm and decisive way as one of the means of redressing the imbalance to which I have referred and as an important aspect of the structural transformation which we are making and will continue to make in the economy. It is interesting to note that even today in GUYSSUCO there are no less than three thousand vacancies for workers. On the other hand, offices are bursting at their seams with clerks and similar types of personnel.

3:45 p.m.

In pursuing this programme, the major emphases will be upon achieving a number of objectives, the grand objective being to deepen and strengthen the process of socialist transformation in the country by the construction of the necessary material and cultural bases. But specifically, the emphasis will be laid upon, first, creating the foundation for the continued industrialization of the country; secondly, expanding our industrial and agricultural base to ensure local self-sufficiency and surpluses for development; thirdly, developing a manufacturing capability (a) based upon the use of indigenous raw materials and (b) oriented towards the manufacture of spare parts, small hardware and other items which are necessary for the kind of construction and other activities in

which we engage in this country; fourthly, the development of a scientific and technological capability in support of our development programme; fifthly, ensuring balanced geographical development; sixthly, continuing the process of the greater democratization of our society; seventhly; cementing national solidarity through applying a number of mechanisms which will enable our people to work together, to study together and to build together in this country which belongs to all of us.

Finally, Cde. Speaker, to increasingly pursue the principle of social justice for all Guyanese people by applying mechanisms which will result in greater production and productivity, a more equitable distribution of income and the creation of certain conditions which guarantee basic socio-economic rights to all citizens, for example, the right to work, the right to education, the right to recreation, the right to adequate health care and similar rights which we accept as being necessary for the development of our country along the lines we have all accepted.

Cde. Speaker, there are, in promoting this policy of development, several techniques - -

The Speaker: Perhaps the Leader of the House may ask for another fifteen minutes.

Cde. Ramsaroop: Permit me to move the Motion to enable the Comrade Minister to continue his contribution for a further fifteen minutes.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Hoyte: There are several techniques which we have to adopt to establish the socio-economic relationship, the institutions, the mechanisms, the procedures which will enable us to accelerate the pace of socialist construction. We will have to establish those mechanisms which will ensure greater production and productivity leading to self-sustained growth of the economy.

will have to establish the mechanisms which will generate the surpluses from our work and production required to provide the services which are necessary for a decent civilized life in modern times. And, we will have to also establish the mechanisms to ensure the harmonious balance between our material resources and our human resources.

In pursuing these basic strategic objectives, we propose to adopt and, in fact, in many cases have already adopted certain principles and tactics. First of all, as a matter of policy, the programme will be designed to raise the material and cultural level of all the people of Guyana simultaneously. That is not to say that there will necessarily be equal increases in the standard of living and quality of life of every segment of the community. We have already indicated that the most disadvantaged people, the workers at the bottom of the economic scale, must have the emphasis placed on them. There must be active and positive discrimination in their favour.

Secondly, we will institute, promote and strengthen the group or team approach to production, productivity and economic activity. Thirdly, we have to ensure the supply of a minimum set of goods and services consistent with the welfare of our people, and a continuous supply of those goods and services which are necessary for the basic economic activities in which we will be engaged. Moreover, as an important instrument of policy, we have to develop the cultural heritage of our people. We have to put emphasis upon a proper appreciation of our culture and our cultural roots. We have to inspire in our people a respect for each other's culture, an understanding of these cultural activities and expressions so that, as a result of this interplay of our diverse cultural patterns, we may not only develop a genuine respect for one another and one another's culture, but we will be able to develop, in time, an authentic Guyanese identity based upon an authentic Guyanese culture.

By no means least important is the mechanism for material and moral incentives for our workers. We have already in discussion with and in agreement with the Trades Union Congress agreed on the principle of the establishment of incentive schemes. As a matter of fact, the

minimum wage package which was negotiated by the Trades Union Congress with the Government for public sector workers was premised upon an understanding, in fact an understanding which was enshrined in the agreement, that everybody would take every positive action to ensure that there was greater production and productivity. It was only on the basis of this act of faith – if I may use the term used in the minimum wage agreement – that the new minimum wage scales which were agreed to could be paid and could be improved in the years to come.

As part and parcel of the policy to ensure this greater production and productivity, there was an agreement that there should be incentives to workers based upon a number of criteria. The Trades Union Congress, several affiliate members, managers of public sector corporations, public officials have all been involved in working out details of the national incentive scheme. But surely, whatever agreement they arrive at, there are certain cardinal principles which, I believe, must be contained in the schemes for material incentives.

3:55 p.m.

These principles, Cde. Speaker, are as follows: First, remuneration must be linked to performance; secondly, criteria and targets for measuring performance must be clearly defined; thirdly, workers' tasks, responsibilities and duties must be defined and allocated to establish accountability with certainty; fourthly, consumer satisfaction, where this is relevant, must form part of the performance criteria; fifthly, profitability, although not a sole or necessarily a dominant consideration, must be a criterion in enterprises where profitability is appropriate; sixthly, punctuality, regularity, reduction of wastage of time, materials etc., team work, general industrial harmony within the enterprise and other work places, must be factors to be taken into consideration; and, finally, the system of criteria evaluation must be understood very clearly by the workers. I believe that these are the principles which are being discussed, principles with which the Government will have no disagreement at all and principles which, when set in place,

have a dramatic and profound effect upon increasing production and productivity throughout this country.

But economic development does not take place in a vacuum; it does not take place merely as a result of enthusiasm or even motivation or willingness. We have got to have the institutions in place and we have got to have a set of principles which form a framework within which the whole economy will operate. To this end we have established the State Planning commission which henceforth will be responsible for the centralized planning of the economy and for controlling and monitoring the investment and other performance of public sector and private sector enterprises. This is very important in the light of the point I made before.

The Speaker: Cde. Minister, are you going to be much longer?

Cde. Hoyte: Yes, Cde. Speaker.

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

Sitting suspended accordingly at 4 p.m.

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4.30 – 4.35 p.m.

4:30 p.m.

On Resumption

The Speaker: When the suspension was taken the Cde. Minister of Economic Development was speaking. Cde. Leader of the House.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER

Cde. Ramsaroop: I am seeking leave to suspend Standing Order 32 (9) which deals with the time limit to speeches of members. It has been agreed that during the Budget Debate two hours will be allocated to the Opposition and four hours to the Government. It would be necessary to impose time limits on members' speeches therefore. I therefore move, Cde. Speaker, that Standing Order 32 (9) be suspended so that speeches can continue without interruption.

The Speaker: Two hours for the Opposition and four hours for the Government benches.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order 32 (9) suspended.

The Speaker: Cde. Hoyte.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Speaker at the suspension I was dealing with the very important institution which has recently been established, namely the State Planning Commission which is central to the Government's policy of stricter management and control of the economy over the next four years and, indeed, in future years.

The State Planning Commission has statutory functions to plan consistently with the socialist objectives of the Government and consistently with the national policy. In pursuance of those functions, the State Planning Commission will ensure the proper allocation of resources and will plan for those resources to be allocated in a way consistent with the developmental emphases over the particular plan period. But central planning, as we conceive it, is not to be a rigid and authoritarian exercise carried out by a few technically qualified people in the centre. Therefore the Planning Commission has been established with a number of organs and its membership will pervade the entire country.

The Minister having responsibility for the commission, in terms of the Act, is the comrade Prime Minister. That function has been allocated to him to ensure that the State Planning Commission has the maximum authority behind it as it proceeds with its task of giving directions and guidance for the development of our economy. The Comrade Prime Minister in terms of the Act may delegate some or all of his functions to a subject Minister but, in the final analysis, he remains the final authority responsible for the State Planning Commission to ensure that nobody within or without the public sector, will get any notion that he can flout the authority of the State Planning Commission with impunity.

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As I was saying, the Commission is structured in a way to provide for maximum involvement and for the iterative process of a continuous flow of information from the Commission to the people, from the people to the Commission – to be instituted. There is a Board comprising technically qualified people who are not employees of the Commission. The function of that Board whose membership is drawn from a wide cross-section of the professional disciplines relevant to economic planning will have a general overview of the work of the Commission to ensure that the Secretariat, in particular, discharges its duties and responsibilities in terms of the objectives set by the Government and agreeably with the provisions of the Act.

Because the members of the Board have no vested interest in the Commission, it is expected that they will bring to bear an objective mind; they will bring to bear calm and dispassionate analyses of the operations and functioning of the Secretariat and they will give advice and guidance in a way consistent with mature professional opinion.

The other organs of the Commission are a Technical Advisory Panel, comprising technically qualified people – again not employed by the Commission – who will form a group of resource personnel to whom the Board, the Secretariat or the Minister, as the case may be, may resort in order to have some specific matter investigated or to have the advantage of an independent advice or opinion.

The, there is another organ and, to my mind, a very important organ, that is the National Economic and Social Council which I would like to refer to as the people's organ. On that Council will be represented all the major socio-economic and other organizations of a national character known to be functioning in this country. The idea is to have the representatives of as many strategic groups as possible. In fact, as far as it is humanly possible, the representatives of all strategic groups and interests in the country will be involved in the work of the National Economic and Social Council. It is not intended or expected that these representatives will be economists or technicians who will give technical advice or professional advice; but, on the contrary, ordinary people who will be affected by the economic plans and policies devised by the technicians. In other words, this is a layman's forum.

The idea is that the Council will resolve itself into a number of Committees to keep and overview on various sectors and sub-sectors of the economy, for example, Agriculture, Education, culture, Production and Productivity and Workers' Welfare, Health, Housing and Environment and subjects like that so that they could feed back continuously to the Secretariat and to the Minister, the layman's perception of what is happening on the ground. In this way, no

matter what the technicians may feel about the effectiveness of their policies and programmers, we will have from the people themselves a constant flow of information, a constant reporting system to indicate how well or how badly those policies and programmers are in fact being implemented.

In addition it is expected that the members of these committees of the National Economic and Social Council will themselves initiate ideas, will themselves make proposals, will themselves make recommendations about the whole range of economic activities as they see those activities developing in the country.

On the one hand, therefore, we have the permanent professional group of people, the Secretariat. Then, we have supporting the Secretariat the Technical Advisory Council of independent professionally qualified people who can bring an objective professional point of view to bear; and, additionally, we have large numbers of people, laymen, who will make a very important contribution to the planning process; that is, provide the layman's perception and the layman's understanding of what is happening on the ground. In a way, the State Planning Commission further demonstrates the continuing democratization of our society. This is supportive of our contention that democracy does not consist merely in holding periodic elections, but rather in the opportunities given to people to take part in the decision-making and management processes at the levels of the enterprises in which they work, their communities and, indeed, the country as a whole.

The State Planning Commission is an important institution in support of the principle I have enunciated, that is, the principle of strong but not an authoritarian economic management which is vital to the successful implementation of the programme which I have outlined.

As an aspect of this firm economic management, there will be a strengthening of financial management and the Cde. Minister of Finance alluded to this in the course of his Budget Speech.

In fact, several things have already happened to strengthen financial control and management within the public sector. The system of purchases by L.P.O.'s has been abandoned and Government Ministries are required to purchase cash. The reason for this is that the L.P.O. system created possibilities for Government Ministries and agencies to give themselves unauthorized credit. This has happened over the years and, naturally, by obtaining this unauthorized credit, there was a distortion in the Government budgetary allocations resulting in some of the overruns which the Minister of Finance has had to contend with. Secondly, there will be stronger controls over the public corporations. The almost autonomous way in which public corporations functioned up to now will no longer be permitted. In this connection, the establishment, of a State Planning Commission is relevant.

Furthermore, Members of the House will note that the investment programmers of all public corporations for the next four years have been incorporated in the Budget. That means that all public corporations will have to submit their individual investment programmers for approval and incorporation in the national investment programme. It follows therefore that they will be required to operate within the limit of the allocations made and they will be required to pursue the particular investments which have been approved.

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The opportunities which hitherto existed for people to “do their own thing”, so to speak, and pursue policies and investment programme which may have no priority from a national point of view or which may be wholly undesirable from a national point of view, will no longer continue.

Moreover, for the first time, the Public Corporations have been set financial targets. It is not intended that target-setting should stop at financial targets, but this represents a start. They will be set, in time, production targets. Indeed, there are production targets set but there will be stricter policies with regard to target-setting which will include social targets since we look upon

Public Corporations as being not only commercial enterprises but enterprises which would serve a social purpose, particularly within the communities in which they are operating.

