

**THE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

**OFFICIAL REPORT**

**[VOLUME 7]**

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

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**180<sup>th</sup> Sitting**

**2 p.m.**

**Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1979**

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**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (63)**

**Speaker**

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

**Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (46)**

**Prime Minister (1)**

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

**(Absent – on leave)**

**Deputy Prime Minister (1)**

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

**(Absent)**

**Senior Ministers (12)**

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

**(Absent)**

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,  
Minister of Works and Transport

**(Absent)**

- Cde. B. Ramsaroop,  
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs  
and Leader of the House
- Cde. C.V. Mingo, **(Absent)**  
Minister of Home Affairs
- \*Cde. H. Green **(Absent)**  
Minister of Health, Housing and Labour
- \*Cde. H.O. Jack, **(Absent)**  
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources
- \*Cde. F.E. Hope, **(Absent)**  
Minister of Finance
- \*Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H.,  
Minister of Agriculture
- \*Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, C.C.H., **(Absent)**  
Attorney General and Minister of Justice
- \*Cde. V.R.Teekah, **(Absent)**  
Minister of Education, Social  
Development and Culture
- \*Cde. R.E. Jackson  
Minister of Foreign Affairs
- \*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., **(Absent – on leave)**  
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

### **Ministers (2)**

- Cde. O.E. Clarke  
Minister – Regional  
(East Berbice/ Corentyne)
- Cde. C.A. Nascimento **(Absent – on leave)**  
Minister, Office of the Prime Minister

### **Ministers of State (10)**

- Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael  
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

### **\*Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

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

Cde. J.R. Thomas  
Minister of State, Office of the  
Prime Minister

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,  
Minister of State, Ministry of  
National Development

Cde. S. Prashad,  
Minister of State – Regional  
(East Demerara/ West Coast Berbice)

Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman,  
Minister of State,  
Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. L.A. Durant,  
Minister of State – Regional  
(North West)

\*Cde. F.U.A. Campbell,  
Minister of State for Information,  
Ministry of National Development

**(Absent)**

### **Parliamentary Secretaries (5)**

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

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

### **\*Non-elected Ministers**

Cde. M. Corrica,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education,  
Social Development and Culture

Cde. E.M. Bynoe,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade  
and Consumer Protection

Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic  
Development and Co-operatives

**Other Members (15)**

Cde. W.G. Carrington, C.C.H

Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley

Cde. E.H.A Fowler

**(Absent – on leave)**

Cde. J. Gill

Cde. W. Hussain

Cde. K.M.E Jones

**(Absent)**

Cde. J.G.Ramson

Cde. P.A. Rayman

Cde. A. Salim

Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P

**(Absent – on leave)**

Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S.

Cde. C.A. Sukul, J.P.

Cde. H.A. Taylor

Cde. L.E. Willems

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen

**Members of the Opposition (16)**

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

**Leader of the Opposition (1)**

Cde. C. Jagan

**(Absent)**

Leader of the Opposition

**Deputy Speaker (1)**

Cde. Ram Karran,

Deputy Speaker

**Other Members (12)**

Cde. J. Jagan

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

Cde. Narbada Persaud

Cde. C. Collymore

**(Absent)**

Cde. S.F. Mohamed

**(Absent)**

Cde. I. Basir

Cde. C. C. Belgrave

Cde. R. Ally

Cde. Dalchand, J.P

Cde. Dindayal

Cde. H. Nokta

Cde. P. Sukhai

**(Absent)**

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

Mr. M.F. Singh, J.P

**(Absent)**

Mr. M.A. Abraham

**OFFICERS**

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

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

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National Assembly

2.10 – 2.15 p.m.

2.10 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

#### Leave To Members

**The Speaker:** Leave has been granted to the Prime Minister and to the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh for today's Sitting.

### PUBLIC BUSINESS

### MOTION

### BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed the debate of the Motion moved by the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives for the approval of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1979.

