

Ministers (7)

- Cde. U.E. Johnson, M.P.,
Minister of Co-operatives (Absent)
- Cde. J.N. Maitland-Singh, M.P.,
Minister, in the Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of
Economic Planning and Finance
- * Cde. Y.V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister, in the Office of the Prime Minister (Absent – on leave)
- * Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister, in the Office of the President
- * Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,
Minister OF Health (Absent)
- * Cde. K.W.E. Denny, M.P.,
Minister OF Labour, Manufacturing
and Industrial Development

Ministers of State (2)

- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State in the Ministry of
Internal Trade and Consumer Protection
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of State for Youth and Sports,
in the Ministry of Education

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Works, Transport and Housing
- Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P., (Absent – on leave)
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Education
- Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (26)

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
Cde. M. Armogan
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.
Cde. A. A. Chin, M.P.
Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P. (Absent)
Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.
Cde. E.B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. S. Prashad, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.
Cde. H.B. Walcott-Nascimento, J.P., M.P.
Government Chief Whip
Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.

Members from National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam) (Absent-on leave)
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Cde. D. Abrahams, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P.

Minority Leader

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P._

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P.

(Absent)

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.,

Minority Chief Whip

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.

Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.,

Cde. I. Basir, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.

Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, C.C.H., J.P, M.P.

Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

(Absent)

OFFICERS

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

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

PRAYERS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Ramsaroop for the period 13th to 23rd November, Cde. Ainsworth from 16th to 24th November, Cde. Tiwari up to the 23rd November, the Minority Leader for a period of two weeks from 16th November and to Cdes. Harewood-Benn and Jairam for today sitting.

Deputy Speaker to act on behalf of the Minority Leader.

The Speaker: I have also been informed that Cde. Ram Karran has been authorised by the Minority Leader to move the motion and to ask the questions standing in his name on the order paper of today's sitting.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Question No. 1

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran (The Deputy Speaker): Sir, I beg to ask the question standing in the name of the honorable leader of the Minority Party.

- QUESTION:
- (a) "Is the Prime Minister aware that members or persons associated with the religious sect known as "The House of Israel" have received military training in Guyana?"
 - (b) If the Prime Minister is aware of this fact, does he regard the sect as a Para-military organisation to whose adherents weapons could he or were issued?"

The Speaker: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Speaker, the Guyana Defence Force, Guyana People's Militia and Guyana National Service have at no time been asked to provide or have they provided military training for any religious sects in this country. Such training has never been given either to individuals or groups outside of the Defence Force.

The Speaker: That is your answer to question one. Cde. Ram Karran you have heard the reply.

Cde. Ram Karran: I would like to ask the honorable Prime Minister if the honorable Prime Minister is aware that the head of this house – The house of Israel has declared and it has been public that it is part of the para-military forces in the country?

The Speaker: I really don't know whether that is a supplementary to this question here. You see, you are asking a question whether the Government through its military forces have given training to House of Israel and the Prime Minister has answered no, and now you have gone on to ask the Prime Minister something alleged to be made or to be said by the Leader of this sect House of Israel. I really don't think it is a supplementary.

Cde. Ram Karran: Since it appears in the daily Chronicle.

The Speaker: It doesn't matter to me what appears in the Chronicle. I rule that that is not a supplementary. You may go ahead and ask another question.

QUESTION NO. 2

Cde. Ram Karran: May I ask the second question on the order paper Sir standing in the name of the Leader of the Minority.

QUESTION: (a) Will the Prime Minister say why it is considered necessary for Government Departments, State Corporations, Boards and Commission, as well as the Guyana Defence Force and the Guyana National Service and other Organisations to advertise in the People's National Congress periodical, the New Nation, in view of the availability of the State-owned Guyana Chronicle and Radio Stations?

(b) Having regard to the fact that among the Corporations, departments and other entities associated with the State which advertised in the New Nation during the first 6 months of 1982 are the Guyana Electricity Corporation, the Guyana Airways Corporation, the Guyana Water Authority, the University of Guyana, the Guyana Defence Force, the Guyana National Service and the Transport and Harbours Department, will the Prime Minister say what was the cost of advertisement by each of these Corporations, etc., and the total cost of all other advertisements for the period January-June, 1982?

The Speaker: Cde. Prime Minister

The Prime Minister: Cde. Speaker, the New Nation is a newspaper in which agencies both private and public find it very attractive to place advertisements. The extent to which the New Nation is circulated is an important consideration. New Nation is sent to many areas, both local and overseas, not covered either by radio or the Guyana Chronicle, and this makes it ideal for agencies that advertise.

Cde. Ram Karran: Is the honorable Prime Minister aware, Sir, that the treatment of the New Nation by excessive advertisement is a denial of opportunities for publication in the other papers including Government papers. I am telling you so, look the research here. I am asking the honourable Prime Minister if he doesn't recognise that the New Nation is being treated as a favoured body in this country against the interest of the State papers as well as other publications in the country. Why should it be. It is discriminatory.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Speaker, the answer is I am not aware of that.

The Speaker: The next part of the question.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Speaker, the next part of the question – the answer is total cost of advertisements placed in New Nation over the period 1st January – 30th June 1982 by private agencies was \$10,560.00, while that for Corporations and other commercial agencies is \$70,980.00.

QUESTION NO. 3

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I wish to ask the Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance question number three on the order paper standing in my name.

QUETSION: (a) Will the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, say what were the financial ceilings established by the international Monetary Fund in the agreements entered into by Guyana with the Fund?

(b) If these ceilings were not met, will the Vice – say by how much did the economy fall short on each occasion?

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The Speaker: Cde. Hoyte.

(The Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance) (Cde. Hoyte) Cde. Speaker, for the purpose of answering this question, I assume that the member means by the term “financial ceiling” which he has used “performance criteria” and that is the term I will use in replying.

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In replying, Cde. Speaker, I wish to advise that Guyana entered into three stand by arrangements with the I.M.F. in the years 1978, 1979 and 1980. I will refer to details and other relevant particulars with respect to the quantitative performance criteria in a moment. The critical criteria, however, related to net domestic assets and net banking system credit to the public sector. The 1978 Agreement was successful in that the performance criteria were all met at the relevant dates. The 1979 Agreement was aborted almost as soon as it was signed because of the disruption of the economy caused by strikes in the bauxite and sugar industries which destroyed the production assumptions upon which the Agreement was negotiated.

In 1980 a new extended Fund Facility Programme for three years was concluded to cover the period July 1980 to June 1983. It soon became clear that the worsening of the international economic situation, the continued decline in world commodity prices and the inability of our production, particularly bauxite, to recover fast enough from the damage done in 1979, had rendered the programme unrealistic. As a result, it fell into abeyance after the second drawing. In 1981 the Government entered into what was in essence an extension of 1980 programme under which 1981 was treated as the second year of the 1980 extended Fund Facility. After the first drawing, this programme also came to an end de facto, although it was not formally terminated by the Government until 26th July, 1982.

I will now give the particulars of the three programmes: The 1978 Programme was signed on the 15th August 1978. It was a one-year programme. The limits of the net domestic assets for the year were as follows: on the 13th August, 1978 - \$240 million; on the 31st October, 1978 - \$240 million; on the 30th December, 1978 - \$255 million; on the 28th February 1979 - \$255 million. The actual levels reached were – am I am following the same date sequence: \$221 million; \$178.6 million; \$222.6 million and \$185.7 million. Credit to the public sector by the banking system and, again, I follow the same date sequence as follows: - \$645 million; \$645 million; \$675 million; \$675 million and the actual credits on the relevant dates were - \$635.7; \$636.2; \$676.4; \$662.7.

Now, in the second Programme, that is, the 1979 EFF, the relevant dates for the performance criteria in 1979 were as follows – 13th June, 1979, 31st August, 1979, 29th September, 1979 and 31st December, 1979. The net domestic assets levels were as follows: \$270 million; 270 million; \$270 million; \$279 million. The actual levels reached were \$255 million, \$338.7 million. Credit to the public sector - \$690 million, \$690 million, \$725 million, \$725 million. Actual \$693.4 million and \$766.5 million and \$766.5 million. As I have remarked, the programme was terminated after the first drawing.

In 1980 the programme commenced on the 1st July, 1980 and the relevant dates for 1980 were as follows: 30th August, 1980; 30th September, 1980; 31st December, 1980. Net domestic assets - \$516.1 million; \$519.6 million; \$543 million. The actual levels were \$567.0 million, \$582.9 million. \$696.5 million. After the second drawing we were out of line with that programme and it fell into abeyance. Similarly on the public sector borrowing, the levels targeted were \$1010.9 million; \$1010.9 million; \$1013.9 million, and the actual public sector borrowing were \$1030.3; \$1066.3. Thereafter it really did not matter in terms of the programme.

In 1981 there was an effort to revive the programme and the relevant dates in 1981 were – 31st July, 1981, 31st August, 1981 and 30th September, 1981. Net domestic assets relevant to those dates were - \$687.3, \$688.3, \$688.3. Actual achievement – \$716.4 on the first date mentioned. After that programme was in abeyance because there was no way that the programme could come back on track.

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With respect to the public sector borrowing, the figures were \$1314.3 million and the same figures for the rest of the year. The actual public sector credits were \$1,293.6 million, \$1,340.6 million. The programme fell into abeyance after that. It was actually dead but it was not formally terminated by the Government until the 26th July, 1982, when, by way of letter, the Government informed the Fund it considered the programme terminated.

DETAILS OF EXPENDITURE OF MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I wish to ask the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, Question No. 4 on the order Paper standing in my name:

Will the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, give details of the expenditure for the year 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979 and 1980 in respect of the block votes (Code Number 092,0898) of the Ministry of National Development?

Cde. Hoyte: Cde Speaker, the answer to the question is as follows:

The expenditure for the Ministry has been categorised under 20 Heads and I will give each Head in respect of the years for which information was sought, 1976 to 1980:

Personal Emoluments, including allowances – i am going to read 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979 and 1980 - \$2,998,786, \$2,804,226, \$2,734,168, \$3,034,294, \$3,275,299.

APPENDIX II
COPY OF VICE-PRESIDENT, ECONOMIC,
PLANNING AND FINANCE, TO QUESTION NO. 4

ITEM NO	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
1. PERSONAL ENROLLMENTS Inc. ALLOVANCES	\$2,998,786	\$2,804,226	\$2,734,168	\$3,043,294	\$3,275,299
2. NATIONAL INSURANCE	230,934	224,304	214,392	245,060	285,648
3. TRANSPORT & TRAVELLING	348,447	187,094	178,660	236,656	448,531
4. YOUTH & SPORTS DEVELOPMENT	503,851	304,283	350,253	702,580	1,212,942
5. EDUCATION & TRAINING	1,293,617	605,389	624,099	745,271	950,193
6. EXHIBITIONS & OTHER PRACTICAL EDUCATION PROJECTS	479,875	141,369	61,049	93,305	732,468
7. NATIONAL CEREMONIES & EVENTS	886,729	419,087	582,719	760,101	1,082,745
8. EXPENSES OF OFFICIAL OVERSEAS MISSIONS AND CONFERENCES	405,170	110,209	117,342	440,177	698,743
9. EXPENSES OF OFFICIAL CONFERENCES HELD IN GUYANA	79,826	34,173	49,941	290,087	562,308
10. ELECTRICITY CHARGES	49,687	53,293	61,860	55,131	77,254
11. TELEPHONES	282,910	235,870	246,080	205,789	325,570
12. POSTAGE, CABLES, etc.	16,997	14,974	12,130	10,857	13,397
13. PRINTING & PUBLICATIONS	896,887	155,693	224,591	360,554	574,975
14. OFFICE MATERIALS & SUPPLIES	459,742	76,284	139,480	209,038	549,854
15. EQUIPMENT	778,605	40,696	47,468	435,038	1,511,943
16. VEHICLES, SPARES & MAINTENANCE	887,550	146,615	232,100	363,777	494,608
17. FUELS & LUBRICANTS	497,785	318,196	335,630	436,935	628,785
18. BUILDINGS & MAINTENANCE	827,980	48,211	117,087	197,339	225,049
19. MAINTENANCE OF COMPOUNDS	26,593	19,045	24,112	38,291	64,959
20. MISCELLANEOUS	371,678	92,628	223,262	297,411	394,458
	12,322,549	4,031,639	7,769,963	9,166,691	14,609,725

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MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY

A MINISTER

Suspension of Standing order No. 23

The Vice-President, Agriculture (Cde. Green): Cde. Speaker, I rise to seek your leave under standing order 83 to move the suspension of Standing Order 23 to proceed the two motions of sympathy on the supplementary order paper to taken at today's sitting.