In addition, Cde. Speaker, the policy of foreign exchange budgeting will continue to ensure that we make the most effective and rational use of our foreign exchange earnings. The Government will no longer permit the foreign exchange earnings of this country to be frittered away on the importation of non-essential items, on the importation of mere consumer-type items which may have no relevance to our society. Government will ensure, through foreign exchange budgeting, that our foreign exchange resources are used in support of our development programmers and for the purchase of those goods and services which we consider to be essential for the growth, development and well-being of our society.

But economic management and financial management must be complemented by a proper development and utilization of our human resources. To this end, therefore, the policy of workers' education will continue in the many-faceted way in which that policy has been developed through institutions like the Trades Union Congress and affiliate members, through institutions like the Critchlow Labour College, through the programmers mounted by the Party, through the programmers mounted by the Central Government at institutions like the Kuru Kuru Co-operative college and the various schools in the country and, in particular, through the programmers which have started and which will be intensified over the plan period within enterprises themselves. Those programmers are designed to raise the political consciousness of workers, to improve their skills and to fit them more and more for their historic task of assuming the management of the enterprise in which they work.

Indeed, there are two points I would like to make in support of what I have been saying about Government's policy of human resource development. The first is that over the past five years the Government has spent \$20 million on training of Government scholarship holders. Some of these young people are at the University of Guyana and some are in other parts of the

world, being trained in a wide variety of skills which will be required for the development of this country.

The second point I would like to make in this connection is that in the course of last year we were fortunate enough to have returned to us a very able and distinguished Guyanese, Cde. Dr. Aubrey Armstrong, who resigned his position at Princeton University in the U.S.A. to come home to develop our management training institute. This Institute will provide and upgrade our management skills and to provide the management personnel whom we need so badly throughout the system. The Management, Development and Training Institute has already been established and will soon be put upon a statutory basis. The Institute is now responsible for management development throughout the whole public sector. In other words, the fragmented approach to management development which has hitherto taken place has now come to an end and this training institution will be the national institution to which every public sector person who has to assume management functions, who wants to assume management functions, will attend, whether he will be in what we traditionally call the Civil Service or whether he will be in one of the Corporations within the rest of the public sector.

Cde. Speaker, supportive of our development endeavours must be the more intensive application of scientific and technological research. To this end we have established the National Science Research Council which has the responsibility and the task of advising the Government on science policy and on the development of a science and technological capability. There is now in the course of construction at the Campus of the University of Guyana an Institute of Applied Science and Technology where our research scientists will have the opportunities and the equipment to apply their theoretical knowledge to real research, to research relevant to the resources of this country so that we can make more extensive and effective use of the abundant raw materials which we have all around us.

I was reading in today's newspapers I think, a report of a letter from the Guyana Association of Local Authorities in which that organization was calling for land reform. On the night of the 22nd February, the Cde. Leader pointed out that this was on the programme for 1977. Land reform has to be pursued in a systematic and orderly way, not in the way in which some people feel that it should be done by asking that Government should take over this estate because the landlord is a bad man and leave the other landlords to pursue their equally bad methods and practices. It has to be part of a national programme. I would merely content myself at this time by reminding this honourable House of the statement of the Cde. Prime Minister and of the fact that the development of this programme in terms of what he said on the night of the 22nd February will be part of the programme of economic development this year. In fact, we see this as not merely supportive of what we are trying to do in the agricultural sector, but as necessary to achieve the goals and targets which I referred to earlier on. Forming a background to all of this, indeed providing the necessary framework in which all of these things, all of the institutional arrangements, all of the other arrangements to which I have referred, can take place, must surely be the legal and constitutional institutions which must be put in place in order to accelerate the pace of development. All those matters are implicit in the programmes which the Cde. Minister of Finance has outlined to this House.

4:55 p.m.

Central to all of our endeavours must be the development of co-operativism. I do not wish to dilate on this point except to say that for us co-operativism is something deeper, more pervasive than the traditional Rochdale type co-operatives. Co-operativism for us is a way of life. It has to do with our national ethos. It has to do with a work ethic which says that we must be supportive of one another. It has to do with a rejection of selfish individualism. It has to do with a national consensus about the way we approach the whole system of production and productivity. And it is this instrument of co-operativism which we contend is necessary for the development of this country along nationally accepted lines and which must be strengthened and promoted in order to

reduce systematically, if not eliminate, that workers alienation which is inherent in all societies which human beings have devised.

We are not saying, we have never said, that the categories of co-operative endeavour are closed. They can never be closed. There must be continuous research; there must be continuous evaluation; there must be continuous experimentation in various forms of human co-operation which enable the people to understand that they are working for themselves, that the decisions they make will redound either to their benefit or to their disadvantage depending upon the effort they put into that decision-making. It is through this mechanism of co-operativism, we hope that people will be inspired to achieve that level of production and productivity which will make for them living in this country a really rewarding experience.

What I am saying is that central to our development strategy, to our programmers, to our policies, vital to the success of all of those things is the worker. The worker is the most valuable person in the whole country. Over the years the workers of this country have performed magnificently despite tremendous odds. Notwithstanding many difficulties they have always responded to the challenges with which they have been confronted. We believe that given the continuing democratization of our society, the expanding opportunities for them to be involved in the decision-making and the management processes of the economy, the opportunities given them for improving their talents through our educational programmers, the opportunities given them for improved conditions of life through the new minimum wage package. The opportunities given to them to earn incentives both material and moral, through their work – we believe, Cde. Speaker, that given all these opportunities the workers will continue to respond more and more efficiently, more and more effectively in this great task of developing the country. For, in the final analysis, I believe that our workers are perceptive enough and intelligent enough to understand that it is only a systematic and continuous expansion of the material base in this country that they can really safeguard their own interests and progressively increase their standard of living and their quality of life.

In promoting the development we have undertaken in achieving the goals we have set ourselves both over the next four years and beyond the role of the Party is crucial. The Party is not an election machine. In fact, in 1974, the Cde. Leader in the “Declaration of Sophia” announced that the whole structure and functioning of the Party had changed. It had become institutionalized. It was now a permanent institution, not for elections, but for economic development, for giving direction, for giving leadership to the people of this country in the great march towards a socialist society. **[Applause]**

The next four years and, indeed, the period ahead required political stability. The Party and the Government intend that there should be that political stability. The Party and the Government cannot and will not tolerate any disruptive elements who may endeavour to prevent the Guyanese workers from reaping the just fruits of their labour. In this task the Government, the Party and the working people are at one. We Guyanese are a capable people; we are an able people; we are an intelligent people. We have come a long way. We have had many achievements of which we are justly proud. In the years ahead I believe that the same dedication, the same intelligence, the same ingenuity which we have shown in the past will enable us to continue our successful advance.

I believe, Cde. Speaker, that because of the institutions which we have begun to set up, because of the institutions which will be set up, because of the opportunities for the involvement of the workers in the task of development, we Guyanese can look forward to resounding successes not only over the next four years but for many years to come. Under the leadership of Cde. Burnham and the Party we have achieved many successes. In the years ahead under the leadership of Cde. Burnham and under the guidance of the Party, we, the Guyanese people, will demonstrate once again that we have a capacity for greatness and by our work and our endeavours will transform that potential into magnificent achievements in the increasing pursuit of our national goals and objectives.

The Speaker: Cde. Lal Bahadur.

Cde. Lalbahadur: Cde. Speaker, I would not like to bore this House many more figures because my colleague, Cde. Narbada Persaud, has done quite an excellent job with respect to that. I would like to deal with a few principles that are necessary for the comrades on the other side to understand because if we are going to speak about socialist economy and socialist structure, it is necessary for us to be guided by certain fundamental principles and not to be guided by misconceptions or ideas that happen to be Utopian. We have to be guided by realistic ideas.

For example, we have always criticized the colonialists for investing money in our economy, thus controlling our economy and, at the same time, controlling political power and draining our raw materials, taking them away, manufacturing them and exporting them back to us as manufactured products.

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Let us see whether this Budget and what it says have anything in common with that aspect or whether we are moving away from that situation. We are being told here that we have a four-year plan up to 1981 but at the same time we are being told that this four-year development plan will have to be basically financed by foreign capital. Now this seems to have more or less certain forms which we have been criticizing in the past. Secondly, with respect to manufacture, I notice that over the four-year period we are investing only about \$85 million. Imagine, in the manufacturing sector, we are investing only \$85 million and at the same time we are going to finance most of our projects with foreign capital, and if we follow the tradition of the past, our economy will continue to be built on products like sugar, bauxite, and so on.

Now, you will notice if you study the Budget very carefully that we are continuing this trend. Are we going to produce raw materials for export and then according to the Budget,

invest only \$85 million for four years in the manufacturing sector? It means that we will be having to import the manufactured products. It means that our economy will continue to follow the pattern of the colonial system: We produce raw materials for export and we de-emphasise manufacturing in our country with the result that later we will have to continue importing manufactured products from abroad and to finance our projects with foreign capital. Therefore, it seems to be a continuation in a different form but the content remains the same. This seems to contradict all the laws of socialist development and a planned socialist economy.

We have nationalised about 80 percent of our economy, it is true, but we also know that nationalization is not socialism. Nationalization can lead to State capitalism and especially in a country where we are aware and we are conscious that most of the leaders of enterprises and so on are petit bourgeois, it seems to give the impression realistically that our economy is leading to a petit bourgeois capitalist State. This can be proved by other situations like emphasis on co-operativism. This, I have mentioned on many occasions here in Parliament quoting even the Prime Minister's statement and it has been emphasized here again. But if probably we read the concept of Marx and Lenin on co-operativism, we will understand that they say that it is a petit bourgeois ideology. It is a petit bourgeois ideology and it existed in capitalism. The farmers and peasants, you organize them – Owen and others tried. You can read those books; you may be aware of them. They tried and they failed. Marx mentioned that co-operativism is necessary but because of the backwardness in the agricultural sector, it was necessary to organize them in co-operatives so that at a later stage, these co-operatives may be converted into the people's property and organized to produce in the interest of the people.

If we maintain this question of co-operativism, we are at the same time propagating the bourgeois ideology and the petit bourgeois ideology which means that instead of going and organizing ourselves towards socialism, we are sowing the seeds of capitalism which at some later stage can develop and take over even the State. The Government was talking about turning the State enterprises into co-operatives. This emphasizes my point that apparently everything

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that is being done is based on a petit bourgeois or bourgeois ideology. This is very dangerous; it is extremely dangerous because if we are going to talk about socialism, I feel – and everybody who understands a little about Marxism knows this – that we may inherit certain situations of capitalism, the mentality of people, petit bourgeois arrangements, even some bourgeois existing in the country, but the tendency will be to eliminate gradually during the years and at the same time, try to perpetuate the State control of the economy, socialization of the economy, socialisation of the means of production, socialization of every aspect of life. But, if this kind of situation is going to be perpetuated, I say that instead of moving towards socialism, we are moving away from socialism and this is a dangerous trend. I wish to warn this House that if this tendency is continued, it will be very unfortunate for the Guyanese people.

Reference had been made to this question of foreign capital. A lot of emphasis has been laid on it by the Minister who just spoke but I want to refer him to our neighbour Brazil. Brazil had encouraged a lot of foreign capital but I am sure that Ministers of this country have been over there and they know what is the disastrous consequence of such foreign capital. Disastrous, I say, because it has a dictatorship not of the proletariat but a bourgeois dictatorship that murders and kills and has no interest in the people at heart. Because of the foreign capital in the country, the dictator is being dictated to by the foreigners who gave him money to develop the country and therefore he has no alternative but to follow their dictates. This tendency has been shown in all Latin America – Nicaragua and Uruguay, Guatemala, even at this stage Chile, Argentina – all dictatorships, because they have allowed the American capital to infiltrate the country and have economic control, definitely leading to political control.

I can remember a great writer over a hundred years ago, Jose Marti, warned – if you remember the song *Guantanamera* you will remember him – that if the future generations of Latin America did not take very serious consideration to control their wealth and organize themselves, the whole of Latin America will become a colony of the United States. This is what is actually taking place now. A hundred years ago he said it and it is being done now. Then, he continued to say that the time will come when they will have to fight for a second independence.

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Cuba has done it, the others still have to do it. This is a very dangerous trend and if we want to move towards socialism, socialism is a long - - - **[Interruption]**

Cuba! They had the revolution in 1959; I was there in 1961. They had already started nationalisation; not the nationalisation we do. When they were threatened by the American they had to stand up. This is the position. The question is that they have done it. Many other situations have proved that this has been so but we are talking one thing and we are doing another. Practical application of the situation is different. There is something that is called universal concepts, not only existing in a vacuum. Universal concept has to manifest in specific, concrete manifestations or it does not exist. You talk about socialism but it must have its concrete manifestation and if you do not see that, it means that there is a divorce from the abstract to the concrete and that is what is taking place here.