**The Speaker:** When the Adjournment was taken yesterday, Cde. Clarke was speaking. Cde. Clarke, you have 15 minutes more. We are going to be on a very tight schedule today from the number of speakers who have intimated their desire to speak and if they are to be accommodated we will have to keep to a very strict and tight schedule. Cde Clarke.

**The Minister – Regional (East Berbice/Corentyne)** (Cde. Clarke): I thank you, Cde. Speaker. Cde. Speaker, when the Adjournment was taken last night, I was supporting my contention that the People's Progressive Party does not have at heart the legitimate interest of the Guyana people and that is why they do not care what happens to this Guyanese economy. I have made the point that the Leader of the People's Progressive Party admitted in this House, on his feet, that he is a Moscow puppet and I made the very serious accusation that in the light of that admission the People's Progressive Party could not seriously work in the interest of the Guyanese people and at the same time work in the interest of outsiders. I was pursuing this course by drawing attention to the P.P.P.'s attitude which has been one of boycotts, strikes,

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encouragement in non-production, while at the same time coming in this House and speaking with forked tongues.

Cde. Speaker, I recall, and I am sure this House recalls, that it was after the 1973 elections that the People's Progressive Party decided that it was going to pursue a course of non-co-operation, of boycotts and strikes and in that respect you will recall and we all recall, that its members went up and down this country and encouraged the farmers not to produce. While that was going on, Cde. Speaker, it was the People's National Congress which had to draw attention to the fact that leaders of the People's Progressive Party were themselves engaged in production while telling the ordinary working-class and farmers in this country that they should not produce. We draw attention to the fact that Ramlakhan from Windsor Forest was planting larger and larger acreages while the small farmers were being told by the P.P.P not to produce.

**2.15 p.m.**

Let me draw the attention of this House again to the facts, because on the Corentyne right now, one of the staunch supporters of the People's Progressive Party and an activist in the R.P.A. on the Upper Corentyne, have not only been planting more lands, but has been guilty of taking possession of the lands of large numbers of small farmers on the Upper Corentyne. That person has the ability to do so because of his equipment and machinery facilities. Jainarine Sawh has taken away land. I want to mention the names of the persons whose land –

**The Speaker:** Cde Clarke you know better than to do that.

**Cde. Clarke:** Cde Speaker, let me make some general accusations. The P.P.P. comes into this House and tells us that it is interested in production, it is interested in solving the problems of this country, but outside of this House the P.P.P. demonstrates the exact opposite. As I said, there are a number of instances which could be drawn to the attention of this House to prove the point that I make about their non-interest in the people. When the Leader of the People's Progressive Party in 1975 announced a change of policy of the P.P.P.

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– because they cannot doubt that this is their position – he said these words and I am quoting from the Silver Jubilee Confab, the **Mirror** of August 17, 1975.

He said:

“Our political line should be changed from non-co-operation and civil resistance to critical support”.

It is when they moved from this position that they decided that they were going to have discussions with the P.N.C. at the highest level. What were those discussions? Those discussions were about the sharing of power. That is what they perceived those discussions would be about. If they were interested in the welfare of the people of this country, they would seriously have come to discuss with the People’s National Congress a programme for the development of this country. But that was not to be. Their interest is power and when you ask power for what, then you will get the answer. We have experienced what they did with the power in the seven years of misrule. Today, even though they are not in office in Guyana, representatives of the People’s Progressive Party have appeared in the community from time to time vaunting arrogance.

Yesterday we heard from our friend Cde. Sukhai. He made the point that the co-operative cannot transform the society. Clearly, he is making an error in his conception, because we are talking about co-operative society as an economic entity. We are talking in conceptual terms and he is talking in strictly economic terms. It only goes to show that the People’s Progressive Party has a conceptual problem in so far as what the P.N.C. is saying about the co-operative. It will be necessary, if it is not to slide further down into the bottomless pit, that it should carefully consider what the People’s National Congress Government has been doing in this country, and continues to do on behalf of the people of this country, for the development of the people of this country and of the country as a whole. It should seriously commit itself to the task of ensuring that this country develops and that the economy of the country improves so that the people of this country could enjoy a better quality of life.