The Speaker: Leave is granted.

Cde Green: With your leave I now formally move the suspension of standing order 23 for the purpose which I have just stated.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY14.30 hrs.PUBLIC BUSINESSMOTIONINVESTIGATION INTO OPERATIONS OF CERTAIN STATUTORY BODIES

‘Be it resolved that this National Assembly agree to the establishment of a Special Select Committee of the Assembly to carry out an investigation into the operations of the Guyana Sugar Corporation, the Guyana Rice Board, the Guyana Mining Enterprise and Guyconstruct, for which statutory bodies increased equity contributions in the sum of \$225,000,000, \$45,000,000, \$180,000,000 and \$25,000,000, respectively, were provided by Supplementary Estimates (Capital) in Financial Paper No. 2/1982.

/The Deputy Speaker, on behalf of the Minority Leader/

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move formally the Motion standing in the name of the leader of the Minority that the National Assembly agrees to the establishment of a special select committee to carry out an investigation into the operation of the several corporations listed in the Motion. I wish to indicate, Your honour, that since the formation of these several Corporations things have not been going well, not only for the economy of the country but for the workings of these Corporations. I remember sometime ago that an investigation was carried out by a former member of this Assembly, Sir Lionel Luckhoo, into the Electricity Corporation and the outcome of what appeared of the Report was shocking indeed. I am certain that if an investigation is carried out by a select committee of this Assembly, there would be need for a great deal of changes in these corporations.

Some time ago it was debated in this Assembly under another administration with respect to selection of personnel to Government offices and Corporations and there have been a lot of talk by the then Opposition to the method of selection. We have seen that those principles that were enunciated then have eroded and virtually you have a section of these very important positions by individuals. What has happened is that the selection made over the years have proved to be out of all reason. In other words, many of these people who have had the confidence of the Government that selected them have been fired willy-nilly and, of course, substantiated by facts that preceded their dismissal and removals. The Government could not be hiding its head in the sand to say that things are all right and they will resist this attempt on the part of the Opposition to get something done in the interest of the country. One example I would like to give – and I am sure if the members on the other side have any shame of themselves they will readily agree – is the photostatic copies of paysheets I have here from one of the sugar estates. The Guyana Sugar Corporation is one of the bodies sought to be investigated. It states: Monday, 15th December, 1980 the F.B.I. Field Workshop – preparing meals for polling stations. It also states S.... Shabilall, Molly Thomas and it goes on all the way. This is obviously a racket.

I heard on the radio last night His Excellency the President talking about popular elections. There was a big laugh on the radio, of course, as it came over. But this could not be. Be that apart, I want to refer to the administration of the Guyana Sugar Corporation which come under my scrutiny in certain respects. I can assure you that in this Corporation as well as in other Corporations there is too much of political and other interference that to my mind causes the Corporations to go upside down. Even though the P.N.C. might hold the reins of power by fraud, in the final analysis it is the people who have to foot the bill.

Talking about footing the bill, the electricity bills have gone up. The Ministers who make the decisions do not have to pay, but the man who is called upon to tighten his belt is the one who ought to have a say in these matters. That is why I so strongly support the sentiments expressed in this motion by

my leader, that there should be an investigation, a select committee of the Assembly, so that we can be well apprised of what takes place in these corporations that are being run as a private preserve of my friends who sit on the other side.

Thank you, Cde. Chairman.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I rise to second the Motion standing in the name of Dr. Jagan on the order paper and moved by Cde. Ram Karran, Earlier on this year when we debated the national budget for this year, it was clearly admitted in the speech as presented by the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, that the performance of the economy was disastrous. Earlier to that occasion, I quoted from the New Nation and the Daily Chronicle where it was referred to as tottering economy on the brink of collapse. Now, shortly after that, we have had on Financial Paper No. 2/1982, the passing of the sum of \$475 million and this was a schedule of supplementary provision to meet expenditure in excess of the provisions made in the Capital Estimates for the period ending 10th August, 1982.

This sum of money was allocated for four Corporations and I name them: One, the Ministry of Agriculture, for equity contribution to the Guyana Sugar Corporation to the tune of \$225 million. Secondly, again to the Ministry of Agriculture, again for equity contribution to the Guyana Rice Board to the tune of \$45 million. Thirdly, the Ministry of Energy and Mining, equity contribution to the Guyana Mining Enterprise to the tune of \$180 million. Lastly, the Ministry of Energy and Mining, equity contribution to Guyconstruct for \$25 million. In all four cases here mentioned, these sums were to provide for Government's increased equity contribution to these Corporations.

Arising out of the Budget speech, we discovered that all four of these Corporations made losses for the year 1981. As far as the Guyana Bauxite Industry is concerned, for the year 1982, we are well aware of the problems and I am going to allude to some of them later on. As far as the Sugar Corporation is concerned, we know of the low price paid on the international market or the free market for part of the sugar being sold. In the Guyana Rice Board we know of the problems also, some of which I will speak on later on. All these Corporations having made losses during the last year and some of them for more than the last year, the Government has found it fit, notwithstanding these operational losses during 1981 where by no dividend whatsoever was paid to the Central Government, to give these corporations these large sums which I have just mentioned in the form of additional or increased contribution of equity.

The Government as we know and even according to the New Nation, is almost bankrupt and that was reported in February of this year. I do not know whether the position has bettered. As far as I can see it has worsened and perhaps it is now bankrupt. Now this bankrupt Government is now lending money or giving money in the form of equity contribution to these tottering Corporations which have been making losses for a number of years, some of them themselves bankrupt, to let it appear to those persons, particularly overseas, from whom these corporations like the Guyana Rice Board and others have been borrowing money over the years, that here we are, the Government of Guyana has confidence in us, has guarantee loans and now they are increasing their equity contribution to show the viability of these Corporations. This, of course, is a farce and will not better the situation whatsoever.

We know for a fact that our economy in Guyana depends crucially on three major sectors of the economy, namely, sugar, bauxite and rice. We have learnt from very hard experiences that at any time at all any one of these three sectors fail, the economy as a whole is bound to fail. We have had the experience last year and again this year where not only one of these sectors has failed, but all three have failed. That is a clear result of the grave economic problems this country has been plagued with over the number of years. The fall in production of the three major export commodities – and I will deal with

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Guyconstruct separately – together with unfavorable terms of trade have had undoubtedly consequential effects on the export earnings and as such aggravates the already critical balance of payments deficits position.

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(Cde. N. Persaud continues)

The country's economic well-being of all the people of this country surely depends upon the performance of these three products. Together, Cde Speaker, they earn about 85% of the total foreign exchange earnings of this country. Now, because of the many problems which exists in these industries and because of the inefficiency in the two nationalised industries namely sugar and bauxite, we have had forces in this country – we still have them – rightist forces that are blaming nationalisation, that nationalisation per say has failed. But, comrades, we know it is not nationalisation which has failed, it is P.N.C. Government which has failed to efficiently manage these industries and is causing these rightist forces inside and outside of Guyana to give nationalisation a bad name.

We must understand when a nations' economy is collapsing, when the performance of the economy becomes disastrous, when exports for 1982 are already down by 19%. When we know that the sugar, bauxite and rice together earn 85% of total foreign exchange, then obviously it becomes imperative for an enquiry to be held into the operations of these industries in order that we can see if we can correct the grave economic problems in which our people are forced to live in.

Now, if I were to move on to the question of sugar Cde. Speaker, the question on which the speaker before me touched. In that very budget speech to which I have referred, the Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance said that sugar is an ailing industry, that the position of the industry is precarious. That Guysuco is a deficit Corporation and the Government cannot carry deficit Corporations indefinitely. These were the statements of the Vice-President of Economic Planning and Finance describing the sugar industry in dealing with the sugar industry, 1981 budget speech.

Now, in that budget speech we have learnt that the deficit for Guysuco amounted to 81 million dollars in 1981. Cde. Speaker, we must see this figure as against what was supposed to have been. A profit was supposed to have been achieved but instead of that profit we ended up with a deficit of \$81 million. In 1971 the sugar producers association estimated that production of sugar in this country would have reached the height of 500,000 tons by 1980 but that was not to be because of the corruption, because of the mis-management, because of the square pegs in round holes. Because of political interference, and they only achieved in that year 1980 269,000 tons, 100,000 tons less the production of 1971 when the Sugar Producers Association made that estimate.

Now, what must be responsible for this decline in production. In 1971 we had 269,000 tons, decreased in 1974, sorry the figure for 1971 was 369,000 tons, decreased in 1974 to 340,000 tons. In 1978, it dropped further to 324,000 tons and last year it reached the low of 300,000 tons despite an increase of 41,000 acres of land cultivated from the year 1970 to the year 1981, despite Cde. Speaker, of increased cultivation land of 41,000 acres production fell from 369,000 tons in 1971 to 300,000 tons 1980. Surely, something is definitely wrong and this investigation should be made.

In 1970 Cde. Speaker, 101, 000 acres were under cultivation. In 1980 it was 142,000. That is the increase I referred to. Now, in 1970, we had 11.68 tons of cane making one ton of sugar. In 1980 it increased from 11.68 tons of cane to 13.36 tons of cane making one ton of sugar. Why? Why, despite additional technology in this country, despite modern methods, despite mechanisation to some extent instead of getting more we get less. In 1970 we had 2.99 tons of cane reaped from every acre of cultivated sugar land. In 1980 it dropped to 2.23 tons of cane reaped from every acre of land under sugar. Why? I brought these figures Cde. Speaker, to lay my case why an enquiry is necessary into the sugar industry and the other industries also for which I am going to give figures. Surely, let us go as far as time lost is concerned. In 1970 out of cane – because they hadn't cane time lost – 13.9% of total time lost. In 1980,

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out of cane time lost reached 17.02% of the total time lost. Something is wrong.

What about strikes? They complain about strikes. We have just heard the Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance talking about strikes as one of the reasons for aborting the agreement with the IMF. In 1970 through strikes it was 11.3% time lost. This however dropped in 1980 to 2.43% of total time lost. Strikes. Strikes to that extent. In 1970 11.3% of the total time lost in the sugar industry was caused by strikes. This however decreased to 2.43 %. What about factory time lost or loss of time through factory causes. In 1970 it was 7.3%. This however in 1981 gone to 11.38%. Cde. Speaker, these are all causes, all these things are causes undoubtedly for an investigation to be held.

Now we have for example the case of running down of machinery. Poor crop husbandry as complained even by Mr. Kennard in a letter that he sent to Mr. Davis during last year. Poor management, lack of spare parts, political interference, square pegs in round holes, non-involvement of workers. These are all causes perhaps why with the exception of poor crop husbandry, all the points I mentioned are all relevant to other industries.

Cde. Speaker, they have started diversification of the crop but can they tell us what is the position as far as rice cultivation by Guysuco is concerned? Can they tell us what is the position as far as blackeye cultivation is concerned or corn cultivation? Cde. Speaker, it is clear that they are all failing and adding additional burden on the sugar industry for which Guysuco was originally established.

As I said in 1981 a loss of \$81 million although it made a surplus of \$5 million in 1980 and was targeted to make a surplus of 17.7 million dollars in 1981. Something is definitely wrong. The overdraft guaranteed by this Government for the third and fourth quarters of 1981 alone to Guysuco amounted to \$74.5 million. Why? Cde. Speaker, it is only clear as I said based on those brief information that some – thing ought to be done.

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I move to the bauxite industry. This industry has also been plagued with technical and managerial problems for years. There has been a steady decline in production like the sugar industry. In 1979 1.8 million tons of bauxite were produced. In 1980 it dropped by 100,000 tons and in 1981 it dropped further by another 100,000 tons of bauxite, producing only 1.6 million tons. In 1981 it lost \$96 million when it was targeted to make a surplus of \$70 million. Something ought to be wrong. Here the industry, based on trends in the past decided, budgeted and targeted, that it was going to make a surplus of \$70 million. At the end of the year it ended up with a deficit of \$96 million. Is that not a source of concern to warrant an enquiry into the bauxite industry? What about the markets we have lost and why we have lost those markets? It is due to low production and an unreliable supply that we have lost the traditional markets. China and Australia have now taken over our markets as far as refractory bauxite is concerned. Why do we have to lose our markets?