We can analyse the case of Puerto Rico for example. Puerto Rico has encouraged American capital through the years. These are examples that are taking place. The Americans have built up all kinds of factories, invested in Puerto Rico but up to now we know that Puerto Rico is still a colony of the United States. They are still struggling. A lot of money has gone into Puerto Rico but Puerto Rico nevertheless continues to be a colony of the United States of America, and comrades, this is very, very dangerous for us.

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I would like to advise the comrade on the other side. Let us be frank. There is a lot of optimism. A lot of things are being said, for example, that by 1981 we would have a Utopia. This was said twelve years ago and people are fed up with all this sort of thing. Why don't we be frank with the economists or socialists. If we are frank socialists, why don't we have constructive criticism and self-criticism? Let us be constructive, analyse the situation objectively and see what the position is. If we fail, if we see we are going wrong, let us have self-criticism. Criticise ourselves when we make mistakes. People have been doing that, many other leaders have done

that. If you make mistakes okay, you have made mistakes and you intend to correct them, but do not deny the fact when the world and every individual in this country knows what the situation is and what is taking place. If we are honest, accept and say, okay, we have committed errors. Let us put our hands together to resolve the problems and at the same time to overcome the errors we have committed in the past. I think these are some of the aspects we must take into consideration. They are very important.

The Cde. Minister said something about land reform. This is a vital aspect. Those who studied socialism know that there is something called urban reform and agrarian reform. You must have that. If you go in any part of this country you cannot get an apartment to live in. It takes months and sometimes years to find one. People spend half their income for an apartment house and at times it is dilapidated. Why don't we have urban reform? Why don't we have land reform? They are building houses for policemen and so on. We are not against that, but there are people in Albouystown and other place in Georgetown and in the country who need houses. People come to Georgetown with half of their salaries in search of houses and some of them are living in very obnoxious conditions. These are the situations we have to try to resolve. Let us have urban reform and try to help these people. Do not tell them about Utopia about which they are dreaming. We have been hearing this for twelve years now and nothing has been done to resolve their problem. The people are really fed up. Don't live in ivory towers, you will not know. If you walk through the streets of Georgetown or in any part of Guyana and you hear what the people have to tell you, you will be surprised. They do not want to hear anything. Urban reform is not only legislation. Of course, we have a lot of land but it may not be necessary to go in to urban reform as some other countries, but something has to be done. In spite of all the land we have in this country there are still many people who want a piece of land and cannot get it. I want to repeat what I said here. They have even taken away what the people have and are not putting it into use. These are some of the aspects we must take into consideration.

It was also mentioned that we have to go into industrialisation. We are talking that we do not have money. Industrialisation is very important. There is also talk about a bicycle factory. We heard about that five years ago. Up to now I can't see it. There is talk about many factories which are to be built. There was one at Black Bush Polder to process tomatoes. When I lived there, there was a guard there for about three years, twenty-four hours a day. The factory was built and then they had to decide whether they were going to plant tomatoes or something else. What on earth is this? They planted tomatoes in the cricket field where the children used to play. Tomatoes are not grown like that, comrades. Any farmer will tell you that tomatoes are not grown like that. What priorities do we have. Are we doing things ad hoc, like Idi Amin, dreaming in the night and planting in the morning? He just dreams and executes and when he fails he decides to change and to move around like a circus all the time. Economic planning and central planning have to be done methodically. You have to go into all the factors, analyse them, process the data, put them together and then project the situation, whether it is a five-year or ten-year plan, perspective or annual, medium term or whatever it may be. This is not done ad hoc.

Furthermore, I want to mention a very important thing here. If you are going to have people to establish a socialist organization, you cannot pick up any kind of technician. Marx said very carefully and unapologetically that it is not only important for the economic transformation but for the transformation of the mentality of mankind. If you transform the man and you do not transform the mind, then he is still going to steal the land and take away the money. That will be the end result because the mentality has not changed. Transformation of the economy is one thing. This has to be accompanied by the superstructural changes. Has the superstructure changed? Has the police changed its attitude? Has the Court changed its attitude? Have the political organizations and all the institutions that furnish superstructure changed their attitudes? We are talking about controlling 80 percent of our economy. That is good, but has the superstructure changed? When you go to the Courts, you find that the police and all institutions are supporting the economic base. When you talk about socialism you will have to do all these things, it is not just talk. These are reflections which people and analysts are looking for.

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I was talking to a friend the other day and he said, “Man, I am confused with the situation in Guyana. Is it socialism or capitalism?” I said I have a distinguishing mark. It was a person from the Army and he was confused with what the dictators of the Army tell him to do and sometimes it is contrary to his convictions. He also asked me what I think the role of the Army is. I said, “Look, if the Army is a people’s army, it is always in defence of the people. If there is any problem, it defends the people. In the case of an army which represents a State which is a capitalist State, this army would always be in defence of the State.” Therefore, if you have an army that fights against the people it is defending a capitalist State because when the workers decide to move against capitalism the capitalists use the State apparatus, the army, the judiciary and everything else against the people. That is what is taking place here because the Army had move against the people. If it is a people’s army, indeed, and there are problems, there are ways of resolving the problems by amicable discussion and so on. But when the army represents a State that is a petit bourgeois State or a bourgeois State, definitely the army would have to follow the dictates of that regime to fight against the workers.

We have seen a clear case in the bauxite industry and also in the municipality. Those people involved were not sugar workers, many were supporters of the People’s National Congress. But the Army moved against them, locked up about 40 of them in the bauxite area, and the municipality threatened to take away their jobs. They are moving in the sugar industry against the sugar workers. Which workers is the Army representing? Probably it is defending the elite. The elite has to be careful that the Army does not turn against them one day. Many people in the Army are farmers’ children and workers’ children and they are not going to tolerate these things for very long. These are some of the situations I am very much concerned about.

At this point I would like to bring to the attention of this House that years ago we were hearing that the Government would take over the banks and insurance companies. We know the insurance companies and banks are very important because they are the people who collect quite a lot of the funds. We have been saying, for a long time, that we are going to control the banks and the insurance companies. The point is that we have to control them because they control the

finances. What are we doing? Are we allowing them to channel resources outside? Why don't we nationalise them? The T.U.C. took a resolution which, up to now, the Government has not implemented. The Resolution said that by the end of the following year, which is year before the last, everything should be nationalised. Nothing has been done. Reference has been made to the T.U.C. on several issues that were convenient to them but on other issues that were not convenient to them they made no reference. This brings me to the point made by the Minister who spoke recently on the question of what he called over-staffing. I do not want to go into the historic reasons for over-staffing. Everyone is conscious about this situation. We realize it now. The Minister probably did not want to mention the correct word, but they call it redeployment but we know it is retrenchment. I have seen hundreds and even thousands of letters of retrenchment saying that "as from the 31st December, your services are no longer needed." What is that? I can show you any time. We have that documentation. These people have been retrenched or dismissed in many cases.

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I am not convinced of the decision taken because a decision of this sort should be carefully considered because if you are going to remove a certain number of people from one area and put them into another area you have to think about their skills. Are they mechanics, are they engineers, are they technicians, or teachers, whatever the case may be? First you have to consider the skills, the number of people you want and then consider the areas in which you need these skills. You decide that you need "X" or "Y" skills before you redeploy people and put them in the relevant skills. If a man is a technician – and you know we have a scarcity of technicians – and you put that man to plant black-eye peas, where is your production? That man might spend a whole day and he might not even produce \$2 worth of it – like the last experience we had. One pound of black-eye peas cost \$2.50 to \$3 to produce.

This is how our money is being spent and completely wasted. You redeploy and you do not consider a man's skill. In fact, we have cases where people were told to go to certain places

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to present themselves for employment. When they went they were told, “We don’t have any jobs, when we have a vacancy we will call you.” There were cases when questions were asked: “Well, I have been working for \$500 per month, what will be my new salary, what about my service in the past, what about my pension scheme and all the schemes that I had contributed to and which benefits I was supposed to enjoy?” They were told that, when they take the new job they will work for the salary and under the conditions the job offers. It means that if a man was working for \$500 in his former job and the new job offered him \$200, then he will definitely have to work for \$200. If the new job did not offer the benefits he enjoyed in his former job, then he will not enjoy them.

These are the things that are creating a lot of problems in our country. It shows lack of planning, lack of organization, lack of thinking and a lack of interest in the people. We have nearly 20,000 unemployed persons waiting for jobs, persons who are starving, yet we are redeploying. How does it work? We are redeploying those who are in jobs in the first place when we have a high rate of unemployment. All right, we lack finances which happen to be one of our limited resources. Let us organize it rationally. But don’t send all those bureaucrats from Georgetown who go there, eat and drink and then plan the thing and come back.

I live in the country and I know what is going on. That is correct. I lived in Black Bush Polder for seven years. I don’t want to call names but some of them are around here. In fact, one of them went into a field: Excellent rice; he gave the man all kinds of things; excellent field; right boy, good, congratulations. They were eating meat and drinking on the road anyhow. When they were finished I laughed. They asked me why I was laughing and I told them I could tell them when the man was going to cut his rice. I wrote it on a piece of paper and put it aside. I said: “You know what you are giving the man money for? Growing marina.” Because marina and rice grow the same way. That was the technician; he was trained at Mon Repos and he also went to Trinidad and came back. He saw a whole field, green all over. Excellent rice. What was it? He was fertilizing marina. Marina is a grass. He was telling me about production and productivity. I asked him where he learnt that and he said at some developers’ course. He learnt

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about production and productivity at developers' course. When the people decided to cut the rice, the owners of the combine told them that would cost them \$2 per bag to cut and that would not pay because what he had growing in his field was marina. He told them to bag them off. So they bagged off the entire marina, rice and everything. He took it to the mill and when they put it in the pit, out of 60 bags of paddy there was 40 bags marina. This is production and productivity. This is what he learnt at the developers' course. He lives not far from my house. His is left half way. He came one day to me and said, "Comrade, I can't make it anymore, I will have to get a job." And this is what he did. This is the production and productivity we are talking about. This is where our money is being wasted. I met him two weeks ago. I asked him about the money he had borrowed and he said it had been written off because he belonged to a co-operative. This is where the money went down the drain.

This is where the planning is very bad. We are putting the wrong persons in the wrong places. If you check the whole economy of this country you will find that the head of many Corporations and Departments are petit bourgeois – oriented. You may find very few who are not. Someone sitting right at the corner here told somebody that if he didn't give him \$20 he wouldn't fix a paper or sign it. Many of them I see and I watch them. These are the situations if we do not correct, we can talk at the top with the State Planning Commission and at Ministerial level, and we can do nothing; all our plans will fall definitely. We have to analyse the situation as the comrade said.

He also said that all the apparatus for the State Planning Commission has been established and so on. When I saw the names of the people on the State Planning Commission, I was speaking to a friend and I asked him, "Which one of them is a socialist?" We couldn't find any. When we studied the composition of the State Planning Commission we would have had to use a magnifying glass to find the socialists. You couldn't find them. Therefore, the apparatus established to organize and develop a socialist economy is constituted of people who are not socialists. Comrades, how can that be possible? This is where we fail because the people who have to do the job are not socialists. They are not interested; they have their own interests, their

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own view points and so they do things according to their own ways and means. That is why we are failing all the time. The other question which is mentioned in the Budget Speech, Cde. Speaker, is the question of consumption. They talk about reduction or elimination of consumption. I don't know how we can eliminate that. I quote from the Budget Speech page 49, first paragraph and third line:

“First, there is the need to restrain or postpone consumption in favour of savings.”

I want to know what that means. If a man can postpone consumption, what will happen to him? This is a very serious matter. You tell the population to postpone consumption. At least, I would not take the chance to go to a public meeting and tell workers to postpone consumption. I might come back dead. This is very important. I know the population would not understand it.

We have so many restrictions already, if we were to postpone consumption – in fact people are walking on the road and falling down dead anyhow. So there is no difference. All about, you see on the road a man fall down, sit down,

“Give me a cent, I want bread, man, don't worry with sweet drink anymore. I can't make that anymore.”

And this is the position all over the country.

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Look! Many of them over there, sitting at the back, and many of the Parliamentarians, ask them how things are bad with them. Things are very, very bad. I can remember at a public meeting, certain workers came and spoke to us. We said:

“How are things, comrades? Things bad?”