We have heard and we know that the P.P.P. has been joining with several rightist groups, ultra rightist and ultra leftist groups, conveniently seeking to ensure that the P.N.C.’s



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programme in this country and for the development of the people of this country does not succeed. But its actions, in all of these respects, are doomed to failure. The P.P.P. knows that its actions are doomed to failure because it knows that the P.N.C. has a closeness with the people of this country, a closeness which the P.P.P. does not dare to deny.

We hear a lot about boycotts. We heard that the members will boycott the Constituent Assembly and they will be boycotting the new Constitution which the people of this country will be drafting. But they will come back, as they did in 1965, to say that they did not have any part in the Constitution that is framed. But it is not our fault that they would not have a part, it is their own. That is why I say they do not have the interest of the people of this country at heart. If they did, they would have concerned themselves with ensuring that the basic legal document of this country, which is going to control the lives and the destinies of the people of this country, has an input from the party which says that it has interest of the people at heart, but which, in all of its actions, tells us clearly that it has not the interest of the people at heart.

**2.25 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, I want to make it very clear to the Members of the People's Progressive Party that they do not surprise anyone on this side of the House nor do they fool anyone outside of this House when they come here and give the impression that they have the interest of this country at heart. They do not support; they do not help. I know what I am speaking about, Cde. Speaker, I am speaking like Cde. Janet Jagan spoke yesterday.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Clarke, 3 minutes more.

**Cde. Clarke:** The call for national patriotic front is therefore very empty. They come here and call for these things and they go outside of this House and they do exactly the opposite. They preach one thing and they practice the opposite. And, therefore, they should not come here and seek to fool the public and the Members of this House as to their sincerity. They have absolutely no sincerity in the call for national unity, national patriotic front. We in the people's National Congress will not be fooled by the attitudes they take up here because we know what is happening outside and as the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives said, the

Party is mobilised, and the Party will take all necessary steps to ensure that this economy is safeguarded from the machinations of those in the opposition who are bent on showing us that they are not working in the interest of the Guyanese people but in the interest of some foreign power and some foreign people whose interest is not akin to our own [Applause]

**The Speaker:** Cde. Persaud.

**Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud:** Cde. Speaker, the Budget Speech is a confession of failure. This confession, however, comes after 14 years of arrogance, mismanagement, inefficiency and wanton waste and squander mania. Why a country has reached such a depressing state must be the searching question of every Guyanese. It is obvious that the rights of the people have been callously trampled upon and democracy subverted, probably non-existent at the moment in the country. The people have had taken away from them the right to choose both the local government as well as the central government.

Local Government is not functioning at all and the central government functions against the interest of the masses. Talks about people's involvement are altered. What is true in this country is people's exclusion. There is no motivation at all.

Cde. Speaker, this country has got tremendous potential. You name the crop and we can produce it. Mittelholzer wrote on the production of potatoes and we have produced some but we do not hear anything about it anymore. Mittelholzer has gone, the book has remained and that is about all with respect to potatoes. Just to cite one. When the Cde. Deputy Prime Minister was Minister of Agriculture, he used to bring certain sample items to say we have produced this and we have produced that and we have produced the other, and I used to tell him then, and I have been proved right, that you have sample items which you have not moved into agriculture in the way you ought to. Agriculture is a dynamic process, it needs vision, it needs planning and it needs foresight. You do not pull out a few roots and bring them to the Parliament and fool anyone. Hence, fourteen years after, we have reached a point where the Government itself confesses failures in almost every segment of the economy. And that is manifested in so many ways.