We now have a problem. Coupled with declining production, bauxite is stock-piling and we are not able to find markets. Our storage facilities here at Linden are filled and the storage facilities at Chaguaramas in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad are also filled. What are we going to do with the bauxite? We have two problems there: the basic and main problem: first, the lowering production of the industry because of all the things I have spoken about and, secondly, even the little we are producing we are unable to sell. The bauxite industry is in chaos.

Let me just give some figures as far as last year is concerned: target and actual. Dry bauxite was targeted to meet 919,000 tons. It ended up with 637,000 tons, a shortfall of 282,000 tons. Chemical grade – targeted 400,000 tons; actual figure 333,000. The shortfall – 67,000 tons. Calcined bauxite – 735,000 was the target, ended up with 513,000, a shortfall of 222,000 tons. Alumina – 240,000 tons was targeted, realised only 170,000, falling short by 70,000 tons.

We have this problem, as I said, where square pegs are in round holes and they cannot operate. Any time you try to fit a square peg in a round hole you are going to run into problems and this is what is happening in all the industries, in all the corporations, in all the Government enterprises where political interferences and paramountcy of the party doctrine is causing this nation to suffer. Let an enquiry be held and all these factors will come out. What happened in 1980 in the bauxite industry? Thirty per cent of the posts for senior technicians and managerial staff were vacant. They ran out of this country because of frustration, because they are being forced to take orders from the party boys.

Last year the industry was targeted to realise \$636 million. Instead, it earned only \$428 million, a shortfall of 34 per cent. The inefficient management in all the areas caused a serious running down of production capacity and crumbling of established systems. What has this left? Inability to run the industry properly has led to the contracting of Green Construction Company of the U.S.A. to do stripping operations and, subsequently, the contracting of at least five other expatriate consulting firms to assist in several areas. As a result, foreign private capitals once again participating in production and management in this industry. Is this why we nationalised the industry? Did we anticipate that we would have to employ six foreign firms to run the industry? People are incompetent. This is why we have now to contract six foreign firms to come to run the industry.

We know for a fact that unless these things are changed we will not be in a position to take this country out of the mess it is in. Surely we have international inflation and recession is going on. It affects the economy not only of Guyana but of other countries of the world, but they do not find themselves with

the problems which Guyana now faces. Why? Because of these added local problems such as the square pegs in round holes, the political interference, the corruption, the mismanagement and the wrong planning policies. These have to be changed. We cannot change the international recession; we cannot change imported inflation; but we can change these rumblings that are going on here and those, limited as they are, will help Guyanese to have a better future.

A few short remarks on rice because this matter is going to be debated later. The rice industry is no better than nor no different from the other two of which I have spoken, corruption, mismanagement, political interference, are all there again. Bringing one man from the Corentyne and putting him here has not changed the situation. They must have realised that by now. It is worse. The investigation, if you agree to it, will decide what should be his fate. There are very revealing tales to be told in the Rice Marketing Board and this is why this Motion is before the Assembly. Agree to this enquiry! If you do not agree to the enquiry you are fearful and you are conniving with what is going on and the economy will not better itself but will get worse.

In 1977, 211,000 tons. It dropped in 1978 to 182,000 tons. It dropped 1980 to 168,000 tons and it dropped further in 1981 to 163,000 tons. Whom is he fooling? Where is the rice? Notwithstanding that, we have lost the Jamaican market and instead of selling 35,000 tons we have sold only 5,000 tons so far. Why, Cde. Speaker? Why has the situation reached this low level in all these main industries? Something is definitely wrong. Production last year fell short of the target by 52,000 tons. Countries all over the world, be they capitalist or socialist, have their targets fixed if they have proper planning. Not one single country in this world, capitalist or socialist, is having such disastrous failures. There was a shortfall of 52,000 tons when the target was 235,000 tons. In 1981 an overdraft of \$48 million was guaranteed by the Government. Already for the first quarter of 1982 an overdraft of \$50.7 million was guaranteed by the Government when the industry is ailing and failing. We are propping the industry. Let an investigation be held! Let the enquiry be held and then the facts are going to come to light! If you are really interested in the well being of the people in this country, whose well being depends upon these three industries, let the investigation, let the enquiry be held!

In 1968, as I said, 111,000 acres were harvested. This was the spring crop. In 1980 it dropped to 103,000 acres. Why is it that we were planting today 8,000 less acres of rice in this country than in 1968 when you say you are giving all types of incentives? Why is it? In the autumn crop in 1968 we cultivated 201,000 acres. In 1980 it dropped to 133,000 acres. 68,000 acres of land which were previously cultivated have been abandoned. Why? All these 'why' will come out if an enquiry is mounted.

There are constant frauds at the Rice Marketing Board. A boat disappeared with rice. Where is the investigation into that? Where has rice gone? Don't you know about it? Why? Let us investigate and tales will come out from school. Some big boys are involved. Is this why you do not want to investigate? Over one million dollars of revenue stamps disappeared! What a shame! Incompetent as they are, they have allowed a situation like this to exist. How is the Rice Marketing Board going to pay its way? This is why the farmers are suffering and are abandoning the land. Instead of getting the money, there are frauds. Persons are stealing the people's money and the people have to pay for it.

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(Cde. Narbada Persaud continues)

Cde. Speaker, we must decide. A number of people have been dismissed. In whose interest? In somebody's interest. That will come out. Some have been re-employed. At least one has been re-employed. Why? Out of a total of 61 single stage mills in this country only 31 are in operation, and they are talking about increase in production. Out of a total of 75 multi-stage mills only 55 in operation. 20 not in operation and from the single stage 30 out of 61 are not in operation. Out of a total 136 mills in this country 50 are not in operation. What are we doing about that? Do you want increased production?

The Speaker: You only got five minutes to operate.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Transferring to commercial importers. This is what they have in this action programme now. In that action programme they say they are going to transfer to commercial importers and distributors including private farmers the responsibility of importing, stocking and selling imports required by firms. That will not solve the problem. Would it? Closing down the small mills like the ones at Belmonte, Somerset, Dundee and Berks also will solve the problem as initiated in that Action Programme which you have for the Rice Industry. Leasing or selling the premises to private millers and co-operatives will also not help the rice industry. Cde. Speaker, as far as Guyconstruct is concerned, I do not have all the figures on hand but speaking generally frauds are there, favouritism is there, discrimination is there, party paramountcy is also there. It is a government corporation coming out of Guymine, Guyconstruct. Last year \$19M they lost when they were supposed to make a profit. Something is wrong. Money is being made, going where? Unless an enquiry is held in these corporations, not only these, we are limited here because of this financial paper giving the addition or increase of equity to these four. That is why the motion is limited, but in every sphere or Government entity there is rascality going on and unless there is an investigation and the public must come and hear what is going on, the Government cannot go forward. Therefore I want to support the motion in the name of Cde. Dr. Jagan moved by Cde. Ram Karran.

Motion is proposed.

Minister of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection (Cde. Hope): Cde. Speaker, in this motion we are dealing with three of the most vital corporations and companies within our economy. They cover the three important sectors of the economy, bauxite, sugar and rice. Between them we are talking about contributions of over 50 percent of the gross domestic product and employment of more than 50,000 people. Certainly in these circumstances if the industries are facing problems and they are facing problems we have admitted this quite frankly and openly on several occasions, then clearly it is up to the Government as the shareholder in the corporations to take such steps as are necessary to ensure their continued viability. One of these steps clearly has been the examination of financial requirement and the injection of some more equity into these three companies. Secondly in these three entities we are also dealing with industries which are in one case almost totally export-oriented and in the other two more than 50 percent in some cases, almost 80 per cent export-oriented. Therefore the industries must as a consequence be affected by the problems which are facing nations at the international level and no attempts at diminishing the importance of the recession which is affecting the countries which consume goods/products can change the facts that if other countries do not have the power to purchase, if their industries are declining, if employment in those countries are also declining then clearly they cannot make use of the raw products which are imported from countries like ours.

As I said no attempt to dismiss the importance of recession facing other countries and which affect all our industries can reduce that importance. We have also seen the growth of protectionism

among the important countries and it is this protectionism among the important countries which in a large measure is responsible for some of the difficulties. I would guess it measures among major difficulties facing the sugar industry today. I will refer to that a little later. Since we have this industry it is up to us, Cde. Speaker, to take the correct steps to analyse the difficulty, to analyse the problem and to find objective solutions. It is obvious they have a disrespect for this House. Clearly, many of us look at it objectively and come to the conclusion that a Select Committee of this House is unlikely to be able to provide that technical analysis of the problems of the industry that is required. Although a Select Committee of the House cannot provide the solution. The Government takes those responsibilities serious and recognises the importance of those industries and has already done a great deal of work in terms of providing that kind of analysis and has already begun to take steps in many cases to address the problems which . . . which I have indicated.

I think that is the direction in which we ought to go if we are really serious in protecting and maintaining the viability of those industries. If I may refer very briefly to the bauxite industry, I do not know if the member who spoke on this motion recognises that in the bauxite industry we are dealing with a very complex industry whose technical requirements were in the old days met by. We are dealing with an industry which is marketing at least five different products and sell these different products in 30 odd different countries. We are dealing with an industry that has to face a giant technological problem of that massive open pit mining which takes place at Linden where we have to dig to remove the overburden of a dept in excess of 200 feet. Then we cannot forget the maintenance of those massive equipment that is necessary for digging in such circumstances.

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(Cde. Hope Continues)

Of course, the industry has also financial complexities and these are all matters which have to be addressed.

The member referred to the fact that in the bauxite industry there are a number of foreign companies that are giving assistance in various forms. I venture to suggest that that is nothing to be ashamed about. All those companies to which reference has been made are involved, in one form or the other, in bauxite or aluminum production, and significantly none of them has within their own walls all of the expertise that they require. They have to purchase the expertise from other companies. They have to hire people very often from other companies when they themselves cannot provide the people to do it. So in an industry where technology is as complex as this one, and where technology both mechanical marketing and chemical, it is not surprising that we would need to purchase from overseas technical assistance which cannot be provided by one firm, but must be provided by different firms if we are after excellence. We must go to the firm that is an expert in the particular area and this is what we have done.

For instance, we have retained in the bauxite industry on East German firm which is providing assistance in the development of a ten-year mining plant and in the operation of large wheel excavators. The selection of this particular firm was based on the fact that this firm had proven expertise in that particular area, that is an area of large ownership mining and planning. Then the firm of Kaiser has been recruited to provide technological help in the improvement of the alumina plant. I think at this stage we need to remember that in developing countries like ours it is important that we arrange for the transfer of technology. If for nothing else, it is because the development of technology is an expensive matter and few countries, much less a developing one like Guyana, can always afford its own research and development to develop all the technology that are required. Therefore, we have got to buy the technology. This is not surprising.

Developed industrial countries very often not only buy technology, but they steal technology. I am sure the comrade has heard about industrial Which is really a form of transfer of technology. And what we are involved in in hiring these firms to participate in the development work at Linden is really an attempt to secure that transfer of technology which is so important.

We have also in truth recruited U.S. Steel. That is also a firm which can help not only in operation and development in improving technology in the kilns, but can also assist in the marketing of calcined bauxite because of its steel connection.

What is important here is that we need the development of the bauxite technology and are seeking to hire that technology from the best and from the firms that are expert in those forms of technology. We are also giving consideration to the establishment, in association with the bauxite company here, of firms to assist in the marketing of the product. Indeed you would have heard or you would have read that Guymine has established its own procurement subsidiary or agency overseas which was one form of taking over where a foreign firm used to operate in the past, we having secured the necessary know-how.

From all that I have said it will be clear that we are aware that the industry has problems. We said that in many cases and it was quoted in the last Budget Speech. What the Government has done is to sit down and analyse the problems. We are dealing here not only with the main tenets and the viability of the country, but we are dealing also with the growth and expansion and steps are being taken to address those problems as I have just indicated. Perhaps it might be a useful thing in the future for relevant Ministers – in making presentations from time to time – to indicate to this Assembly what is, in fact, being done and

to bring the Assembly up-to-date in some of these areas. But I would venture to suggest that there is little that a select Committee of this Assembly could do to address the problems of the bauxite industry. Sure, we can have a report, we can have a meeting, we can have a lot of noise as we heard a moment ago, we can have a long report but in the end the problems would not have been identified and even more important the solutions would not have been vindicated or implemented.