One said:

“Things nah bad, comrade; things bad like ass!”

This is the situation. Things are very rough; things are extremely rough and as I said in my last intervention, we have to establish the proper ratio between consumption and accumulation. This is a very important principle in economic planning: establishing a proper ratio between consumption and accumulation because it would be dangerous if we dedicate too much to consumption, then we may not have development. And, at the same time, if we dedicate too much or all to accumulation then there will be no consumption. I should like to warn those on the other side that if we eliminate, or as they say postpone consumption, we will have serious political repercussions; we are already having them.

That is pure economic thinking. It says that you must establish a proper ratio between accumulation and consumption; it also says that if you spend too much on consumption, you may have to limit your accumulation and, therefore, development will be limited. At the same time, on the other hand, if you put too much or all on accumulation, you will restrict consumption, in this case, postpone consumption, and it will lead to serious political problems. Therefore, the most important part in economic planning is to establish the proper ratio. If you do not, both sides will end up in problems. I would like to warn that this is very important.

There is another aspect that I want to deal with here. It is of some importance that this House understands because in this Budget it is mentioned on various occasions. It has also been mentioned by political leaders on the other side that because of political reasons in the sugar industry, production has been affected and a series of other things, therefore, the P.P.P. and other people are being blamed that because of political intervention there was the strike and the prolongation of the strike and so on. I just want to prove that this is not so; that those who are responsible for the prolongation of the strike are the members of the P.N.C. and I will document that. You see this? This is a P.N.C. document. First I will take the T.U.C. This letter is dated February 2, 1977.

The Speaker: Cde. Lalbahadur, you are going to read all of that? **[Interruption.]**

I am not stopping you. All I want to tell you is that you have 20 minutes more and then the Opposition will not have anything more to say for the day.

Cde. Lalbahadur: All right. Just one paragraph will do then. Paragraph 3 on the first page of this letter from the Guyana Trades Union Congress to Cde. Hamilton Green on November 2, 1977 states:

“Firstly, it is important for me to stress a very important initial point that an end to strike is being delayed not because of the rejection of GAWU’s claim for profit sharing but because of disagreement between the TUC AND Guysuco regarding Guysuco’s objection to the inclusion in the terms of resumption of the usual clause which provides for the removal of scabs...”

This is a TUC document.

Now here is another document from the People’s National Congress. This is Fact Sheet No. 3 and the first part says:

“Para (6) Furthermore, Government has directed Guysuco to give permanent employment to all workers who report for work at this time;”

It means that this statement has certain relevance to the document I just read, Cde. Speaker. It is very clear that what has taken place in the sugar industry and the prolongation of the strike were basically due to the P.N.C. Government and, therefore, it must be responsible for the consequences.

The Speaker: Cde. Chowritmootoo.

The Minister of State - Regional (Essequibo Coast/West Demerara, (Cde. Chowritmootoo): Cde. Speaker, I am sure that all of us would want me to thank the last speaker for that comical interlude - -

The Speaker: Cde. Chowritmootoo, I am not going to allow that kind of statement. I objected to Cde. Narbada Persaud saying that he heard a comic Budget Report so I am not going to allow any kind of abuse or disrespectful language.

Cde. Chowritmootoo: I beg to withdraw that remark. Cde. Speaker. that the members of this August body have been subjected to the level of debate coming from the members of the Opposition is a manifestation of the incapability of that section to analyse the Budget Speech. My understanding is that debate on the Budget Speech should be one devoted to analysis and constructive criticisms, in order to facilitate development and understanding.

Cde. Speaker, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the Cde. Minister of Finance for presenting so competently the Budget Speech of the year 1978. Inherent in this masterly presentation is an efficient time-tabling and prescription for national survival and progress. The model is unique in so far as the Guyanese tradition goes. It is in fact a fiscal macro plan of expenditure which shows the direction of planned economy. While we discern the uniqueness in that respect, it is, to my mind, of importance to point out that it underscored two principal elements. First, it maintains a consistency with its post Independence predecessors, in that it is another realistic attempt to point truthfully to our nation the conditions and state of our economy and the necessary measures required, without being ad hoc, to correct various weaknesses in the economy. Secondly, Cde. Speaker, endemic in its proposals for development, management and accountability is its uncompromising and unequivocal stand on the ideological consistency of the People's National Congress.

The Cde. Minister of Finance said on page 9 of his Budget Speech:

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“Our international partners, in all positions of the ideological spectrum, will deem us to be serious and accordingly react helpfully to our efforts at self-sufficiency, only if we demonstrate the capacity to implement carefully planned approaches to these matters. The stepwise raising of the consciousness of the Guyanese people will only occur if we can all be involved in, and therefore appreciate, the tactics which we must pursue first for our survival, and second for our development.”

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Cde. Speaker, that statement validates our non-aligned position, a position we share with countries which have gone a far way in the establishment of socialism. One is reminded of the difficulties which faced the Soviet Government in the early days after the October Revolution. Lenin in his task of the Soviet Government pointed out the following:

“The principal difficulty lies in the economic sphere, namely, the introduction of the strictest and universal accounting and control of the production and distribution of goods, raising the productivity of labour and socialising production in practice.”

It is with characteristic courage and determination that the People’s National Congress in Government persistently and dauntlessly sail the ship of state through years of troubled waters, always reaching the safety of the port of economic recovery and stability. Our people have grown accustomed to the astute management of our resources and their confidence they will continue to pledge their trust in the proven ability of the People’s National Congress. It has not a record of chaos and confusion, of bankruptcy – the state of affairs endemic in a previous administration. The People’s National Congress, the vanguard of the working class, continues to struggle against the vagaries of the international machination of the system of exploitation. From these struggles it continues to draw strength from the experiences of the past. The lessons learnt there from provide that knowledge and consciousness which strengthen our conviction of the correctness of the direction taken. It is little wonder that the working class continuously

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repose upon us, its representatives, that confidence that we resolve to lead on to bring about total economic liberation and social justice.

That there has been or continues to be a qualitative as well as a quantitative increase in the well-being of the people, of the working masses, while the influence of the status quo, of birth and economic privileges give way to more just practices, is evidenced in the decline of the exploiting class, the manifestation of the class struggle inherent in the present stage of our social development. We continue to struggle indefatigably in the interest of the working class without noise and fetish sloganeering. The fact that the tactics and strategies of our Party in Government continues to realize benefits in the interest of the working class exemplifies a fundamental principle in practice of our socialist objectives.

The programme struggle in alliance with the rest of the working class to establish rule and control of the masses is fought at many fronts. The theory and practice of ownership and control of our natural resources is the most discernible form of the struggle against and the most acute attack on the capitalist bastion. We are not an army in the service against world this or world that. We are merely changing our society and ridding it of its noxious practices. The strategy in train devised to effect the facet of economic independence for an economically strong and self-determining society is nationalisation, the principle of the ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange. I refer to the last speaker's reference to the miniaturisation of the banks. It is for us to see that that process, that factual move, has in fact yielded the results which we had contemplated. We notice throughout the rural areas the closing down of the foreign banks and the setting up of the local branches of our indigenous savings bank. It is, too, for those who have eyes to see but cannot see, that for every financial need of the working masses there is an institution that takes care of his need. I refer to capitalism as a state of mind and a habit, as a socio-economic system which governs and concerns economies and establishes norms and practices based on the exploitation of man by man, the dominance of a few over the many. And while the employ of the strategy of nationalisation conditioned the purposive transformation of the economy, it did not readily mentalise the workers in appropriate

characteristics of production relations; neither did the workers lose immediately the character of the alienation of work.

From the inception our Party in Government, the People's National Congress, was acutely aware of the ravages of the system of exploitation, its built-in mechanisms which determined social status, economic opportunities and work approaches. Inspired by the principles of Marxism/Leninism, we have followed consistently that direction which invariably must lead to the destruction of the system of exploitation, and the eradication from the minds of our people the habit of greed and the urge to exploit. With a revolutionary background and a committed leadership, our Party validates its position by its action and not vaunting and posturing. Was it not our Cde. Leader who said on the 16th April, 1955:

“Our Party is pledged to fight for the establishment of Socialism in this country cost it what it will.”

Organising the proletariat and building the class consciousness, our Cde. Leader said, again, on the 5th November, 1961:

“It must be remembered that the People's National Congress is a Socialist Party. By that I mean the People's National Congress is a Socialist Party. By that I mean the People's National Congress draws its strength from the working class people of this country, that the People's National Congress is dedicated to the establishment of a system of social justice, where the workers get their just deserts, will get the rewards of their labour and no longer will a few get the lion's share while the many get the jackal's pickings.”

An analysis points to:

- (1) The abolition of exploitation of man by man;

- (2) Equality of opportunity based on the principle of each according to his ability to each according to his work;
- (3) That the People's National Congress is the organised detachment of the masses from which it draws its strength and of whom it is a part.

This position as stated then stood in contrast with the Leader of the present Opposition in the House. I quote from "Towards Understanding," October 1961. I now quote Dr. Cheddi B. Jagan:

"While we believe in the nationalisation of all the important means of production, distribution and exchange; while we reserve our right as any sovereign nation does, to nationalise whatever industry we think should be nationalised in the public interest, we have explicitly stated that we have no intention of nationalising the existing sugar and bauxite companies.")

What an unprincipled position for an alleged avowed Marxist, but then, had not the type of behaviour characteristics of the political faction which he represents? What a price one can pay for political power.

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Cde. Speaker, fundamental to all the changes in human society is that which is economic. Economic change is a driving force of history. The study of the laws of the history of social development lays the foundation for an understanding of the inevitability of change while giving one an insight into the outcome of changes – the new stage of man's social development – socialism. It is in the context of this law that we understand that socialism is bound to triumph.

No society can evolve or evoke a fundamentally new social political pattern while it is cast in an old economic mould. While the political germ eroding the old order must be found in the old order, and upon its growth and development depends the institutionalisation of the new order, the birth-marks of the old persist in the new and changing situation. The economy must undergo structural change, before the concomitant socio political changes take place. It is within this context that our Party in Government, the People's National Congress, programmes for development and implements strategies for change. The transformation of society, at which we are aiming, requires both a definition or description of the society to be created and a major restructuring of the economy to cause that kind of society to be created. Suffice it to say at this point that the catalyst which must bring about this change is the Guyanese working class led by its organised detachment, the vanguard People's National Congress.

Now, for a definition. In The task of the Proletariat in our Revolution, a programme of work written in April, 1917, Lenin said:

“From capitalism mankind can pass directly to socialism i.e. to the social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the amount of work performed by each individual.

Socialism sets as its objective a basic and complete change of the existing order. The first stage is the transfer of the political power and the control of the State. It is an ideology. It describes a social and economic system which clearly defined features and relationships between people and people and between the people and the means of production, distribution and exchange. To my mind, there cannot be different types of socialism.”

And it is a good thing, Cde. Speaker, that we take time to learn and, perhaps for some, now is a time for learning, a time to rise out of ignorance, the fossilisation of traditionalism and be enlightened.

There has to be a change in the ownership of the basic means of production which thereafter has to be geared for use, rather than individual profit. This itself carries the concomitant change in the relation and relationships between property and people, between people and people, and between class and class. “The pellucid clarity of exposition,” borrowing a phrase from my colleague the Cde Minister of Finance – needs no wordy rambling and in the context of our development, it unfolds itself in the changing society of ours. Present changes, Cde. Speaker, are revolutionising our society. In the short historical period of less than 12 years after Independence, Guyana has undergone a physical transformation. Nothing remains the same as society’s aggregate resources went their way back to development. As we continue to revolutionise our society – its physical forms and its peoples and practices – we need to view, and to examine our methodology in the context of the interpretation given by our Party in Government, the People’s National Congress. And it is time that members of the Opposition learn of this interpretation because they would not find time to come here and make rantings and noises over that which they know nothing.

Cde. Speaker, I have been taught by my Cde. Leader, that ignorance breeds frustration and discontent. While perhaps this may not be the case in every situation as in the case of the hunger for political power, one may end up in the similar state of mind knowing that there is no hope for such aspiration, that is, political power for the People’s Progressive Party. In the latter circumstance it is knowledge breeding frustration and discontent. Of course, that is the exception to the rule.