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The Ministry of National Development is supposed to be the Ministry of Mobilisation. I wish to ask this question: what is that Ministry mobilising? Mobilising a crowd of people, beginning from the Permanent Secretary, to picket outside there few days when Parliament is in session, when these very people should be in their Ministries working and producing? How are you going to have production and productivity when you have them wasting time out there? What that Ministry has not succeeded in doing and will never succeed in, is mobilising the people to produce, mobilising the people to change the trend of the economy, mobilising the people to produce more effectively so that we could have a more vibrant economy in which the welfare and well-being of the people of this country can be taken care of. Cde. Speaker, this Government cannot fool us any longer with the utterance and loitering.

One Minister spoke last night, the Minister of Works and Transport, and he said that this budget is very modestly presented, there is no arrogance, there is no haughtiness. Probably, the presentation of the budget augurs a new era for this country. Must I interpret that statement to mean, Cde. Speaker, that in the past there was haughtiness, arrogance and all the rest of it? That is the position. And even this budget, this budget in which they attempt to bring out some of the truth because they cannot hide it any longer, all the facts are manifested clearly, and everyone knows what the position in the country is so that their confessions are not founded on the promise of honesty. They were forced in 1979 to come and show their hands, but indeed not fully so that the true picture of the country could be presented to this nation.

**2.23 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, so far as the Ministry of National Development is concerned, I would simply say, scrap it and leave the millions wasted there each year for agricultural development. The Government, Cde. Speaker, seeks to accuse the P.P.P. of stopping the people from producing. I heard that not very long ago.

[Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues]

How could the P.P.P. or anyone stop anybody or stop this Government when this Government claims at the Referendum held in July that it got more than 70 per cent of the votes? According to this Government, it controls the whole country. The Government then got more than 70 per cent backing. The second point is that this Government has 80 per cent of the economy under its control. This Government has a powerful army, it has the National Service, it has the People's Militia and what have you. It has Jonestown. What is therefore in this Government's way to stop it from producing?

Some of the speakers have indulged in cheap propaganda, attempting to point fingers at the P.P.P. According to them, the P.P.P. has no support and still they come in this Parliament to say that the reason why we are in this bad way is because the P.P.P. has been holding public and secret meetings, telling people not to produce. That is enough to demolish my friend Oscar Clarke. I think it would be good to explain that the truth of the matter is that 13 per cent of the people voted at the Referendum and the truth is that the P.N.C. has 13 per cent of the population behind it. I want to give it 20 per cent. It means then that 80 per cent of the people do not want the P.N.C. and it should get out of the Government. The reason why there is no production, why there is no development, why there is no growth and why they were not even able to meet the 5 per cent growth suggested by the I.M.F. is because it does not have the people behind it.

Earlier, I was making the point of motivation. The people obviously see what is happening in this country; they have lost interest. The people are migrating. From the North West, they are running away to Brazil and Venezuela. Indeed, those who are not migrating have retired into lethargy. There is no motivation and they are not prepared to do anything. This Government has a serious task before it. It has to create that spirit and zeal so that we can produce and bring back this economy. And it cannot be done with arrogance or the Government will continue to fail. What is very clear is that time will catch up with it, as it is catching up with it at the moment.

I want to say, to crown that off, that the people themselves have rejected the P.N.C. in no uncertain terms and to demonstrate that rejection there is this condition in the country at

the moment. The people themselves are not inspired, they are not encouraged and there are many factors which can be argued to show why they are not producing. It is because of the whole undemocratic character of the Government and things generally in this country. The Government does not like to hear charges of discrimination. But that is foremost on the list of charges against the Government. We have a situation where the greatest number of technical men run away from this country and the Ministry of Agriculture suffered the greatest number of casualties, even before the coming into being of the current Minister of Agriculture I do not want to name those people, but I know of men who have failed to get objective programme and policies implemented. Out of frustration, they have departed from this country. Even the men who were planted by this Government in many Ministries ran away, some by night. That is the situation in this country. Who is now left in this country to push the economy? None of the Ministers can answer that question and they cannot deny that a number of people who have left this country would have linked to serve Guyana.