In the case of the sugar industry, certainly the sugar industry has suffered over recent years in declining productivity. But I think we need to remember that it was just in 1975 or 1976 that that industry was plagued by the smut disease. That disease caused serious dislocation in the industry. For one thing, I think the hon. Members would know, some of the highest yielding trails of cane had to be destroyed completely and could not be replanted because it so happened that those trails of cane were susceptible to the smut infestation. What was replanted was smut resistant canes which, on the other hand, were not as high yielding as the others.

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(Cde. Hope continues):

In addition, because of the problems – financial problems, finding the industry the re-planning exercise which have been carried out was not done in the way it ought to be done. These are all problems which we have all recognised. The most recent information is that last year for instance continuing to this year the replanning has been much more extensive with theand that will be up in due course in yields by the industry.

I think one of the problems which was highlighted there was the fact that the industry was suffering tremendous loss over the last years, but Cde. Speaker, the loss which the industry suffered was a matter mainly of production. There was also the matter of price – there was a low price that we got for 50% of our exports which was in fact the result ofwhich I referred to earlier.....it is the fact that Europe which today is the largest beet producing country is producing beet under conditions of high subsidy and because of that high subsidy which European farmers got for the production of what it is possible for beet sugar to be sold at low prices and even more important it is possible for the farmers to maintain high levels of production not only by taking up more acreage but by using lands to cultivate on a larger extent because even the capital equipment is being subsidised.

One of the greatest problems facing cane sugar in Guyana.....which are needed to be low because producers are speaking of the low price of sugar. We are told that the price of sugar is somewhere in the region of fifty-one percent of the cost of producing it. We need tothat first of all and to understand thatWhat can the Select Committee in this Honorable House do to solve that problem. What we should do is to look for alternatives-use of the sugar cane – like for more guaranteed markets if possible, like for better companies of production. These areand market..... which are.....attention to the people who are responsible and we feel certain that in due course the results would be seen. Already for this year we have seen a better production for the second crop. We have seen productivity for the second crop.....put in more field equipment to rehabilitate its factories so as to have better measurement and a higher level of productivity both in field and in factory.

With respect to rice Cde. Speaker, I think in this particular year the problems of the Guyana Rice Board are also well known and very reasonable. The Guyana Rice Board has a action plan for facing up with the problems of the industry.....to decentralise surpluses so that acreage for instance which only very recently in the rice industry has now been placed in an agency whose specific function is to provide agriculturalof the industry would be improved. The question of theof spare parts, fertilisers and so on, these are beingin these areas so that development would not be improved. Tractors and combines at the Guyana Rice Board are now being transferred to the Regional Administration where they have been more carefully monitored, where they can be more effectively used all to the advantage of the industry.

As the speaker spoke about the illegal exportation of ricefor instance it intends to supervise and export the rice.....ensure that we keep proper records of sales, purchase, stocks in hand so that the illegal exportation of rice can be fairly reduced. The Rice Board has also said that it intends to give farmers and millers a chance to improve on their export earnings. Thus we are sure that this will act as an incentive for farmers and millers to produce more effectively.

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From all that I have said, it will be observed that (1) the Government is aware of the critical problems that face the industries; (2) the Government has addressed these problems; (3) positive steps are being taken to implement measures, the objective of which is to remove these difficulties, to remove these constraints. I think we also need to recognise that once the country is facing foreign exchange problems the industries cannot realise their best potential because there will be times when we need spare parts which cannot be provided as rapidly as is necessary because of foreign exchange difficulties. We need to recognise also that we are exporting rice to the world and to the extent that incomes fall in these countries, to that extent we will not be able to export as much as we should be doing. We need to recognise also that to the extent that the industrialised countries continue to be in recession, to that extent some of our industries, like bauxite, will be adversely affected. As the leader of the Minority said, we cannot do anything about recession. At least we can do this which we are doing in the case of bauxite. We are also planning that when the recession comes to an end, as it must come to an end, it would leave the bauxite industry recharged, fully maintained, rehabilitated and ready to take advantage of the existing markets. From this point of view, our feelings, on this side of the House, is that in all the circumstances a Select Committee of this honourable House cannot help. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran (replying): It does not seem that any other member wishes to speak. I therefore use my right to reply and say that I notice a very pathetic figure in the person of the hon. Minister of Trade, who attempted to set aside a very strong case made out by the Opposition for this measure. I was thinking that this exercise today may have been introduced because of the happenings in Jamaica or that it was a real attempt –

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, let us deal with the reply.

Cde. Ram Karran: - to start dialogue with respect to the business of the House. I am not at all satisfied – as I heard the hon. Minister pathetically making out – that everything is all right. We have all the problems he has indicated. They do exist. We ourselves have said so, but we have sat down. I did not hear anything after those words ‘sat down’. Sat down to do what? Sat down to analyse and to solve the problem. The hon. Minister did not attempt – except to go on a long excursion – to tell us about all the problems of deep mining. I do not know if they have gone deep enough to get oil. There are problems with deep mining, spare parts and so on.

Before the nationalisation of the bauxite industry, experts from over there were talking about everything. They knew everything. Even flocculent was going to be made from cassava instead of wheat flour. All sorts of experts were talking. Where are these experts now? We have to go to Kaiser to make razors, or we have to go to Bethlehem Steele and we have to go all over the place to get the experts. Any country with any sort of industry needs experts. You find the experts. You do not allow them to dominate you. My friends made out as if all these experts have to come here and hit some sense into their heads as they sit down and they formulate and analyse. We do not want that. We want an examination. We know that experts will have to come. We know that problems exist.

My friends talks about rice. Do we not need to examine whether we have over-mechanised, because in the 1960s the records show that with partial mechanisation we were producing more rice on less land than previously. Do we now need to look and see whether the varieties will be produced. At the time when he introduced Star Bonnet and Blue Belle – I remember the song we used to sing in school:

“where the blue bells grow” – we were telling our friends, the hon. Prime Minister that it was far better for us to hold on to BB 110 and the strains that were then available. You did not have to puzzle, you did not have to level the land; you did not have to use fertilisers and you were getting what I understand Manarabisi got, twelve bags to the acre in 1960. The production in 1962 and 1963 was greater than the production that the Government has been getting over the past fifteen years.

My friend the hon. Prime Minister was telling us that we need to increase production and then we will get more money. My friend tells us another story after 17 years in office. He says that the Guyana Rice Board is now thinking of sharing part of the money that they get from export earnings. That is what we were telling them for a long time. Can't you see? Don't you want to examine the thing, or you are going to sit down? If you are going to sit down, you are going to be in the same position for the next 25 years, because, with all the rigging and scampishness going on in the country - I beg your pardon, sir – we are not going to be able to move from this position until the people decide to put them out.

My friend tells fairy tales. No body questioned all the things he talked about the bauxite industry. We know that, but what is happening? Have they tried to find other markets? He said the Minister is going to tell us from time to time what they are doing. The United States is not the only part of this hemisphere. We have been saying over and over that this Government has gone on record in putting a ten per cent tax on Soviet Union trade. As soon as it got into office. That is removed. Why can't you make long-term agreements with other countries so that you can sell your products even though the prices might not be as attractive as the prices you get from your friends in the United States. The purchase of industrial and other equipment will also be related to those prices. This is the kind of business that one does and they need to examine it. If the Select Committee cannot do it, maybe some other form of investigation is necessary. My friends talk about 'expertise'. They believe in too much expertise. Is it not necessary to find out how one single individual was able to cheat the Guyana Rice Marketing Board of one million dollars in revenue stamps? Who is examining that?

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, we cannot go into that.

Cde. Ram Karran: I am not going into it, sir. I would not attempt to go into it. I want the Committee, somebody, to go into it. Not only that. Many other frauds are taking place. They cannot be exposed in this Assembly but the Government must look into these things. My friend was talking about an analysis. Where is it? He is not as forceful as the Frank Hope I know. He sits down, then gets up and he makes a little statement.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, you are not seeing your writing clearly today?

Cde. Ram Karran: No, I cannot see very well, sir.

I would welcome not only Ministers getting up and telling us what is being done in Ministries but more frequent meetings of the Assembly so that the Ministers can get a chance to tell us what is being done.

The Speaker: We are meeting regularly to dispose of these matters.

Cde. Ram Karran: After 17 years?

The Speaker: I have not been here 17 years. We have some other matters to dispose of.

Cde. Ram Karran: I want to suggest strongly that the hon. Minister and his Government reconsider their decision. It goes down as a very bad joke for the Assembly to meet to discuss this very important Motion, having regard to all the circumstances and then come up and say that the P.N.C. is on top of the problem. It looks like a very bad joke because the people outside are catching hell. Don't we need an investigation, sir, in a case where the Adviser to the honourable the Executive President says in a

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document which I have here – Let me read it out, “ As far as possible they should be free of GAWU’S influence and should be politically loyal”. Have you ever heard of Government run like that in an industry, the largest industry in the country? If there is that sort of thing, don’t you need an investigation?

The Speaker: They are recognising how powerful you are.

Cde. Ram Karran: I don’t know if they recognise it, sir, but I think they are sending this country down the drain and there is a lot of robbery going on and a lot of scandals. My friends over there have to answer to posterity for it.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLYSYMPATHY ON DEATH OF CDE. JOHN GABRIEL JOAQUIN, C.C.H.

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. John Gabriel Joaquin, C.C.H., and pays tribute to the distinguished service which he rendered to Guyana and to its Parliament and directs that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing widow and children.” /The Vice-President, Agriculture./

The Speaker: Cde. Green

/The Vice-President, Agriculture was summoned and he took his place in the chamber/

The Speaker: Cde. Green, I think I had better adjourn the sitting.

Cde. Green: My apologies, Cde. Speaker, it was a matter of state. Cde. Speaker, last Monday, November 7, we were told in this country of the death of a man who served in this Parliament and who served in this country in very many capacities. We heard that he died and it is said that in the midst of life is death. The death was announced of John Gabriel Bartholomew Joaquin, who was born in Kitty in 1905 on December 27. John Joaquin was a man who had very strong views and a man who during his lifetime stood by those views, stood by the Party and Leader that he was committed to. Very often some of us in this Assembly and country because of the colonial legacy of which we are part and because of the sharp difference which occur in our society, because of the machinations of imperialists found it easy, comfortable and convenient to support one or another political party. But with the typical arrogance of some people some people assumed that because of Joaquin’s background and because of John Joaquin’s life that he lived before he should have automatically served and in some cases be subservient to a particular group. But John Gabriel, as some of us call him fondly and familiarly, had a vision of this country and worked out that his service should be with the People’s National Congress. But during his life including the period he served as Supervisor of Williams Forgarty Limited he had to face the shafts and arrows of his contemporaries and people who felt he had no right to serve this Party and Its Leader. But he was a man of strength and courage. Perhaps he developed that strength and courage because at the early age of 15 when he started work at William Forgarty Limited in Water Street. Indeed his tenacity was clear because I suspect very few of us could have the distinction of having a single employer throughout our working life. Apart from his political life John Joaquin had that distinction and he retired in 1967 at the age of 62 after serving William Forgarty Limited.

His commitment to the cause and country put him to serve as a Councillor in the Kitty and Alexander Village Local Authorities between 1938 and 1967. In fact in 1953 he became Chairman of the Kitty and Alexander Village Local Authority. But John was not concerned with the regular run-of-the-mill political activities. He was interested in sports, people and life and this is why in 1960 he found himself as Assistant Manager of the then British Guyana A.A. and C.U team to the West Indies Championship which were held in Jamaica in that year. In recognition of the service he gave to the community and country he was awarded, and this covers another area of activity, the medal of Merit by the London Scout Association in 1965.

1965 reminds me of the year that People’s National Congress went up with a delegation to London to seek our God-given right of constitutional Independence from our masters, the British. The Party and Leader thought it prudent and important that John Gabriel be a member of that delegation. I remember John in his usual simple jovial but precise manner helped us to keep an even temper when some people tried to irritate that delegation and I was a member of that delegation. I remember that John was fun to be with and provided a source of relaxation when as happens at some of these conferences the

tension seems to be around us.