Some advocates of change believe that there is a pre-packed, cut and dry methodology which having succeeded elsewhere can, ipso facto, be induced and made to succeed in the Guyanese situation. I contend, Cde. Speaker, that this is a fallacy and it is contrary to the teaching, of Marxism-Leninism. These advocates fail to take cognizance of our indigenous traditions and historical circumstances of our society, and that we firmly believe we can make an original contribution to world development in our approach to achieving the goals of socialism. I

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refer, Cde. Speaker, to the reference made to co-operativism. For us, co-operativism, is a methodology for the fulfilment of the goal of socialism, as referred to by Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives. It is more pervasive. It goes beyond economic development. Rather, it is the sum total of the collective experience of a group which, encompassing economic participation, makes for social political participation and which, at the same time, stimulates individual members to bring out their creativity in the interest of the group. Cde. Speaker, we have learnt from the Cde. Minister of Finance about the need for the revolutionising of the society. It is perhaps noteworthy for us to seek to understand what is meant by revolution in the Guyanese context, and I quote no less a person than our Cde. Leader:

“... a revolution means a basic, radical and distinctive change of the system and order which is prevailing and its replacement by a new system and a new order based on

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different criteria and consideration from those on which the old system is based. For a revolution to be successful, a revolution to be meaningful, it must be relevant to the circumstances in which we live and must be indigenous to the country in which it takes place. It is impossible to have a revolution therefore, unless, we have clear ideas as to what we want to have removed and what we want to put in its place.”

While we have no quarrel with those who have gone the path of violent overthrow of the old system and while we publicly admire the changes they have wrought as a consequence, we of the People’s National Congress have chosen the path of revolutionising our society in a peaceful manner. It is in this context, Cde. Speaker, I believe the Cde. Minister of Finance spoke of revolution when he said on page 5 of his Budget Speech:

“The process of revolutionising the society for the achievement of socialist objectives would continue to move apace under the stimulus of the Party and the Government. Now that the dominant portion of the means of production and distribution is in the hands of the Guyanese people through the State, the

immediate task of the revolution is to increase the productivity of the workers; to centralise the planning of production; to expand the productive base through balanced and diversified economic development ...”

Cde. Speaker, heretofore, the Cde. Minister of Finance made reference to centralised planning. That he referred to the setting up of a State Planning Commission which, he pointed out, achieved legal reality on the 25th of February, and which, to my knowledge, has further blossomed into its structural spheres of operation and the identifying of personnel to carry on the tasks identified with its formation, its further manifestation of the socialist nature of the Budget proposals, and the deepening of the process of Socialist Revolution in Guyana. While we see planning in its socialist context as the system of managing economic processes involving production, distribution, investment and consumption, determining of economic targets and methods for their implementation, in particular, the allocation of the means of production and of labour to different use, the nerve centre of co-operative and co-ordinated planning and monitoring activity for the entire economy is placed in the entity, the State Planning Commission, the core of a de-alienated process of determining what should be done with the Guyanese economy. This has to work within the confines of the overall social goals and priorities laid down by the Party in Government, the People’s National Congress. Its functionality must bring about the fundamental difference between the planned economy of the socialist state and the laissez-faire free-enterprise market economy of the capitalist state and I thought, Cde. Speaker, the economist on the other side would have made that point but then they are here merely to criticise.

Cde. Speaker, I further detect the workability of the process of democratic centralism in the central state planning, for it represents a mechanism for providing early warnings from the representatives of the people themselves, as advised by the Cde. Minister of Finance. It means that the people at the base must determine what it should do, and how it does it, is its central task.

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Cde. Speaker, as the Cde. Minister of Finance made reference to Regions, may I take this opportunity to posit that the institution of regionalism is in practical service of the principle of democratic centralism. Does it not bridge the centre with the base where upon there exists the collective leadership of an involvement of the masses on one hand and the centralised direction from the top which is binding to all of society's membership?

The Cde. Minister of Finance at pains emphasised and re-emphasised the importance of increased production. We, of the People's National Congress recognise that the creation of all the wealth is in the hands of the material producers, in the fields, in the factories, in the offices, in the mines. We also recognise equally strongly, fully convinced that the social producers enhance the production of wealth and it takes the co-ordination and co-operation of the two elements of the productive forces to yield the abundance necessary to bring about the qualitative and quantitative changes in our society.

We further recognise that inherent in the socialist revolution is the scientific and technological revolution with which we must create a basis upon which there can be increased production.

The reference to the expansion of our agricultural acreage and the simultaneous expansion of our educational facilities are in recognition of the dual principles of bridging the gap between mental and manual labour, endemic in the entire educational system of our country and, at the same time, satisfying the technological needs to enhance production. It was Karl Marx who contended that the way to build society and create conditions for free development of every individual lies through the realm of necessity through the creation of material prerequisites for the new society.

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It was Lenin who, perhaps, gave more acute guidance when he said:

“Only if the proletariat and the poor peasants display sufficient self-sacrifice and perseverance, will the victory of the socialist revolution be assured.”

Yet in our open and ultra democratic society detractors of socialism, left adventurists, power-hungry political noisemongers breed discontent and mislead some of the workers, members of the working class. It is not the vaunting of loyalty to the working class that serves its interest, it is a sincere demonstration to their well-being by inducing greater production in the interest of our society. The lessons of history seem to have meant nothing to some, or perhaps they are incapable of absorbing knowledge. It is good to remind the oblivious members of the political factions on the other side that the People’s National Congress has effective State control which is ratified by the continuous trust of the working class and we will never ever cease to act in their interest to maintain the dominance of the working class and to vigilantly guard against the forces of reaction. While we acknowledge that we have not yet achieved socialism, and while we are mindful of tactics of detraction used to divert us from our course, we are fully convinced that our directions are clear and our strategies continue to yield benefits for the working class of which we are the vanguard, the organised detachment.

May I in conclusion remind this House of Engels’ analysis when he said: “It is impossible of course to carry out all the measures at once. But one always brings others in its wake.” The rising expectations of our people are justified. They have become accustomed to the good life under the sensible and dedicated leadership of the People’s National Congress. Our philosophy of self-reliance must now become the hand-maiden of our ideology; in their absolute integration lies the survival of our nations’ thrust to the establishment of socialism, the good life, the just life under the People National Congress, the vanguard of the working class..

The Speaker: Cde. Chowritmootoo, I was very glad you were only referring to your notes. If you were giving them a treatise, I do not know what would have happened.[**Interruption**] Cde. Clarke.

The Minister of State – Regional (East Berbice/Corentyne) (Cde. Clarke): Cde. Speaker, only the lazy and the sluggard, as well as those who would allow themselves to be politically misled and would thereby let our economy droop and drag, will not welcome the production-oriented Budget of the Cde. Minister of Finance, particularly coming as it does at this momentous time, at this challenging time in the history of our country. Quite rightly, the Budget seeks to ensure that emphasis is placed on agriculture, on forestry, fisheries, mining and manufacture, those sectors which offer the best chance of speedily pulling our economy back. I am sure that as this debate progresses, our friends from the other side will accept that the general thrust of this Budget is correct.

I think, therefore, that what we need to do at this stage is to seek a basis of understanding, to seek to agree that this thrust is essential to our survival and to progress in this country. Then, having decided that, for all of us in our various ways and in the ways which we know are at our disposal, to activate the people, to motivate the people so that we can produce in 1978 and onwards better than we have ever done before. I believe that the Guyanese people have proved in no uncertain manner and on more than one occasion that their determination to face the most extreme difficulties with courage is second to none and that their will to overcome problems and difficulties, especially under the leadership of the People's National Congress, is certainly second to none. One only has to recall the attitude and the action which followed the attitude of the Guyanese workers in the face of the political action in the sugar industry last year to recognise what the Guyanese people, faced with difficulties, backs to the walls, are capable of achieving. I am sure that in 1978 and beyond, given the willingness of all the representatives of the people in this House to co-operate, we will make Guyana the paradise which we know we can make of it.

6:25 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, one has to remember the words of Cde. Narbada Persaud as he started this debate today on this momentous Budget. He told us all, that the Minister made certain suggestions and

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prognoses in 1976 and 1977 and that the P.N.C. and the Minister of Finance could not make those prognoses real. Well, Cde. Speaker, apparently, Cde. Narbada Persaud and the Opposition do not consider themselves part of the Guyanese people and the Guyanese process, because if they did, he would have said that we did not make the Cde. Minister's prognoses materialise. But now, he comes and he says that it is the P.N.C. In other words, he withdraws and the P.P.P. has withdrawn apparently from the progressive organisation which they say they are and the progressive stand - - **[Interruption]**

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, sometimes I don't hear very well but when you speak too loudly, I do.

Cde. Clarke: - - which seems today merely to represent a posturing on the part of the Opposition. I think that the Cde. Minister of Finance has clearly identified and indicated that greater production and productivity are the only solutions to our present economic problems. And we should, therefore, if we have the interest of the Guyanese people at heart, if we have the interest of the nation at heart, seek to close ranks and to urge the people to produce for their survival, for our survival, and for our progress.

The People's National Congress and Government have undoubtedly set the stage for the great transformation of this society. No-one in Guyana or out of it who is sufficiently acquainted with what we have achieved in this country over the last 13 years and particularly, within the last 8 years, will deny that the People's National Congress has advanced the revolutionary process towards socialism in this country, even though we experienced the humbugs and the difficulties of people in the Opposition right and left. There is no one who will deny that and I believe that the Cde. Minister of Economic Development in his contribution has rightly pointed to the many areas of progress which we have made along this road.

I would like to focus, Cde. Speaker, on just one institution, one mechanism which we have introduced, which mechanism is designed specifically to secure what the Cde. Minister of

Finance describes as necessary and referred to by my friend Cde. Narbada Persaud. The application of truly democratic co-ordinated planning and monitoring involving the T.U.C., consumer organisations and producer groupings, is one of the fundamental changes without which an orderly and systematic approach towards the kind of society we want cannot be achieved.

I believe it was in 1974, that the P.N.C. Government introduced the regional system. And this system has been evolving, has been developing, has been deepening with the passage of time. The system, structurally as well as operationally, is designed and geared to secure the very fullest involvement of the people of this country, in the identification, planning and the execution of projects and programmes for their own benefit, as well as in the process raising the consciousness of the people so that they would become more appreciative of the processes of development, what is involved in development, and the nature of development, particularly in this pro-socialist non-aligned Third World country, which is Guyana.

The Cde. Minister of Finance himself pointed to this fact, that because we are pro-socialists, non-aligned and developing, it makes development in this country more difficult, more dangerous than what obtains in other developed countries or in countries less exposed to imperialism than we are. Therefore, Cde. Speaker, our strategy of regionalism, which is basically a self-reliance strategy, is important to the future development of this country. That is why we instituted this system and, as I said, it has been taking gradual roots in the society. I am sure with the passage of time it will assume a greater and greater role and more and more responsibility in our developmental process.

If we were to go through the Cde. Minister of Finance's Budget Speech carefully, we would note that the strategy outlined in the Speech is impossible of achievement without the regional system, because it is in the region that development takes place and particularly

agricultural development, forestry development, mining. That type of development takes place not in the centre but in the region.

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The need, therefore, to organise development, to plan development carefully, and to execute development, and the task of doing these things are tasks for the region. That is why I believe that in a very real sense what has happened in terms of the necessity to shift service workers into production in terms of redeployment, in terms of proper labour placement, is something that will help the regional system, that will deepen the regional system, and that will ensure to the success of the system because it will mean that unproductive or under-productive persons as well as persons placed at the centre who do not contribute sufficiently to the development process for one reason or another, will find themselves being redeployed into the regions where the work of development is taking place. Even if they are clerks, those clerks will be made to function closer to the base of development and therefore become more appreciative of what it means to be operating in a developmental situation.

In my view, the regions can do a lot with those people and, as I said, as the process of redeployment deepens it will mean that a lot of these comrades will come to the regions where they can perform more effective tasks in support of development.

Cde. Speaker, all of the tasks, the task of monitoring, the task of reporting in a structured way the physical as well as the financial components of each developmental project so that urgent corrective action could be taken if and when necessary, are tasks which have to be performed in the region. The task of co-ordinating the developmental efforts of all of the agencies, public, co-operative and private, is a task for the region and, therefore, it seems to me that the whole process of accelerated agricultural and other development hinges on the success of the regional system. So, Cde. Speaker, while we have already so structured the region to provide the basic framework for the success of this programme, what I am saying is that we can

strengthen the structure and we can make the region more effective so that it can perform better for us. I think this is a duty which we all have to ensure takes place in the immediate future.