He was a member of the Party and served as Junior Vice-Chairman from 1960 for a number of years and recently up to time of his demise he was Party Co-treasurer. As an officer of the Party because of the absence sometimes of the Chairman or Vice-President or when he was Junior Vice-Chairman in the absence of the Chairman or Senior Vice-Chairman John was requested to chair meetings. If I may speak of my own experiences whenever John had to chair those meetings I was a happy person because we were certain of two things: that irrelevant matters would not be discussed as long as he was Chairman and we would conclude that meeting with expedience andI remember when one colleague wanted to prolong a meeting and some people like to prolong meetings for what we don't know, John simply said the agenda was at an end and that ended the meeting. John was a great chap. John had a special interest in the women fold in this country and the Party. An interest which I think is pure and an interest which was because he felt that at the time he entered politics our women were a disadvantage group. Thanks to the People's National Congress they are no longer a disadvantage group. In fact one suspects that the men are now the disadvantage group of the party.

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(Cde. Green continues)

This is due mainly to the work and interest that people like John Joaquin showed. In fact, he has the distinction of being the first male life member so appointed at the Fourth Biennial Congress of the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement, being the first life member of the W.R.S.M. They loved him and I believed that the W.R.S.M and the Party have lost a friend.

In this Parliament, he entered on the 21st August, 1961 as a member of the Kitty Constituency and he also entered the Second Parliament in 1964 and served as an ordinary member of the Parliament, then as Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics from February 1966 to October 1968, and for a brief period in 1968 before there were other changes, he served as Minister of Local Government. With elections in 1968 December he also subscribed to the oath and was a member of this Parliament beginning in 1969 January.

Joan Joaquin had a total service in this honourable Assembly of over eleven and a half years. Even the British recognised his sterling qualities and in 1965 he was awarded the O.B.E. As is well know, this Government, in recognition of the contribution he continued to make in 1974 awarded him the Arrow of Achievement. Two years ago, his National Honour was upgraded to that of the Cacique Crown of Honor which he held at the time of his death.

John Joaquin served well. As I moved this Motion of condolence standing in my name it is my hope that as we share the death of a friend, that those of us who remain must perhaps take strength from him and not forget that service is what is important at this point in time. We, on the other hand, must never ever forget the deeds of our people, and some societies have all sorts of ways of remembering their past heroes and those who served well.

Apart from tribute in this Assembly, I look forward perhaps to the people of Kitty and this Parliament doing something in memory of John Gabriel Joaquin. Cde. Speaker, I know that all of us, particularly in the Party Executive, would miss John. The people of Kitty have lost a good son. The people whom he served and worked with will remember him for being unoffensive and a genuine man. I have great pleasure, Cde. Speaker, pleasure in the sense that when a man passes from this world and he served well, perhaps the best thing we can do is not only mourn, but remember him fondly, that at least we had a friend who did something good. I would like to ask that this Motion be put before this Assembly to record our deep regret at the death of John Gabriel Joaquin, C.C.H., who died on the 7th November, 1982.

Motion proposed.

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Speaker, I would like to join with my friend the hon. Vice President in expressing on my own behalf and on behalf of my colleagues, sympathy on the passing of John Joaquin and to support the motion that letters of condolences should be sent to his family. I think I know the late John Joaquin longer than any other member in this Assembly. I used to attend school opposite to where he lived in the long and distant past and I used to remember him not only for the way he dresses in his cork hat, his umbrella on his cycle, but also his resentment to being called "Angel Gabriel". I do not think people knew he was Joaquin. I do not think you could know John as you knew Gabriel.

I knew him also in the 1940s when a big campaign was mounted for the elections against the late J.I. D'Aguiar. Joaquin was all around the place obviously anti-communist and against the candidate that was sponsored by the movement in Kitty. But I got to know him closer when he came in Parliament. As you know, Cde. John Joaquin was a man of few words and I remember the fun we had when on one

occasion it was necessary for the opposition to extend the debate beyond midnight so as to fault the Government in extending a certain important bit of legislation. After Joaquin had made his speech, after a very long time, and completed his half hour, he was given an extension – we used to have extensions in those days – and a Motion was moved for Joaquin to continue. I can tell you the hilarity and fun witnessed when Cde. Joaquin completed his half hour.

But I remember another occasion when we were sitting in the Public Accounts Committee and the Government side was in some difficulty even though there were two members of the Opposition there. But the Government side was in such difficulty that they had to call Joaquin from his office as Parliamentary Secretary. I told him that Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries did not come here. He said, ‘I want to come’. He sat through and cleared the day for his friends and colleagues.

I remember the time too when he served for a very short period as Minister. My friend reported when questions used to be answered in those days but it was the most difficult thing for Joaquin to get up on his feet and speak. But he was, above all, having known him for such a long time, a very lively person, a friendly man, soft and quiet, and looking at him one would not know that he had such strong political views. In fact, we had a joke when he said “we black people”. So we often tease John. He would not reply one way or the other.

I know from my own knowledge of John that he was a very lively man and one looking at him would not have thought that he would take such strong political positions. One would have thought that Joaquin was a preacher or something akin to that sort of activity.

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(Cde. Ram Karran continues)

Once again Sir, I wish to join in expressing my sympathy and those of my colleagues to the family of John Joaquin, C.C.H. and express our condolences.

Motion carried.

The Speaker: This is a convenient time to take the suspension.

Suspended accordingly at 16.03 hrs.

On Resumption.

16.20 – 16.30 hrs

ITEM 3 – SYMPATHY ON DEATH OF CDE. LEONID ILYICH BREZHNEV

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Supreme Soviet, and directs that an expression of its condolences be conveyed to his sorrowing relatives and to the Government and people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.
/The Prime Minister/.

The Speaker: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move the motion that this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee and President of the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Supreme Soviet, and directs that an expression of its condolences be conveyed to his sorrowing relatives and to the Government and people of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Cde. Speaker, Leonid Brezhnev died on Wednesday 10th November, 1982 and by Thursday 11th November the world was informed of the death of this great Soviet Leader.

Leonid Brezhnev was born 19th December, 1906. He was the son of a worker at a steel factory and when he was ten years old, the great socialist revolution occurred. At the age of seventeen he joined the Young Communist League. Eight years later he became a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

This was a landmark which signaled for him the purpose of his entire life – which has been tireless work in building the socialist society, a society which has been described as the most just society at this time.

In June 1938 Brezhnev was promoted to the post of Department Head for Dnepropetrovsk for the Regional Party Committee and in February 1939 at the age of 33, the Young Communist was elected Secretary of the Regional Committee.

At the outbreak of the Nazi invasion during the second world war, Cde. Brezhnev was in the forefront of the battle to defend his homeland. It was during that war that he won many orders and medals for his outstanding services. In 1943 he was promoted to Major-General.

At this point I would like to recall one of the most outstanding achievements attributed to this Great Leader in so far as the development of his country is concerned. I refer here to the development of the Virgin Lands in the Republic Kazakhstan.

In his book on the development of this program Cde. Brezhnev said “the virgin lands development is part of my life.” He was entrusted this task in January 1954 – and it was a tough assignment but he knew value of it and put his all into the task. The development of the virgin lands was not only a matter of increasing grain production in that Republic but also a cardinal solution to the grain problem for the whole Soviet Union.

Cde. Brezhnev lived to see the coming into being of a gigantic agro-industrial complex which still today exerts a powerful influence on the economy of the whole country. The development of the virgin lands signaled a great achievement in the socialist epoch. It provides us here in Guyana ample proof that if we set ourselves the task of developing the virgin lands of all 216,000 km² of our nation we would have a lot to be proud of.

Following the successes in developing the Republics’ Virgin Lands Cde. Brezhnev was further elevated between 1960 and 1964 to Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme people then to General Secretary of the Central Committee in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and remained at that position up to his last day.

Leonid Brezhnev’s life revolved around the principal tasks of safeguarding, maintaining and improving on the achievements made by the Soviet people as a result of the great October revolution and promoting and pursuing initiatives designed to bring about peace which he considered as the crucial condition for progress in all fields of human endeavor.

The Great October Socialist Revolution occasioned the release of the creative energies of the Soviet people to tackle the urgent task of national reconstruction. The result of this has been marked by vigorous development of industries decisive for scientific and technical progress. So significant and progressive was the success of that revolution that the world has been witnessing since then the steady development of socialism not only in the Soviet Union but throughout the world. The world socialist movement today occupies in excess of 35 percent of the land surface of the world. Several countries, large and small in Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, including the Caribbean, now embrace socialism and the number is growing steadily. These are countries who have recognised that socialism and non-capitalist development is the only road to their country’s rapid and safe progress and to the full and proper service of their citizens and of the international masses.

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16.30 hrs.

We witness today the new socialist states of France and Spain.

It is significant that one of the late president Brezhnev's last public appearances was at Moscow Square. Leonid Brezhnev earned a hero's funeral and was inhumed among heroes in Moscow Square, commonly referred to as "The Red Square". On November 7, 1982, he performed his last public task at Moscow Square when he reviewed a two-hour long Mass Parade during the celebration to mark the 65th anniversary of the great October Socialist Revolution. What must have been an inspiration to him was the readiness of the total population to use the Defence of the Fatherland, as demonstrated by his people welded into unity by the force of history and the indomitable will to survive as a nation.

On Friday 12th November, President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Forbes Burnham, led his nation in paying tribute to the late President Leonid Brezhnev when the book of condolence was opened at the Soviet Embassy in Guyana. President Burnham had this to say:

"The Soviet Union has lost a great, and the world, a leader and statesman whose consuming interest and self-imposed objective was a world where peace dominated."

Cde. President Burnham further described the passing of the late Leonid Brezhnev as a grievous and monumental loss.

In moving this Motion, I can say no more but to commend this Assembly, every Member, to nurture a fibre from this three-time hero of the Soviet Union and two-time hero of socialist labour as he struggled to the very last not for personal and individual wealth, not for the development of things primarily, but for peace and security in the interest of humanity the world over. Indeed, Cde. Speaker, the late President of the U.S.S.R. knew that the transition period from capitalism to socialism is a difficult period but it must be faced if we are to break the resistance of the exploiters and carry out fundamental socialist reforms in the socio-economic and spiritual life of any country.

Another lesson is that we must study, work and learn in order to progress. The late President Brezhnev reminds us:

"One of the primary tasks of socialism is to foster in our citizens a desire to attain great social goals, ideological conviction and a truly creative attitude to work."

Only education, theory, precept and practice can ensure this. President Leonid Brezhnev, during his eighteen years at the head of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was mindful always of these cardinal principles of the new way of life. Further, his was the determined task of saving the people of the Soviet Union from the disaster and destruction of another war.

His foreign policy was inextricably bound up with maintaining the achievements of the Soviet Union and seeking to promote a world environment which would facilitate the growth of human development rather than the "senseless squandering of their material and spiritual wealth."

It was these considerations which inspired the policy of détente based on the principle of peaceful co-existence which saw the world cease its headlong rush to nuclear confrontation. There is no doubt that when the history of these times is written it will be recorded that the world breathed easier as a result of Leonid Brezhnev's active commitment to world peace.

We should resolve now to work towards the strengthening of the non-Aligned Movement so that

nations that wish to strive to practice the principles of a new development path by interpreting correctly concepts such as democracy and egalitarianism in order to build a strong country and just world can pursue this chosen path peacefully.

If we strengthen our resolve, too, to work for the creation of a zone of peace in the Caribbean, then the teachings of Lenin which Brezhnev stood for and which are reflected in his efforts to promote détente genuine peace and then in his death the cause of true peace and national sovereignty will find strength.

Comrade Leonid Brezhnev's whole life was an example of serving the interest of the Soviet Union and furthering the cause of socialism, which he recognised can only be achieved in an atmosphere of world peace.

For us in the developing world his life stands out as a shining example of commitment and dedication to the cause of socialist construction and must serve to inspire and renew our commitment to the promotion of world peace and proletarian internationalism.

Cde. Speaker, at this time I cannot help reflecting on the words of Nikolai Ostrovsky, for this is how I believe the late Leonid Brezhnev lived. Nikolai at the age of 20 was turned into a bed-ridden invalid and died at the youthful age of 32 from wounds sustained in the Civil War in his country. He was actually going blind when he wrote these words:

“Man's dearest possession is life. It is given to him but once, and he must live it so as to feel no torturing regrets for wasted years, never know the burning shame of a mean and petty past; so live that dying, he might say: All my life, all my strength were given to the finest cause in all the world – the fight for the liberation of mankind.

And one must make use of every moment of life, lest some sudden illness or tragic accident cut it short.”

This he wrote in his book “Tempering of the Steel”.

Finally, Cde. Speaker, I make bold to say that Leonid Brezhnev lived fully his tree scores and fifteen of heroic years. Such men do not die. For such men death has no sting. For such men the grave cannot incarcerate them as victims. For such men entombment can proclaim no victory.

Leonid Brezhnev's fine moral qualities live in the virgin lands of his homeland as a living symbol of selfless service not to things primarily but to people, to humanity. The name of Leonid Brezhnev, outstanding world leader and champion of the cause of peace and détente will live in the hearts of men for ever.

I commend, Cde. Speaker, this Motion to this house.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Cde. Mohamed.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Speaker, I rise to support this Motion. I wish to point out that it is indeed fitting and appropriate that this Parliament of Guyana records its profound regret on the death of Cde. Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, one of the most distinguished and indomitable leaders in our day. He was General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. We join the world in mourning the loss of a truly great leader.

It is often said that the times make the man. It is also equally true that history has occasionally provided such great men who have been able to influence the entire course of world history. Cde. Brezhnev is one such man. His entire life has been not only rich but one providing mankind with much inspiration and many examples, and he has certainly left his indelible mark on history. Born in a working

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class family, himself starting as a worker, he developed into one of the most prestigious leaders of the international working class movement as well as one of the most renowned of statesmen in our times and also a respected leader of the Soviet people. With such a background, he well understood the feelings, the hopes, the aspirations and dreams of the ordinary man, particularly the working man.

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(Cde. Feroze Mohamed continues)

16:40 hrs

Cde. Brezhnev was an outstanding revolutionary and a communist, a dedicated communist. This was clearly seen from the time he joined the Young Communist League at the age of 17. Later in 1937 he became a member of the Soviet Union and until his death when he was 75 years old he held the responsible position of General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and President of the Presidium of the U.S.S.R. During this time it was necessary for us to note his exemplary performance in the great.....war of 1941 – 45 when as part of the Soviet army he was able and he played a major role in repelling the Nazithat invaded the Soviet Union.

He ably accounted for himself in his performance in the different positions he held. Never did he fail to live up to the expectations of his people, party and country. In all he did he portrayed that distinguishable trait of a communist. As a communist he remained faithful unto the end to the Scientific Marxist-Leninist Principles. For him, this was not only a source of inspiration but a compass that guided him and his party steadily towards the successful construction of an advanced socialist society and to laying the foundation for the communist construction un the U.S.S.R. He paid special attention to ideological work and development, underlining its importance and emphasising the dangers of distortions to the cause of socialism and to the working people’s interest. Due to its relevance here may I quote what he said on this:

“But a mistake in ideology is as a rule hidden camouflaged in fine sounding phrases and this only makes it more dangerous because it is bound ultimately to have its effect and cause enormous harm, if not corrected in time. The modern world has no vacancies, whereas we allow ourselves to be lulled into complacency, there our ideological opponents are at work. “Hence,” Lenin taught us, “to belittle the Socialist ideology in any way, to turn aside from it in the slightest degree means to strength bourgeois’ ideology.”

Inseparable from Cde. Brezhnev’s life is his singular, his untiring efforts to realise world peace and disarmament. This has been not only his life long obsession but these form the corner-stone of the Soviet Union’s foreign policy. He was unquestionably a passionate advocate of world peace. Among our contemporaries he ranked as one of the foremost peace champion. Associated to his name too was the policy of détente which in the 1970’s replaced the cold war brought about by imperialism and of which Guyana was a victim several times over. The historical significance of these policies to which he is related and for which mankind is so deeply grateful cannot be underestimated.

Militarism, a by-product of imperialism has raised its ugly head in a major way. It is monstrous and horrible. It is wasteful, immoral and irrational. Militaristic policies are pushing mankind to the brink of extension. The priority issue before humanity today is to halt this growing threat, avert a nuclear world war III. It was to these tasks that Leonid Brezhnev, leader of the Soviet Union addressed himself, and the fact that 37 years have elapsed without another world war is due primarily to the indefatigable and consistent peace work of leaders such as Cde. Brezhnev and the policies pursued by the socialist countries.

From his endless speeches one finds unmistakably a clear abhorrence of war and his recognition of its senselessness, futility and destructiveness which are opposed to social progress and man’s happiness on earth. To peace, disarmament, détente, he was firmly committed. Leonid Brezhnev was also a firm internationalist and during his period as General Secretary of the Communist Party of Soviet Union and head of the Soviet Socialist state unstinting support and solidarity were rendered to the peoples of the

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world struggling against imperialism, apartheid, colonialism, and neo-colonialism for democracy and social progress. Assistance was sent to them in many forms. Readily come to mind are Vietnam, Angola, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Nicaragua and Liberation Movements like P.L.O.; S.W.A.P.O.; A.N.C.; of South Africa F.M.L.U. in El Salvador; etc. In his time we saw the irreversible and important advance made by the world revolutionary forces.

Cde. Leonid Brezhnev's body was put to its final resting place last Monday. Nevertheless, his ideas, the policies he embraced will certainly endure. Speaking of himself he said:

“Serving the interest of the Soviet people, the cause of Lenin's party and the cause of communism has been and remains the meaning of my whole life”

This is an objective self explanation and one as good as any that we can provide. He has blazed new trails which his successor, Cde. Yuri Andropov will no doubt follow. He has also left a rich heritage which will benefit not only the Soviet people but indeed the mankind.

We on this side of the House wish to reiterate our profound grief at this loss and join in sending our condolences to his party, Government, people and family.

The Speaker: I will now put the question. Will members kindly indicate by standing up for one minute.

/Members stood in silence for one minute/

Motion carried.

BILLS – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

GUYANA RICE BOARD (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982

A Bill intituled:

“An act to amend the Guyana Rice Board Act to empower the Guyana Rice Board to establish Regional Rice Boards and to assign them certain functions of the Board in order to decentralise its functions and to provide for matters connected therewith.” /The Vice-President, Agriculture/

The Vice-President, Agriculture: (Cde. Green): Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that the Guyana Rice Board (Amendment) Bill 1982 – Bill No 11/1982, first published on September 11, 1982 which deals with the establishment of Regional Rice Boards be now read a Second time. Cde. Speaker, this Bill is intended to amend the Guyana Rice Board Act and to empower the Board to establish Regional Rice Boards and to assign them certain functions and responsibilities in order to basically decentralise its functions and to provide for matters connected with the operation of the Board. Briefly, this move is consistent with our new approach to give more power to the people and to ensure that the Regions become effective and that the people who function or has a responsibility for the majority of government businesses that is normally conducted from the Centre.

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16.50 hrs.

(Cde. Green continues)

As far as the Board is concerned, we will recall, Cde. Speaker, that following the merger of the Guyana Rice Corporation and the Guyana Rice Marketing Board in 1973 December, the new organisation which we now have, the Guyana Rice Board, emerged. Some of the functions of the Board as was envisaged at that time in 1973 consisted of the following: To develop the industry and to promote the expansion of the export trade; to exercise the general supervision over the disposal of all paddy produced in this country; to control the manufacture, purchase, sale, distribution and export of all rice and all the by-products manufactured in Guyana; and to engage in such other commercial, industrial and agricultural activities which the Board deems necessary for the purposes of the development of the industry.

In order to carry out some of these functions the Board found itself over the past nine years involved in a number of activities such as an agricultural machinery service with a fleet of tractors, harvesters and combines. The Board also got involved in things like agricultural credit to rice farmers and working in collaboration with the industry of agriculture, spent a lot of effort in extension and research work. The Board also was saddled with the responsibility of supplying rice farmers with fertilisers, weedicides and insecticides and, also, the Board at the centre assumed the responsibility of operating a number of mills in the regions and the areas where rice is produced in this country.

This Government is always prepared to examine an organisation or Corporation to see whether it is in keeping with the current laws and the needs of the society and the people that we are serving. A close examination was made of the Board earlier this year and it was discovered that there were managerial problems. There is a huge overdraft which this Assembly is aware of and exports have been falling. There are a series of acts of indiscipline, not to mention the rascality which we have discovered and for which a number of persons are now before our Courts.

During this year we completely restructured the management and we have appointed a new General Manager. We have been forced to rid ourselves of a number of managers and regional managers who were not acting in the best interest of rice production in this country. Briefly, therefore, one aspect of the new proposal is to set up these regional Boards, which Boards are intended to help the management of the existing mills and the facilities in the region. The proposal at the moment is to have five such Boards, one in region 2, Region 3, Region 4, Region 5 and Region 6, and it is proposed that the Board should consist of at least five rice farmers. The Chairman of the Board will not necessarily be the Regional Chairman. That person, whoever is elected as Chairman, would sit as a Director on the Central Board in Georgetown.

The regional administration, in fact, has already taken over some of the Boards. At Rotterdam, the region has already assumed, along with the Rotterdam Agricultural Production Group, responsibility for the mill in Region 2. At Dundee, Mahaicony, in Region 5, we have just completed procedures for handling the responsibility for the mill to regional administration and the same goes for Paradise in Region 4. Within the next few weeks, we will complete the details for handing over Belmont and Cane Grove. It is intended at the next stage that the running of the mills will be transferred into the farmers' co-operatives ultimately.

A fleet former owned by the G.R.B. has also been handed over to the regions so that they can provide a more intimate and a better service to the farmers. The indication so far is that this new system of regionalism is already bearing fruit.

In so far as the extension work is concerned, the Ministry of Agriculture will continue to support the regional system and the Regional Chairmen in the provision of extension work for the rice farmers. Credit, as perhaps is already known, will now be handled by Gaibank and the distribution of the inputs of fertilisers will be the responsibility of the commercial sector including the Guyana National Trading Corporation.

This Bill is merely to ensure that we have the legal authority to hand over and to empower the Board to establish the regional boards to which I just referred. It is our view that the regional boards would be better able to manage their facilities since the remoteness which existed in the past as a result of having a central authority in the main urban centre would be removed. The rice industry is important for us at this stage and we see this Bill as just one of a number of steps taken and to be taken by the Ministry of Agricultural and, indeed, the Government to ensure that our rice industry and, indeed, the agriculture revolution is put on a firm footing and bear the reward and the success which we look forward to over the next few months and years. Therefore, Cde. Speaker, I commend this Bill for acceptance by this Assembly.

Question proposed.

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Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, it took the Government eighteen years to realise that there was managerial problems – rascality and probably other things which have led to the complete running if not destruction of one of the industries that could have been the most possible in this country – the rice industry.....coupled with genuine and sincere appeal or appeals many years ago to overhaul the board and to ensure that it is constituted with people who have the industry at heart. People with the necessary expertise and skill that can really make the wheel of production move with the services in this country. But the Government, sad to say Cde. Speaker, did not heed to our appeals, but continued on their own.....which today shows that the rice industry is in a perilous situation. The industry which before made profits, an industry which was overof its market and to create new markets for selling rice produced by the farmers. We had a report in the 60's about production and because of that fact and that reality we were able to go beyond the borders of the Caribbean to sell our rice.

Cde. Speaker, this bill will serve only to extend the bureaucracy and probably added to that additional financial burden on the Rice Marketing Board. I was looking at provisions in the bill. I found that the Chairman of the Regional Rice Board, shall be paid such, if any, remuneration and allowances as the Board, acting after consultation with the Minister, may determine. The other members of a Regional Rice Board shall be paid such, if any allowances as the Board, acting after consultation with the Minister, may determine. So you will have to pay the Chairman of the Board and there is provision also in the bill to pay other members duly constituted to the Regional Rice Board.

What the Minister should look into and I want to call upon him to do – the Minister of Agriculture Cde. Speaker,so many people have failed to perform as Minister of Agriculture including one technically qualified man, and the record for the year 1982 shows that they have all failed miserably – rice being no exception.

What is needed is not extension of the bureaucracy, not greater financial burden but a deep look into the body that maintains and administrates the rice industry. It was a fatal mistake to bring Dundas from Corentyne and put him in the Rice Marketing Board.

The Speaker: No Cde. Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I withdraw it Cde. Speaker. Cde. Speaker, the rascality at Springlands probably was greater than that which the Minister referred toas soon as the People's National Congress took absolute control of the Board away from the farmers.