Cde. Speaker, at the base of the regional system, we have functioning what are known as Community Development Councils. These Community Development Councils do not exclude the Opposition. In fact, they include every organised group in the community and if the Opposition is organised, then it will have a representative at that level. At that level, the people's ideas, their views are canvassed, are organised and are channelled upwards because as my friend, Cde. Joshua Chowritmootoo said, the whole process of central planning has to begin at that level. And this is where it begins. The regional system works to support central planning. It brings together people at community level, at sub-regional level, at regional level, both people's organizations as well as administrators who are supposed to be in service of those people. It gives direction; it co-ordinates; it organises. This is what the system is about and I am sure that this system, if given a chance, can and I believe will make production become greater and greater in this country as the years go on.

Cde. Speaker, it is true that we must have incentives for workers and we must set targets. I think that the sector on which we will have to concentrate in terms of setting proper incentives for production would be the agricultural sector. I think that it is important that we should appreciate that more and more incentives will have to be organised in support of agriculture. Speaking from a regional standpoint, I am in a very good position to say that people will respond, given the right atmosphere and incentives, and they will respond notwithstanding what

some of our friends in the Opposition tell them. For instance, for this first crop of rice, some of our friends in the Opposition – and I will not call any names; I am not like those who like to call names – have been saying to farmers in my own region, Region No. 4, that they should not go for the crop. The farmers were in fact concerned that if they should go, those who told them not to go will take up a position against them which is likely to lead to their losing this or their losing that, or physical destruction of property. In fact, some of the farmers who spoke to me told me exactly that. They said,

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“Man, if I go for the crop, they might destroy me tractor. As happened on the Corentyne, they will let out me water.”

[Interruption]

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You see, my friend does not want to hear this because he knows these are the ways by which farmers are intimidated so that they would not respond to the incentive programmers and to the production action programmers which the regions put out. He knows this is what happens. In spite of all that they try to do the fact of the matter is that in Black Bush Polder, where there was a concentration of this activity, we are able to say now that with the efforts of the administration and with the response of the farmers of the Black Bush Polder, we were able to put on the ground some 16,000 acres of the 17,000 acres available. This shows that the producers of this country want to produce and if given the support and the encouragement, they will produce. But we know that it is not in the political interest of some to give that encouragement and support. Therefore, I call on my friends, I plead with my friends over there. If we are seriously interested in the welfare of the working people of this country, let us get out there. They must come together with us at community development level, let us speak the same language to the farmers and we will produce and we will win. I will, of course, be looking to see the response. I am from the Corentyne and I know that I will be able to monitor very closely the attitude and the actions of my friends. It is all well and good to come to this House and talk and to appear to be espousing the cause of the masses. It is another thing when we get out there. So, I will be looking.

The Cde. Minister of Finance has indeed thrown out a challenge to the nation as a whole and to the working people in particular, to get into top gear so far as production is concerned, to consume what we produce and to provide enough from production as surplus for export so that we could earn some foreign exchange in support of our bad foreign exchange situation. I believe that it is our duty, if we are patriots, if we say that we are working in the interest of the working

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people, if we say that we are socialists, if we say we have the people's interest at heart, to give all the necessary support to the Cde. Minister in the call which he has made for greater production and productivity. I will, from a regional stand-point and perspective, be looking on to see how our friends will perform.

I think there is absolutely no doubt that under the leadership of the People's National Congress, notwithstanding any machinations which might be theirs, in this year 1978 and beyond, under our leadership as we have shown before, as we showed in the sugar strike, the people of this country will produce, will save this economy, and will strengthen this economy. If our friends on the other side wish to continue to be part of this process, they will find themselves on the side of the people because their interests are the highest interests, their interests are the most important interests and I feel that lest the people find them out, as they are beginning to, they have a duty to be on the people's side.

Cde. Speaker, before I close, let me say this. It was the P.P.P. which, in the immediate days and weeks preceding the presentation of the Minister's Budget, thought that it could get the people in Georgetown to start marching. Its members started a picketing exercise, they chose the places well but the people spurned them. In the Mirror there was a headline "Thousands support the P.P.P. meeting." They have to beat their own trumpets. They must not believe that they are going to fool the people, because the people are intelligent. The working people are intelligent people and they are going to find them out. You cannot blow hot and cold; you are either

socialists or you are not, and if you are socialists, then you have to be with the people and the People's National Congress.

The Speaker: Cde. Roshan Ally, you will have 20 minutes.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, according to the Chronicle newspaper of the 14th January, 1978, Guyana and the rest of the African-Caribbean-Pacific Group of Countries are doing

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everything possible to obtain from the European Economic Community an increase in the price of sugar. The main argument that they are putting up to justify this increase is that the cost of production of sugar went up by 10.8 percent. This is very good. Any sane person will back such a demand. In fact, if the cost of production of any commodity has gone up, then it is justifiable that the price of that commodity should go up. What bothered me very much is that this is so on the one hand where sugar is concerned.

The R.P.A., the democratically elected body of rice farmers, has produced facts and figures to show that since the last autumn crop in 1977 the rice farmers were losing \$134.15 on every acre of rice they plant. In fact, the R.P.A. went on to point out that the cost of production of one acre of rice costs the farmer \$482.15 but the income from that one acre of rice is only \$348.00.

These facts and figures were supplied to the G.R.B., to the Minister of Agriculture, to the Prime Minister, and the figures were put out even to the public. Requests were made to meet the Minister of Agriculture and the Prime Minister but nothing has been done. Not one of them invited the R.P.A. for discussion until a picketing exercise took place in Georgetown at the G.R.B. and near to this building, then, the Prime Minister there and then decided to call the R.P.A. in for discussion on the 14th October, 1977. He adjourned the discussions to a month later when they would resume talks. From the 14th October until this day the Prime Minister has not met the R.P.A. to resume the talks. This is the type of Government - -

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The Speaker: Cde. Roshan Ally we are dealing with the principles of the Budget, not the details of the statement.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, the Budget deals with rice. I just want to show the comrade what is the drop in production of rice. This is what I am trying to bring out.

The Speaker: Comrade, production means different things to different people.

Cde. Ally: The R.P.A. is appealing to the Government for an increase in the price of rice and paddy and they are asking that the price of rice should go up to \$70 per bag and that of paddy to \$35 per bag. This stone-hearted Government, this Government which is really an enemy of the rice farmers, instead of increasing the price of rice, has further increased the cost of production of rice. For instance, drainage and irrigation rates have gone up in some areas as high as \$5.50 per acre. The Government not only increased the charges of drainage and irrigation but the cost of agricultural machines has gone up, the cost of agricultural machinery spare part has also gone up, the cost of agricultural machinery tyres has gone up, the cost for labour has been increased from \$8.50 per day to get labourers to work. The price of fuel has increased and the cost of licenses in general, for example, for tractors, has also been increased. Hence, transportation cost will go up, ploughing cost will go up, harvesting cost will go up. Just imagine, from \$134.15 that the farmers were losing it has gone up, and with this additional cost, it is doubtful whether it would be possible for them to plant rice.

The Government talks about increased production. How is it going to get increased production? Why is it going for an increase in the price of sugar and not rice? The Government is interested in the money but it does not have the interest of the rice farmers at heart. Cde. Clarke made statements just now but he did not paint a true picture of what is going on. The farmers on the Corentyne delivered their produce at the Rice Marketing Board bond at Springlands sometime in September, 1977 and they did not receive any payment except an advance of 25 percent of the amount of produce they sold. To this date some of them have not got their money. As a result, farmers could not have gone to the field because they haven't got their money. Cde. Clarke was approached on the matter but he won't tell you this. The Minister of Agriculture was approached also. People wrote the Prime Minister and came down every day to Georgetown bothering the Rice Marketing Board for their money. All they heard was, "We have posted your cheque, haven't you received it yet?" This is the position.

Let us check what percentage of the land was planted because of this very late payment. Cde. Clarke said nearly 75 percent. Perhaps he does not do his homework properly or he does not go around his area and he does not know what is really going on. No one told the rice farmers not to plant. They did not plant because they didn't get their money. That was the reason they were not planting; they were very hesitant. In some areas the Local Authorities could not pump water because of the dry seasons. The farmers were not supplied with irrigation water and right now, what has happened with the little that is being pumped? Ask Cde. Clarke – he is not in his seat now because he knows I will stand up to speak. Right now in Black Bush Polder, lands are white, sun-baked and the rice instead of being green is brown. Trenches are blocked up with water-grass all over the place, because they are not being cleaned. I met officials in the Black Bush Polder, a few days ago and I had a discussion with them. They said there is no money available to clean the trenches.

This is the Government that is talking about production. The Government asked the farmers to do self help. When the people are paying for services they are asked to do self help. They put the money in their pockets and ask the farmers to do self help. They are paying rent to the land development department, and this is what they are asked to do. They are not begging for the service.

The farmers were also told that if they wanted to save their crop they must make water tracks. Also in the Block III area, lands are in the same condition at the moment. In that same area there are 14,500 acres of land. For the last autumn crop all was put under cultivation, but at the time of harvesting over 50 percent of the rice lands there suffered losses due to a shortage of water. We went to Leon Dundas, the Regional Manager, several times and we also met other officials in the area. When we asked for an increase in the revs of the pump, they said that the pump is being controlled from Georgetown. They also said that the pump is very old and they didn't have hands to do it anymore. That is the reason for the frequent breakages and so on. Well, if the pump is there over 27 years, why not replace it?

How much money was collected? This year it will be \$19 per acre for drainage and irrigation rates. Where is the money going? What are you doing with the money? You want production why not see that the people get proper services so that they could be able to produce. You must not only talk about production. Old people have a saying “mouthar and guitar not the same thing.” You cannot only prattle and don’t mean a thing about what you are saying; it will take you nowhere.

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Cde. Speaker, Cde. Clarke made a statement – I do not believe he really understands what he was saying – about someone threatening the farmers to burn down their tractors and destroy their property and what not. Ask him how many persons’ tractors were damaged and how many buildings were burnt down. The only building burnt within that area at 10:30 in the morning was the G.D.F. building. You are not hearing anything about that. Nobody knows how the fire started and how it got there. Who lit the fire? No one knows. So would like to appeal to this Government that what it is doing here right now, perhaps, will put the rice cultivation in the same position that the milk industry was put in by this Government. The Government, because of its behaviour towards the milk industry nearly destroyed it and I believe it wants to do the same thing with the rice industry. I would like to quote some figures, Cde. Speaker, to show that production of rice is dropping instead of increasing, unlike what the Government is saying. This Government is planting rice in the Chronicle newspaper and over the radio - -

The Speaker: For which year?

Cde. Ally: The **Chronicle** newspaper has already - -

The Speaker: Cde. Roshan Ally, you must pay attention to me sometimes. You said rice production is dropping and I asked for which year.

Cde. Ally: Rice Production is dropping. That is what I am saying. I will give the year now, Cde. Speaker, as I have said, owing to mal-administration - -

The Speaker: In addition to that, the last thing I want to tell you is that you have 5 minutes more.

Cde. Ally: All right, Cde. Speaker. Production has dropped from 48,777 tons of rice which was produced for export in 1963/1974 and 73,269 tons in 1974/1975. Cde. Speaker, this is the position. As I said, rice production is dropping and if we go into the Annual Rice Report, we are going to find that for the year 1959/1960 to 1964/1965, the average yield per acre of paddy was 13.7 bags. Each bag of paddy is 140 pounds. **[Interruption]**

The Speaker: Comrades, do not interrupt him; he has only 4 minutes more; let him complete.

Cde. Ally: In 1972/1973, it was reduced to 11.7 bags per acre. So, when 13.7 bags were produced, the farmers were using no fertiliser or very little fertiliser but the yield drops when they are using lots of fertilisers. This is to show that owing to mal-administration and lack of interest on the part of this Government in the rice industry and in the area of drainage and irrigation, production has dropped.

Cde. Speaker, there are other areas which are suffering today throughout the whole of the country, so to speak, for irrigation water. Let us take the Crabwood Creek area, for instance. The Crabwood Creek area has 8,299 acres of land under rice cultivation. For the last autumn crop, farmers could not have planted more than 50 percent owing to shortage of water, as a result, the R.P.A., not the Rice Action Committee but the R.P.A., met the G.R.B. at Springlands, the Local Authority at Crabwood Creek, and myself, and they led a delegation to the management of Skeldon Estate seeking water for the area. The management of the estate said

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that they could not do it because they did not have enough pumps to supply the water and they were asking this Government to give the estate one additional pump to guarantee the supply of water to the Skeldon Estate and the Crabwood Creek area for irrigation. So, for this spring crop, the same Crabwood Creek area could only have planted 400 acres of rice.