I was a member of this Assembly in 1965 Cde. Speaker, when the then Minister in charge of the Rice Marketing Board Mr. W.O.R. Kendall moved to amend the Rice Marketing Board Act. The title of that amendment was to literally cease the industry from people who have shown that they had both the capital and the voice to demonstrate and run the Board efficiently and successfully. We warned him then that in so doing the Rice industry would be ruined and the farmers will be frustrated. Cde Speaker, not a single member on the Government benches will say that we did not have a frustrated farming community in this country. Probably, the rice farmers being the most frustrated.

I remember reading in the last budget speech where the number of dependents in the rice industry has been reduced from some forty five thousand to twenty-six thousand.....objectives to realise a greater structure for the administration of the Rice Board, but what we will not have in this country is people to produce the rice. This is another warning about rice this afternoon in this Assembly.

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17.10 hrs

You may have the bureaucracy, you may have pen-pushers, you may have men gallivanting into the various regions telling the rice farmers they can do this and do that, but what you will not have ultimately in the country is people to actually produce the rice so that the economy can transform itself and so that your foreign exchange position can be better.

We have heard - and this is only for the purpose of making the point more clear – that bauxite and sugar are in danger because of world trends. It does not appear from purely a common sense standpoint that rice can rescue and rice will have to rescue the economy. If that is clearly so, would it not be better – though the Government is coming after 18 years – for the Government to confess what the Minister has confessed this afternoon and at the same time make bold to say that we have reached the point where we are now going to hand over the rice industry to the farmers of this country so that they can run it efficiently instead of bringing a Bill to put more people on the backs of the farmers who can achieve nothing for the industry?

These regional boards can do no more than replace the Rice Action Committees. That is another reality: replace the Rice Action Committees. We have had this kind of input already for several years. The Minister made a point and I noted it. We are trying to have the necessary legal right or power so that these Committees probably can emerge from the process of legislation, or legality, but in practical terms the Government enjoys the right, which right they exercised in the past, of appointing people to constitute the Rice Action Committees and the Rice Action Committees were expected to do exactly what these regional bodies, as the Minister is saying, will do now. Probably the only new input is that somebody there – I think he said the Chairman – may sit on the Rice Board but expansion of the number in the Rice Board without inclusion of the people who are interested and who can make a contribution will be, as I said, simply providing employment and wasting taxpayers' money.

We are opposed to this Bill. We are opposed to expansion of the bureaucracy. The Rice Action Committees have not been subjected to public scrutiny. Under what Act within the framework of our Statute Book were those bodies set up? To whom did they account? The Rice Action Committees have wasted millions of dollars in this country and millions were wasted as well on the machinery which is probably idling at various points in this country and the farmers continue to complain of poor, or no, services. There is discrimination in providing machinery for harvesting their rice crops. We have alluded to evidence where machinery was in Plot "A" and even though Plot "B" was ready for harvesting the machinery was taken a distance away from that point and the man next door did not get the opportunity of using that machinery for the harvesting of his rice.

The Government has, over these years, brought in all kinds of varieties of rice, not to mention the hybrids. In the '60s when the rice industry was buoyant and viable the varieties used required less fertilisation, but all the varieties that were introduced and pushed by the Government required substantial fertilisation and history has shown that the Government was unable to provide the fertilisers. Because of the difficulty in obtaining machinery, fertilisers, insecticides and weedicides and so many other services that are basic to a successful rice industry, many farmers have become so frustrated that they have parted company with the rice industry. Thousands of them migrated and migration is continuing currently from the rural areas to Georgetown. This is a serious thing which the Government must look at. If migration continues, even in this limited way, from the rural areas to Georgetown, it means that you are lessening

the production force in the country by not taking the kind of action that can help the industry and so help the farmers.

I want to ask the Minister to tell us. There are a lot of rumors and probably some news item here and there, about losing the Jamaica market. The Trinidad market has gone and possibly the Barbados market is going. I would like to ask positively--

The Speaker: Cde. Persaud, we are not debating the whole rice industry.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, with the greatest respect, this amendment has to do with the rice industry because if you are expanding the bureaucracy with the aim and objective of improving the rice industry, I must, without being too long about it, make a few points that have to do with production, marketing, price. These are basics to the industry.

I proceed to make the point with the greatest respect that we are losing, or have lost, Caribbean markets. What is the position? There was a news item on the air. I did not hear it myself, but I was reliably informed by some of my colleagues that there was something emanating from the General Manager of the Guyana Rice Marketing Board to the effect that the rice farmers are going to be permitted to dispose of their own rice. Probably the Minister can tell us if that is contemplated, if it is so or not. Why do I raise it? Cde. Speaker, you know that people have been charged, have been harassed, their rice has been seized. All these are actions which have frustrated farmers and then you come shortly afterwards and say, "Now you are going to be permitted to do what you were getting jailed to some time ago." We have to draw attention to these things otherwise we would not be making the kind of effective contribution we have to make.

The Speaker: Cde. Persaud, if the law says you cannot do it and you breach the law, you must be penalised. If the members of the Government recognise that what they were doing is incorrect they are now amending the law to change it. But one cannot just breach the law and say that was wrong and this is right. I am not entering into any dialogue. Please proceed. I do not want to take up your time.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: It is a simple point. I would be the last to say that people must breach the law, but if it was only a question of breaching the law, then the Government could have acted differently to encourage the farmers, instead of discouraging them and frustrating them, particularly if the Government had in mind that this would eventually have to come, and the Government would know that there was no need to impose the hardship and harassment to which the farmers were subjected. That was a very good point, and I am grateful to you for it if that is the result of consideration by the Government.

In the 60s the P.P.P. Government provided great services to the farmers. The Credit Corporation was an institution which had as its foremost policy to help agriculture and the rice industry in particular and the farmers benefited immensely from the services offered to them by the Credit Corporations. Is it not a scandal that after 18 years we are producing less rice than we were producing in 1964, 1965. The actual figures then would have been 165,000 pounds. I do not want to go over the figures that were given earlier by my colleague. I think the Government had a worse case in so far as the rice industry is concerned. The number of mills has been reduced by more than 50 per cent.

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

There were not only dismissals or removals in the hierarchy of the Parliament there were dismissals at lower levels. Why? Because they are over-employed in the Rice Marketing Board. They had no alternative but to take these measures. I want, Cde. Speaker, this afternoon to call upon Government to amend the necessary legislation to revert the position of the Board as it existed in 1969. That is a positive move. That is more effective andthe Rice Farmers to be in control. The Government already has a Regional Chairman, Regional Executive Secretary and what have you. What really are the functions of all these people. When the regional legislation were proposed in the Assembly we were told that they are expected to do all these things. They will work with the people and the people are given the greatest opportunity to produce for the development of this country. Now, despite the fact that we have the regional system with so many people, we are adding, yet further,.....simply being that they will help with production.

Cde. Speaker, I want to call upon Government to look at the relationship between the Rice Producers Association and the Rice Farmers in 1960s and the kind of legislation which protects the Rice Producers Association that serve the industry. Today if the Government is pursuing the socialist path then in making a decision as to who would be.....in order to provide these changes the overwhelming fact would be the people and hence the Rice Producers Association would be placed in that district. But now the Government is placing farmers.....doesn't it follow that costs will go up and cost of production will go up automatically? So many difficulties to show how prices will go up. In fact farmers are making the point and I want to be their strong advocate this afternoon that they are producing at a loss and if they will continue to produce at a loss there will be a drop in the commodities produced.....and that situation has to be alleviated. I want then, this afternoon, to ask the Minister to consider a general restructuring, not place written legislation adding more burden on the Board and on the farmers but look at the Committee at the top. If the top is weak, because this legislation makes provision for the Board to point to people and those Regional Boards can only function under the direction and control of the Rice Marketing Board and they can only carry out the functions that have been assigned to them by the Board. I say we need a new Board. We need a new report. We need people toand give the farmers new opportunities and revive the industry to better the economy of this country. Thank you.

Cde. Green: Cde. Speaker, I am afraid my friend, Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud has not added a great deal to the bill before the Assembly. He has raised a number of issues which I feel we can discuss at another time and place. I want to say some are derogatory that he referred to. Cde. Speaker, one needs to analyze the whole history of the Rice industry and the idea of it under the Rice Producers Association to which we subscribe and in fact the motion before the House is in that direction. We assume that people involved in the Regions will have an opportunity to exercise a sense of responsibility.....that we can further in.....

In the area of marketing we are continuing to look at markets abroad and we haveOne other thing I would like to get to, Cde. Speaker, and it is the remark made of the produce. I am not sure where he got his facts from but people are still cultivating. We are looking at conditions to increase acreage in the production of rice. Since the figures we have here in Parliament are not accurate because of individual diversification thata substantial portion of rice lands are not.....Cde. Speaker, I do not think there is anymore I want to say except to say we continue to.....the regions.

1982-11-17

17.20 – 17.30 hrs.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed as printed.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17.30 hrs

PUBLIC OFFICERS (TRANSFER OF FUNCTIONS) BILL 1982

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend certain enactments.” [The Vice President, Works Transport and Housing.]

The Vice President, Works, Transport and Housing (Cde. Naraine): Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that the Public Officers (Transfer of Functions) Bill be read a Second time. This Bill seeks to transfer certain functions to particular officers designated. One would remember that many years ago the Public Works Department and later the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, had many divisions all under one department or Ministry. Over a period of time the Hydraulics Division moved under the Ministry of Agriculture and the Chief Hydraulics Officer became the Chief Technical Officer. Therefore, certain functions that previously were carried out by the Director of Public Works or Chief Works and Hydraulics Officer, as he was known later under the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics were transferred to the Chief Hydraulics Officer. Similarly, the Chief Pure Water Supply Engineer, when Pure Water Supply moved into the Corporation of Guywa, was designated as General Manager and changes were made in the Act establishing the Guywa Authority.

There used to be a Supplies Division in the Ministry of Works but since a number of Public Corporations have been formed, this Supplies Division no longer exists as a division although there are small stores departments in various parts of the Ministries. But the Supplies Division, as we knew it, no longer exists. So, in fact, the designation of Chief Works, Hydraulics and Supply Officers, in fact, does not exist at all.

The Ministry of Works is now divided into certain divisions whereby, for instance, Roads Division is now being handled by the Chief Roads Officers who is fully responsible for the public roads of the country. The same goes for g buildings where a Chief Buildings Officers is responsible for buildings. So this Bill seeks to divest what was described as the Chief Works and Hydraulics Officers of a number of statutory functions and substituting a number of officers who now actually carry out the functions under those various acts.

In relation to surveying – because we will see that there is change of designation also under the Land Surveyor Act – all surveying now is concentrated in the Lands and Surveys Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and the head is the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys. Therefore, what is being done now is that the person designated as Surveyor of Lands and Surveys would take over the functions that used to be exercised by the Superintendent of Surveys and the head of that department now will function and exercise full authority under that Act.

I think it would be useful to know – because I am sure that this must be passing through minds of comrades – what happens with the Chief Works Officer. The Chief Works Officer will take up a new role and he would be concentrating mainly on dealing with major problems of engineering. For example, he would be dealing with general engineering standards, the publishing and preparation of engineering manuals. He would be dealing with contractual procedures and negotiations on major contracts and in dealing with research and development in so far as engineering is concerned. He will co-ordinate at the highest technical level the work of all the engineering divisions servicing this Ministry and all the Government Ministries and the regions as well.

This is what this Bill seeks to do. It is just regulating functions of officials exercising certain

functions under the Acts mentioned here. I think it is not a controversial matter but I would be happy to give any explanation which may be necessary.

Question proposed:

Cde. Ram Karran: The Bill is by no means controversial, Your Honour, except that there is the saying you have in this country, “monkey does dress up he picknie till he spoil um.” I cannot understand. The former Public Works Department in this country catered for drainage and irrigation as well as public works and pure water supply. It was changed. Because of rivalry and personality clashes and so on, the former Public Works Director could not get along with the deputy who was in charge of Drainage and Irrigation, so you had to get a new department. That was changed back. A full report was made out bringing back these two departments together. Somebody got a brainwave. I think when the hon. Vice President was in charge of this department he put in a new branch, Supply, and Supply has gone. We do not have Supply now and tomorrow you will not have the department, you will not have Ministers, much less Vice Presidents and we are cluttering up our legislation with all sorts of stupid amendments.

The Speaker: You have not said anything yet.

Cde. Ram Karran: I am saying that it is not necessary for legislation to be made for officers to carry out functions. The head of the Ministry or the head of the department must appoint X or Y to serve on whatever Board or whatever Committee or to carry out certain functions. If we are going to clutter up our legislation every other day when somebody gets a brainwave with things of this nature we are going to waste a lot of time, Your Honour. I have some experience in this matter and I am telling you from my own experience. My friend can bear me out if he has the guts to get up and say it, that everyday you are going to make a new Road Engineer or an Assistant Road Engineer is going to serve on this thing, and we are only making a bureaucracy and completing the Parkinson’s Law. I cannot understand why, for the life of me, departments or Ministers cannot appoint these people to do what they are supposed to do. You had Works, you had Water Supply, now you have Surveys. The Ministry did study very carefully the setting up of a separate Surveys Section. It is done now after how many years. Why does the Chief Surveyor have to have his duties written down in the legislation? Are you not forgetting something? It cannot be done properly, sir, it is better for it to be done administratively.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed

CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982- Bill No. 13/1982

“A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Customs Act.” [The Minister, Finance in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance].

The Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of Economic, Planning and Finance (Cde. Sallahuddin):
Cde. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of the Customs Amendment Bill 1982 and to say briefly what is intended here.....to section, for that section the Minister has authority tocustoms duties. The amendment seeks to insertin the public interestthrough the House.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed

FISCAL ENACTMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982 – Bill No. 14/1982

“A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend certain fiscal enactments” [The Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance].

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of the Fiscal Enactments Amendment Bill 1982 and to seek your kind permission to introduce the amendments at the proper stage.

Essentially, Cde. Speaker, the amendments may be for the purposes of conveniences be set out in two groups. One group of enactment seeks to ensure compliance with various tax measures and regulations and I shall make reference to those present.

The other group of amendment seeks to grant some measure of tax relief to various groups or persons and I shall now give some comments on the various aspects.

The Speaker: Perhaps it is time to deal with the amendments.

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Speaker, with your permission I would want to add that what the amendments seeks to dofor the purpose of the compliance withmeasures, the Deed Registry Act and the Land Registry Act are said to be amended to empower the Registrar tothe permission of certificates of compliance from the Commissioner of Inland Revenue and from the relative Officer of the Local Democratic Organs before property is transferred and this is for the purpose of clarity and for the public understanding. I just want to say that since some of the amendments will take effect from the new fiscal year and some will take effect consequent upon their passage into law, I would like to say that this is one of those amendments which

will take effect consequent upon its passage into law.

The second, Cde Speaker, seeks to achieve the same objectives in the sense that those persons who require to have the registration of their vehicles transferred will have to produce to the Chief License Revenue Officer a certificate of compliance from the Commissioner of Inland Revenue.

The third amendment Cde. Speaker, has to do with regulating compliance so that those persons who in law are required to pay over to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue entertainment duty will now have a time stipulated for compliance with the regulations. What the amendment seeks to do is to empower the Commissioner to impose a certain penalty if compliance is not done in accordance with the law.

The fourth amendment Cde. Speaker, is similar to the third in that it relates to travel voucher taxensure compliance with measures. The fifth amendment seeks to grant income tax relief to those persons who receive pensions from overseas. One of the objectives there is to encourage those persons who qualify for overseas pension to have their pensions brought into and paid in the country so that some additional quantity of foreign exchange may become available to the system.

Finally, the amendment to the Income Tax Act section 25 seeks to grant deduction for income tax purposes or interest paid to loan obtained for additions, extensions and repairs to dwelling and also a similar facility of interest for the purpose of building which were previously occupied for a period not exceeding five years.

(Cde. Sallahuddin continues)

1982-11-17

17.50 – 18.00 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17.50 hrs

Essentially the amendments therefore fall within those two board categories. I shall be happy to answer any questions arising in the course of the meeting.

Question proposed.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Speaker, the Bill before the House this afternoon, particularly as it pertains to the first four amendments, clearly shows the desperation of the Government as it moves to collect money to run this country.

The People's Progressive Party has never been opposed to persons of this country paying taxes. Again, as far as this measure is concerned, we would not have been opposed, but it is the way in which the Government seeks to have this forced on the people of this country. So frantic they are moving not only to ensure that outstanding income taxes are paid, but a new amendment is put in here as far as the motor vehicles transfer is concerned.

This bill undoubtedly will create undue hardship to a number of people. As I understand it, at the moment a law exists which empowers the Commissioner of Inland Revenue to oppose sale of properties, or transfers of properties, when they are advertised in the Official Gazette, and, if people owe income tax, the Commissioner will then have an opportunity to collect. This is as the law exists at the moment. Therefore, where the existing law is concerned, the burden is on the Income Tax Department to continuously look into the Official Gazette to see whose property is being advertised for sale, or is being transferred, and then to check the records in the Inland Revenue Department to see who owes tax. If they do or if they have not filed returns, then the Commissioner of Inland Revenue can do the necessary thing. Because of the inefficiency of the department, because of the great problems that exist in the department at the moment, that burden, that onus, is now being transferred to the man who is selling his property or selling his car. Why must that be so? If I do not file my income tax returns, the law says the Commissioner can sue me. That is the law right now. The law compels me to file my return by April 30th. If I do not file my returns, then the Commissioner is within his right of the law to sue me. But, No. Because of some reasons or the other the law was not being enforced and they are saying that if I am selling my old Fiat Car now since it is getting old and I cannot afford to keep it i must waste my time to get a certificate to put in front of the Licensing Officer and say to him, "I have filed all my returns. I owe no money" and then i will have the transfer effected. Previously I would have gone to find a buyer. By the time I get that certificate, having found a buyer and perhaps not having the time to go to the Income Tax Department until a week later and with the problems that one has there to get a certificate, the buyer has gone. I have to find another buyer and to contend with my old Fiat car until I find another buyer.

This is so because of what happens at the Income Tax Department. This is a reality. People who are leaving this country – that includes me now and again – have problems with getting clearance to leave. It is a problem right now. Now we are going to have additional problem. The amendment refers not only to income tax. One will have to go to the City Council, or somewhere else, to get another certificate. That is the amendment which they have just brought here. The City Council also has a problem to get money. They are putting up properties for sale.

The Speaker: Cde. Persaud, you have no problems. Do you have a property?

Cde. Narbada Persaud: No, I do not have. I am not speaking for myself. I am speaking for you, too, Cde. Speaker. I have to file a return in the same way that I have to fill up a form and send it every year to my employer for a code number. I get a response giving my code number to my employer. When I

file my return, why cannot the department check and see if the return is in order, whether I owe or not. If I do not owe, send me that certificate that they are now going to ask me to get. Send me a certificate saying, "You do not owe money. You have filed all your returns and you are clear." During the year, if I want to sell my car I will not have to go to them again. I have filed all my return. They have looked at it when they are examining my expenses to give me my code number. They look at my return; it is in order. They say, "You do not owe" or, if I owe, well, send me a letter saying, "You owe. Pay it within so many days". When I pay it, they give me a certificate. I can then sell my property, anytime.

My great grandfather who is crippled and lying on his bed will die at any time. He has a little house and a little land. He wants to transfer it to me or to any other grandson and has to go through this cumbersome business to transfer. He is not selling his property, but to transfer it to his grandson or his son he will be bogged down with this legislation to get the certificate, when he is lying on his bed crippled and is not earning.

This legislation was not properly thought out and it is going to create unnecessary hardship on a number of people. As I said, we are not opposed to collecting taxes, but it is because of the way the members of the Government have run the country down. As some of them sit in the night or sleep in the night a brain wave came to them, "Here is a way to get money" and they push it down on the poor people of this country. We are representing the people. We have to speak out against it. Obviously we are opposed to this type of thing.

As far as entertainment is concerned, the cinema owners, I have to speak for you again, Cde. Speaker. We are not concerned about that. Those are the big ones, like the man who owns an aeroplane, the Guy-American people, or whoever they are. This is not for the poor man.

The Speaker: This legislation is being made for rich people, not for poor people.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Not for my grandfather and the poor man? He is not a rich man.

The Speaker: You do not have to worry. He has no property.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Exactly because he wants to transfer his property to his grandson. He is a poor man.

The Speaker: Then he is a rich man.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: This tax for the cinema is aimed at the rich. Clearly it is for the carrier, the passenger flights and so on. That is for the rich.

I want to know if the Minister in replying can give an explanation as to the last line on the last page, that is, page 7 of this Bill where it is stated that "purchase of residences which were previously occupied for a period not exceeding five years." I should like to know why the phrase 'not exceeding five years' is included in the last amendment.

The Speaker: Cde. Sallahuddin.

Cde. Sallahuddin: For the record, I want to emphasise that there is no new tax measure before the Assembly this afternoon. The Member who just spoke gave one impression that he was speaking as though he were opposing new measures. These measures seek to improve the regulatory processes which the Inland Revenue Department has to employ and I want to say that while it is true that there is an existing mechanism which the Commissioner of Inland Revenue could now use to ensure that those persons who are parting with property by one means or another pay the tax, this new mechanism, however, simplifies the task of the department in that it simply has upon application and after the necessary investigatory work, to issue or not issue the certificate of compliance.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18.00 hrs.

(Cde. Sallahuddin continues)

The burden is now transferred from the Inland Revenue Department to the citizen. The citizen still has the responsibility to ensure that he files his returns and pay his taxes. So long as the citizen fulfills those responsibilities there shall be absolutely no difficulty in the discharge of this function by the Inland Revenue Department.

The Speaker: Cde. Sallahuddin, I do not think Cde. Narbada was worried about that. His contention was that you know what happens when you want a tax clearance.now you are putting the burden on him.....If the mechanisms are set up where you can get the thing done quickly.

Cde. Sallahuddin: May I say that was the third and concluding point I want to make and that is to say there are the necessary arrangements to be made within the Inland Revenue Department. The final point I want to reply to is “why five years”. Before this amendment and bill this facility for tax relief did not exist and therefore it was felt that a five year period would have been a useful introduction.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule.

Cde. Sallahuddin: On behalf of the Vice-president, Economic Planning and Finance I beg to move the Amendment of the Schedule.

Amendment –

(i) That the following be substituted for the words beginning from Registrar” to end of the new Section 16A proposed to be inserted in the Deeds Registry Act, Chapter 5:01:

“... Registrar –

- (a) a certificate of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue (hereinafter referred to as the Commissioner) stating that he has in accordance with Section 60 of the Income Tax Act delivered to the Commissioner all his returns, including the return for the preceding year of income, and has paid all taxes due and payable to the Commissioner by him or has made arrangements to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for the payment of all such taxes that are due and payable; and
- (b) a certificate from such officer of the local democratic organ, within the boundaries of which such immovable property is situated, as may be authorised by that local democratic organ in that behalf stating that the donor, vendor, lessor, transferer or assignor, as the case may be has paid or made arrangements to the satisfaction of that officer for the payment of all rates and other sums due and payable by him in respect of such immovable property.”

(ii) That the following be substituted for the words beginning from “presents to the Registrar” to the end of the new proviso proposed to be inserted in section 76(2) of the Land Registry Act, Chapter 5:02:

“...presents to the Registrar –

- (a) a certificate of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue (hereinafter referred to as the Commissioner) stating that he has in accordance with Section 60 of the Income Tax Act delivered to the Commissioner all his returns, including the return for the preceding year of income, and has paid all taxes due and payable to the Commissioner by him or has made arrangements to the satisfaction of the Commissioner for the payment of

all such taxes that are due and payable; and

- (b) a certificate from such officer of the local democratic organ, within the boundaries of which such immovable property is situated, as may be authorised by that local democratic organ in that behalf stating that the donor, vendor, lessor, transferer or assignor, as the case may be has paid or made arrangements to the satisfaction of that officer for the payment of all rates and other sums due and payable by him in respect of such immovable property.”

(ii) That the words “the certificate” be substituted for the words “a certificate from the Commissioner of Inland Revenue” in the new proviso proposed to be inserted in section 89(2) of the Land Registry Act, Chapter 5:02:

Schedule as amended, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Assembly resumed.

Cde. Sallahuddin: I beg to report that the Fiscal Enactments (Amendment) Bill 1982 was considered by the Committee clause by clause with amendment, and move that the Bill be read a third time and passed as amended.

Bill reported with Amendment, read the Third time and passed as printed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved. “That this Assembly do now adjourn to Thursday, 1982-11-18 at 14:00 hours.” (The Vice-President, Agriculture.)

Adjourned accordingly at 18:05 hours.