Tell Cde. Oscar Clarke to check it out and he will see that my figures are correct. And, those people who planted the 400 acres, did so because they have their private pumps to pump in water for themselves. That is where Crabwood Creek area is concerned.

In the Block III area - -

The Speaker: you have only one more area because you have 2 minutes more.

Cde. Ally: All right, Cde. Speaker. Cde. Speaker, I see that you are determined not to give me any more time so I would like to appeal to the Government - -

The Speaker: You are not appealing to any Government. This is a decision and I am sticking to the decision.

Cde. Ally: I would like to appeal to this Government to pay more interest to the rice industry and recognise the R.P.A. now because if it does not recognise the R.P.A. at the moment and give the R.P.A. representation on the Board and at different levels, this is what will be.

Cde. Hamilton Green, in 1973 said that the number one enemy of the P.N.C. Government are the P.N.C. Members of Parliament and Local Authority administrators. Hamilton Green said so, not me. He said so himself.

The Speaker: Cde. Roshan Ally, I have been saying that I am not going to allow anyone to refer to other members disparagingly. Please refer to him properly in future.

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Cde. Ally: I had said “Cde.” Hamilton Green in the beginning. Cde. Hamilton Green himself bore this out since 1973 and, as a result of the mal-administration and inefficiency of the Local authorities, rice production throughout the length and breadth of the country is affected. We have people as Chairman who do not know anything about agriculture. They have never planted rice or any other crop. Some of them were stray-catchers: some of them were stealing people’s coconuts and what not and automatically became Chairmen of Local Authorities. Some of them are not working within the area; they are working far out, miles away from the area. This is the reason why you have this sort of problem and rice production, instead of increasing, is decreasing.

The Speaker: Cde. Van Sluytman.

7:15 p.m.

Cde. Van Sluytman: Cde. Speaker, notwithstanding the economic constraints the world over, particularly Third World countries of which Guyana is one and is not an exception to the financial dilemma of non-oil producing developing countries, we have been able to weather the storm and produce more local food as never before. Because of Government’s policy of making the nation self-reliant and self-sufficient, we have been able to broaden our agricultural base, strengthen our storage facilities, not only in Georgetown but also in the interior. We have been able to meet the people’s need, even in the most remotest part of Guyana, with basic food items and, at the same time, purchase from residents all surpluses of agricultural produce. We have been able to supply the nation with cheap protein in the form of fish as low as 35c per pound through the various outlets and co-operatives. We have been able to expand our overseas market with pork and pork products, ground provision, fruit and cheese.

Our first contributor to this Budget this afternoon, Cde. Narbada Persaud, spoke about deficits in the Public Corporations and he mentioned the Guyana Marketing Corporation. It is incumbent upon me to enlighten Cde. Narbada Persaud, this House, and the nation, of the

functions of the Guyana Marketing Corporation. The role of the Guyana Marketing Corporation is three-fold. One is to ensure that farmers have a guaranteed market for their produce. The second is to ensure that farmers receive economic prices for what they produce and sell and, the third is to ensure that consumers purchase locally-produced goods at low prices.

During the year 1977, because of this new-spring activity of the Guyana Marketing Corporation, we made \$3.5 million to carry on these activities. But it is important to note that \$3 million went directly to the farmers to improve their way of living by giving them better prices. The remaining half million went to cushion consumer prices. Neither the Guyana Marketing Corporation nor this Government has any apology to make for having shown a deficit because, in fact, we have spent the money wisely. In the history of the Guyana Marketing Corporation and in the history of Guyana, the farmers would have realized that this year they have received better prices than at any other time in their lives. I will quote just a few of the prices because there are big. Plantain – 25c per pound, eddoe – 20c per pound, sweet cassava – 15c per pound, banana – 20c per pound, and corn – 18c per pound. Never in the history of farming in Guyana have farmers received such lucrative prices.

The Guyana Marketing Corporation played a major role in the fishing industry where the small fishermen are concerned. During the year 1977, the G.M.C. bought from small fishermen a total of 371,121 pounds of fish of twelve types to the value of \$396,079.26, the highest price being paid was \$1.35 per pound for red snapper and the lowest price 25c per pound for mullet. We bought red snapper, grey snapper, white snapper, snook, grouper, large trout, mixed fish, cavally, tarpon, paggie, queriman and mullet. All of the fish which the small fishermen brought into the port of Georgetown which they themselves were not able to dispose of, was bought by the Guyana Marketing Corporation.

I mentioned that we expanded our exports during the year 1977 by 239 percent over 1976. We exported the following items to the tune of \$1,028,735.38: Live swine – 221,646 pounds to the value of \$299,222.10; fresh pork – 220,486 pounds to the value of \$467,831.50;

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pork products – 7,328 pounds to the value of \$23,603.90; casareep – 810 gallons to the value of \$6,885; wheat-meal – 1,079 pounds to the value of \$157,574.25; cheese – 5,016,000 pounds to the value of \$15,574.68; pumpkins – 94,590 pounds to the value of \$21,786.50;

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Oranges – 78,968 pounds to the value of \$13,424.066; plantain – 48,900 pounds to the value of \$14,112; eddoe – 12,000 pounds to the value of \$3,656; Black-eye peas – 1,392 pounds to the value of \$1,002.24; grapefruit – 11,038 pounds to the value of \$1,805.09, making a total poundage of exports of \$708,253. The money earned, as I mentioned before, is \$1,028,735.38. Cde. Speaker, the countries to which we exported these commodities are as follows: Trinidad, Barbados, St. Lucia, Antigua, Surinam and Canada. Trinidad and Surinam were the largest importers and accounted for 82.16 percent of our total exports.

The Guyana Marketing Corporation, as usual, has played a very important part in the pig industry. In the year 1977, the Corporation bought from the farmers 31,652 pigs which yielded 3,182,414 pounds and we paid the farmers \$5,885,330.52. Our prices for pork were as follows: Grade 1, \$1.70 per pound; Grade 2, \$1.54 per pound. Perhaps it is good for this House to know that the Guyana Marketing Corporation has the best and most modern ham and bacon factory in the entire Caribbean, with a slaughtering capacity of 180 pigs per day, and this factory and its capacity to handle pigs has given the farmers a fillip to increase their production.

I can remember when I was first appointed to the Board of the Guyana Marketing Corporation way back in 1965, one year after the People's Progressive Party said it wasn't taking part, when we looked at the figures for 1963 and 1964 and what the Guyana Marketing Corporation was doing for the farmers, it revealed that they had little interest in the farmers. Then, the hucksters bought more produce from the farmers than the Guyana Marketing Corporation bought. The G.M.C. bought only fourteen items to the tune of over \$1 million. The

Guyana Marketing Corporation buys 41 agricultural items to the value of \$4 million and, as I mentioned before it buys pigs from the farmers to the value of \$5.8 million and fish to the value of \$1 million. Within the farming community, on agriculture, livestock and fish, the sum of \$11 million was spent in 1977. The Guyana Marketing Corporation has grown dramatically over the past years. It has grown eleven fold within the past years.

Cde. Speaker, I have also said earlier that we have improved our storage facilities not only in Georgetown but even in the interior. The Guyana Marketing Corporation has installed during 1977 adequate drying and storage facilities at its operations at Farm. It has two driers with the capacity to dry 40 tons of corn or black-eye peas at one time and our storage facilities can store 3.1 million pounds of either black-eye peas or corn.

In the hinterland, through the hinterland emergency action programme, two bonds were built, one at Lethem and another at Kato each measuring 60' x 40' and it is proposed to build soon another smaller one measuring 20' x 16'. For us to develop agriculture, we need bonds in which to store our produce, and for us to keep the people fed in the interior we also need bonds to store the basic food items going from Georgetown into the interior. Hence, these bonds are exceedingly important. They act two ways; they store goods and commodities from Georgetown and, at the same time, the farmers in the area bring their produce to these bonds to be sold to the Guyana Marketing Corporation.

We have also been able to meet the needs of our people because of our co-operatives and through our outlets during the year 1977. During this period, the corporation operated 14 outlets where the people were supplied with basic food items as well as ground provision, fruits, pork, and pork products.

7:35 p.m.

The outlets are as follows: Golden Grove, Beterverwagting, Buxton, Sophia, Robb Street, festival City, Pouderoyen, Anna Regina, Dartmouth, East La Penitence, Wismar, Manchester, Bartica and New Amsterdam. Coupled with this, Cde. Speaker, the Hinterland Emergency Action Programme also distributed basic food items to the tune of 696,733 pounds and its locations are as follows: Lethem Trade Store, Aishalton Trade Store, Karasabai Trade Store, Kato Co-op Shop, Annai Co-op Shop, Kurukabaru Co-op Shop, Orinduik Co-op Shop, Paramakatoi Co-op Shop, Sand Creek, Kamarang Trade Store and Baramita Trade Store.

We consider, Cde. Speaker, that it is the responsibility for the Government to see that basic food items reach people notwithstanding where they are, hence, the Hinterland Emergency Action Programme Committee was organised in 1975. Its Chairman is the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works and Transport, the Ministry of National Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Guyana Marketing Corporation, Guyana Airways Corporation, Guyana Defence Force and the Police. Some of the main objectives are as follows: One, to make sure that an adequate supply of foodstuff and other commodities reach the people in the hinterland, two, to encourage, to supervise and monitor production and marketing of agricultural products. Generally, this Committee is to see that all the necessary commodities and inputs for agriculture and other areas of activity reach the people in the interior. I think this Committee ought to be commended because notwithstanding difficulties that exist in the interior, particularly in the Rupununi, the Trade Stores, the Co-ops and Buying Clubs, were always kept in adequate supply by them.

Cde. Speaker, I have mentioned the broadening of our agricultural base and this has direct relation to the functions of the Guyana Marketing Corporation. That is why we have been able to move from \$1 million in 1964 to \$11.5 million in 1977. We have been able to buy not only 14 items of agricultural produce but 41.

Cde. Speaker, notwithstanding the People's Progressive Party's attempt to persuade the farmers not to produce, the farmers have spoken in no uncertain terms that they are interested in production and productivity. The bumper rice crop, the abundance of plantains and other ground provisions is a testimony in itself of the confidence of the farmers in the People's National Congress.[Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Ramsahoye.

Cde. Ramsahoye: Cde. Speaker, we are gathered here to debate a Budget which has been conceived with the whole world in spasms. We are all aware of the worldwide economic recession. No country, apart from the oil-producing ones, has escaped and in considering this Budget, it would be well for us to look a little at why such a crisis has descended upon the entire world. It has been said that this is an economic crisis but I think, more and more it is beginning to show that it is a crisis in thought.

The word crisis is derived from the Greek meaning decision. It is a time of decision for us, whether we in Guyana will let events overtake us and by default do nothing or whether we will take a conscious decision to try and improve the lot of our fellow Guyanese. We have already nationalised the major portion of our economy. It is now left to us to try and control. We already own. But we are learning that it is more difficult to control than to own because control needs knowledge. Our colonial past did not prepare us to control. It prepared us for dependence. [Cde. Ram Karran: "Quote from Daniel."] I will quote from Ecclesiastes not Daniel.

"Ecclesiastes 10:19 '... but money answereth all things.'"

2.3.78

National Assembly

7.45 – 7.55 p.m.

7:45 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, we have to use what limited technical manpower we have to try and control the resources, the industries which we now own. Modern civilisation is very much dependent on oil. The post war era saw the reconstruction of Europe underwritten by cheap Arab oil. In the midst of experimentation with international money which even all the experts now agree they know nothing about, the world was transformed so that our very existence, not only the industrialised world but even the dependent, the under-developed world, became dependent on oil. Just imagine what would happen if no oil came to Guyana for a week. The electricity company would close down, sewerage would pile up, no water would be in the pipe and there would be no transport. We would not even have electric lights.

Cde. Speaker, to show the extent in which technology has, even into our lives – I was looking through a book today, it is called “The Handbook of Petrochemicals and Products.” It was written in 1966 by the Statistics Division of the Petroleum Information Service in New Delhi and there is a picture here of a fertiliser plant and it says “We could see the wood for the trees!” I will quote the legend. It is a picture of a fertiliser plant in Tabankor in Kerala State. The Kerala State as you know is a highly forested region of India. It states:

“No coal, no coke, no natural gas in the area. Still we went into commercial production with a capacity of 50,000 tonnes of ammonium sulphate a year, back in 1947, adopting the firewood gasification process. Unique, but a bit of a gamble. And it paid! It was a question of us adopting this process, or the region going without a fertiliser plant. But as fertiliser technology developed, the company replaced its now outmoded wood gasification process with the “Texaco” partial oxidation process, using raw naphtha as feedstock. It commissioned the first plant of its kind in this country in 1962.”

What happened, Cde. Speaker, is that these people were making fertiliser from wood. They did not have oil but oil had become so cheap that they decided to make fertiliser from oil, a

decision which, I am sure, they now regret. In this process of industrialisation whereby oil became central, Guyana was not omitted. We depend on oil in every sphere of our activity, our agriculture. This Budget deals a lot with agriculture, but agriculture is heavily dependent on oil at the moment. The fertilisers for agriculture are made from oil. Just to produce those machines – I am saying nothing of running them – necessitates a lot of oil in the smelting of iron and making of the parts. So oil goes into the transport, oil goes into the storage, oil goes into the processing.

We say we would like to be independent, to grow our own food. But yet we have to realise that we are limited in this. We still have to import fertiliser. In that sense we would not be independent in agriculture for a very long time. The world, however, is beginning to realise that a new method of thinking has to be devised. I saw in the newspapers this morning, page 4 of the Guyana Chronicle, Thursday, 2nd March, 1978, “Petrol, Coffee prices move up in Moscow.”

The price of petrol has been doubled in the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, for those who do not know, is the world’s largest producer of oil. They produce more oil than anybody else including Saudi Arabia and yet they have doubled the price of petrol. We have not doubled it, we put it up and I hope that the purpose for which it was put up will be achieved, that is, that people will use less gas. I am quite sure the Cde. Finance Minister does not want to get extra revenue from that tax. I think he just wants to dissuade people from wasting energy, from wasting valuable foreign exchange. We would like to see energy conserved.

The Budget makes arrangement for mass transport systems. We know that mass transit systems would significantly reduce our oil bill if we can get it implemented. In New York, the historical facts are that with the introduction of the mass transit system, there was a saving of 15 percent in power. If we can persuade Guyanese people to use more public transport, to share in private cars as they do in many of the advanced countries, one day I use my car and tomorrow the next person’s car is used and so on, if we by raising gasoline prices can encourage people to save, the Budget would have achieved its purpose.

(Cde. Ramsahoye continued)

7:55 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, we are in this crisis now because Arab oil no longer underwrites western industrialisation. The O.P.E.C. has decided to call a halt, and as the O.P.E.C. gave the whip to the industrialized countries, the industrialized countries whipped the natives a little harder. They passed it on. Our salvation is clear. We have to use every means at our disposal to limit the amount of energy and to utilise our own natural resources. In this process our technology and our technologists would be invaluable. As I said earlier, our colonial masters did not leave any legacy. We need to have a lot of technologists and scientists to take on this task and the few of us that are around would be doing the very dominant tasks that are ahead.

If I were to place priority on all that the scientists should do in our present situation it would be to propose to the Government a comprehensive policy for energy conservation, to assist the Government in putting forward an energy policy, a policy that will include both conservation and utilisation of local material. That I would put as the number one priority. The number two priority, which is more in the long term, I would put on education and training. I say in the long term because education and training is a long process. We only recently introduced free education and it will take some time before we can reap the fruits of what we are now doing in terms of education. I am quite sure that the Cde. Minister of Education could elaborate on the steps the Government is taking in the multilateral schools now being constructed and the emphasis being placed on science education.

An area which I would place emphasis on, Cde. Speaker, is the area of trade. It is not normally recognised that scientists and technologists are needed in this area but we have reached the stage where if we were buying machinery, we have to make sure that we buy the most efficient machinery and in our process of importation we have to make sure we bear in mind that the price of oil is going to be increased and, therefore, if we spend a little bit more on our machinery now, it will pay much greater dividends in the end. We should choose machinery which is durable and which is energy efficient.

2.3.78

National Assembly

7.55 – 8.05 p.m.

Now, our agricultural programme will demand heavy emphasis on water control. It means that we have to have pumps, etc. I was talking to a friend of mine the other day, about the GUYWA pumping stations. I said,

“You know, I think some of the pumps, if not all, that are running, will have to be converted into steam pumps run off of Guyanese wood.”

He said to me, “Comrade, that is a backward step.” Well, a few years ago it probably was a backward step. Indeed, as I quoted the article in the Indian journal, that was a backward step when they turned over to oil. Events tend to overtake us. I am quite sure that whether we like it or not we shall be forced to produce steam using wood. We will have to burn bagasse, our rice straw, our rice husk and the wallaba. We will have to use them to produce energy, we will not be able to pay for it, whether we like it or not.

The oil bonanza also replaced materials. Instead of using wood, we started using plastics, arborite, etc. but plastics are made from oil, and plastics like all of these imported things are going to increase in price. So we have to revert to wood.

The golden age of the automobile, as civilisation now knows it, is over, not only for us but for the industrialized countries as well. Already, you see the Americans introducing legislation for more efficient cars, cars that will run and give more mileage per gallon. It is an interesting thing that the model “T” Ford which is considered as the pioneer of motor cars had a performance of about 25 miles per gallon but the modern American car, which most Americans have, is about half of that. We import smaller cars and we get about 25. It just goes to show what cheap oil did. Cheap oil encouraged waste.

Cde. Speaker, it is becoming increasingly important to us that we reconsider some of our basic products. We have traditionally in the past looked upon sugar cane as the producer of sugar, the by-products of molasses which produce rum, etc. I think the time is very near when we will look

at sugar cane as the producer of alcohol with sugar as the by-product, if any, because it is already a technological fact that at least 15 percent alcohol can be added to gasoline and your car will perform the same way. So, right now, without any change in the car, you can supplement gasoline with alcohol.

8:05 p.m.

Indeed, I noticed quite recently that the Americans are introducing a Bill in Congress to do just that. To make themselves self-sufficient in gasoline, they are going to insist that alcohol be added. And they produce oil, “Oil don’t spoil,” but oil does not last forever and we, Cde. Speaker, are extremely fortunate in this country. We do not realise how fortunate we are because our grandchildren will be able to tell those Trinidadian grandchildren that hydro lasts forever and that wood is a renewable resource. When their oil and gas would have been exhausted, our wood would be rejuvenating itself; our hydro power would be going on. But, every dog has his day. Right now, they have oil we can mobilise and I am quite sure that with the ingenuity of the Guyanese people, we will adapt to the new conditions. As I said, this is a crisis in our thinking.

Now, the People’s National Congress has made provision for the promotion of this policy of implementation. We have, as you, Cde. Speaker, established the National Science Research Council which is the main body to advise Government on science projects. The Council is divided into five different branches dealing respectively with agriculture, forestry, medicine, Bureau of Standards, and finally, science and industry. Very shortly, a science policy would be introduced in this House. We have also started construction of an Institute of Applied Sciences which, it is hoped, will be completed in two to three months’ time. With Canadian assistance we will be able to equip that Institute with the necessary apparatus for most of the fundamental work which will have to be done in many of our projects envisaged in that four-year project. In our thinking, we should recall an old Tibetan proverb: “What we are to become, we are now becoming.”[Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Bynoe.

Cde. Bynoe: Cde. Speaker, the last speaker, Cde. Ramsahoye, dealt at length with the economic crisis our country is presently facing. As such, perhaps it would be a very good opportunity for me to state the part that woman could play and perhaps will have to play in the economic field. The struggle for women's equality cannot be divorced from the supreme task of burying that noble thing capitalism and building in its place, a just and true socialist society. It is part and parcel of the wide battle to liberate the working-class.

We come to the point where we speak of discrimination against women. This is a consequence of all class societies and could only be firmly rooted out with the destruction of classes. In all societies, the valuable functions of women are found in the home and are not generally recognised by all, especially some of the men, and particularly, we could also say, some of the women. It would be a good idea to put our monetary value to the work done by housewives at home, then there would be greater appreciation of the role women have to play in this revolution.

Perhaps, because of our historical background, women were always looked upon as a lesser being or rather, the weaker sex in the home and were prevented from taking part in many activities because perhaps they could not have rightly taken their place in society. The woman was never given an opportunity really to perform. We see that labour is a definite integral of production and since there was under-utilisation of women in the labour force or in the labour sector, it is felt now that women could use their skills in order to achieve production. I would like to quote from the Budget Speech presented by the Minister of Finance, page 5, the last paragraph as perhaps this will show in itself what the Government is trying to do:

“The conscious, co-ordinated restructuring of the economy is to be orchestrated to lead us towards that kind of society. Without deviating into an extended and intensive discussion of the restructuring itself, we need to highlight the main weaknesses of the economy and society which we must aim to eradicate.”

Perhaps the time has come where this Government and the nation could try to eradicate that weakness which was felt among women.

Now perhaps, I could come to the part the Party's policy could play with regard to equality for women. The Party, now moving towards socialism and as a result of its policy or philosophy, demands equality for all, regardless of race, colour or creed. This being so, Cde. Speaker, each individual woman must be allowed by society to function according to her capacity, her capability, her ability and her aptitude to serve. Also, she must be allowed to rise to the very highest point of her employment, be it in the field, factory, in the office or in any other area of contribution. It is safe to say that the People's National Congress does not only talk but acts and acts swiftly with great confidence. This was demonstrated not too long ago when two women from the Guyana Defence Force were promoted to the position of Major. This is why I mentioned just now that this Government is not a talking Government but a Government of action. It says and it does.

8:15 p.m.

This Government speaks of equality for women. The Leader of this Government at many forums always makes mention of the role women will have to play in this society in order to assist in developing this nation. Here it has been demonstrated that it has been done to some extent. Perhaps we can safely say that this Government takes pride in not only saluting those two women who were recently promoted but also women from all walks of life for it could be clearly seen that women have been given the green light to accept the challenges and opportunities afforded to them at all levels, particularly in the technical field.

Here I would like to mention some of the areas in which we find women being involved. Women are involved as masons, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and we have noted with good care that women are now driving heavy-duty vehicles. This is all because of the policy the Party has for the Party in no uncertain terms is demonstrating what women can do. What women were

prevented from doing in years gone by, what was noted as a crime for women in days gone by is now accepted by all of the Guyanese people. We note with good care that the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement, the organisation to which I belong, is doing its utmost in order to project the image of women. As such it might be very good at this time to call on all Members of this House, not only Members of the Government side but Members on the Opposition side also, to urge women to accept the challenges afforded them so that they can take their rightful place in society. The opportunities given to women today were never given before. We must also take cognizance of the fact that the W.R.S.M., having struck the blow on discrimination against women, immediately sought to educate them in order that there could and must be attitudinal changes and demonstration of socialist behaviour. We have seen the Government, of which the W.R.S.M. is a part, is sparing no bones to educate its women. We have women finding time to use articles which normally they would have thrown away. They are finding great uses for these articles. They are making items for their homes and I am quite sure that some of us have seen them at exhibitions throughout the country.

In conclusion, I would like to say that women are playing a very active and vital role in the development of this country, especially in nation-building. We have seen for a fact the demonstration given by women in the can-cutting exercises. There we saw women demonstrating in no uncertain terms, shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts in the various cane fields throughout the country wherever cane was planted. In days gone by when a woman went to the cane field she was deemed as one who could not have been in society, so to speak, because she was a cane-cutter. But here we have seen from the wife of the Prime Minister right down to the ordinary woman in the cane field cutting cane with the cane-cutters and with public servants and other people who were quite willing to go out voluntarily to make their contribution. As such, I call on all Guyanese women to rally behind the women who have taken the initiative to accept the challenges which are thrown out to them by this Government. I want also to urge them to follow the footsteps of those who have demonstrated in no uncertain terms their willingness to assist in building this nation.

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National Assembly

8.15 – 8.25 p.m.

I know for a fact that there are many women who are not involved and, perhaps, there are many women who saying that, whatever the People's National Congress is saying, it is just catering for the women of the Party. May I say in this honourable House that this is not so. We who belong to the People's National Congress have thrown out our arms to accept any woman who is willing to go along with us, who is willing to become involved in this nation-building and who is willing to accept the challenges afforded to the. I know for a fact that there are some people also who tend to give their own name to the W.R.S.M. Never mind. St. Paul says every man to his own order and we know our order is to assist women wherever necessary. I again urge all Members of this House to rally behind the women, to help the women, to encourage them so that they can take their rightful place in society and help to build this country of ours – Guyana.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this National Assembly do now adjourn until Friday, 3rd March, 1978, at 2 p.m.”

[Cde. Ramsaroop]

Adjourned accordingly at 8:25 p.m.