The People's Progressive Party held Local Government Elections in 1960 and the people's representatives were elected. There was no system where you used to get a list and when the names on the list expired, you drew names of people who were not on the list and put them on the Councils. The public must know this. People all over the world must know this. How can you get motivation when at the very local government level the people who constitute the Councils are people put there because they hold party cards? Do you expect those people to inspire many people? Democracy must be at the root and when people are satisfied that democracy operates at that level then and only then people will be motivated and pushed. Those are the obvious factors that are responsible for the state of the economy and for the fall in production in various areas.

The truth is that for nine years there were no Local Government Elections in this country. How could the Government defend that condition and now, nine years after, start talking about a new Constitution, talking about regionalism to justify the postponement of Local Government Elections on more than four occasions? I cannot point to any country in the Caribbean that has done that. Their leaders are suffering for less. For four years you are denying the people the right to choose their local government leaders in this country. The

situation had reached the point where the term of office of each of the municipalities as well as the Councils had expired in October last year. The result is that this Parliament had to suffer the indignity of validating actions of the Councils done subsequent to the end of October last year. It shows that the thing had reached such a point that they did not realise that they were perpetuating them in office, saying, we will be giving you another year or two more years. It was this year that they brought legislation to regularise that position. That is the case with respect to local government.

As I said, one of the main factors for non-production, for non-motivation in this country is the complete absence of democracy. People cannot and will not be motivated in an atmosphere of dictatorship. People will not produce if there is no incentive. The exclusion of farmers from the Rice Marketing Board is another blatant example of the undemocratic practices of this Government. There was one Chairman whom they sacked. He did not know anything about rice. They have now put another man and he does not know either. That is the Chairman of the R.M.B. They are talking about contraband and smuggling. But I would suggest that they should search their own homes. I want to be kind to people, I do not want to call anybody's name.

**2.45 p.m.**

That is the situation. The people who head the process, to be specific, of rice development, know nothing about it. Then, each one is in a better position than the farmer who produces. Let them come off the farmers' backs and give the farmers the right to manage, to administer and to run their affairs. They have done it successfully in the past and nobody knows that better than the Minister of Agriculture. He is part of that scheme and he undoubtedly made a contribution. But, of course, times change, positions change and people change.

Cde. Speaker, I do not want to spend a long time giving figures but compare a period during the time of the P.P.P. Government, which they talk so much about, with a period during the time of the P.N.C. Government and you will see new developments during the time of the P.P.P. In fact, the figures will show that during the period of the P.P.P.

Government, the production of rice rose by 74 per cent and during a seven-year period of the P.N.C., it rose a paltry 6 per cent. That is the reality and that is the truth, challenge these figures if you want. Those figures have been given from your statistics.

Indeed, Cde. Speaker, rice is one of the largest foreign exchange earners. I just want to make the point clear that those who produce and those who earn foreign exchange do not enjoy the right and benefit of spending any of that foreign exchange. They do not go anywhere and even if they wish to go, they would not get permission to go with any money. But those who do not produce enjoy that right. The Government has been robbing purposely the rice farmers, year after year, and still wants them to produce rice at the same price despite the increase in the cost of production each year, if not each month.

Cde. Speaker, the figures show that the cost of production for one acre in 1977 was put at \$482.15, that is, cost of insecticides, fertilisers and application empty bags and twine, reaping, transportation, drying and milling rice etc. What is income for 1977? Income \$348. It shows that the farmers produce rice at a loss. But how they are able to survive, the question has always been asked, and anyone who knows the peasantry, anyone who has come from that stream in this country, knows that they put their whole family into the production process, wife, children every person who makes up that household. Hours! They are not clock watchers, they do not go at 8 o'clock and stop work at 3.30 p.m. as you have been doing. Indeed, the question of hours is no consideration to them. They go early and they work until they are finished. Top officials of the P.N.C. have been talking to many of the people who claim that they support the P.N.C. Why don't they learn from them, why don't they follow them? They have not been doing the same and that is why the country is in the state.

The farmers are producing rice at unremunerative prices. I wonder if I can persuade the Minister. I know he agrees with the argument but he has to take a pick even if he faces the threat of removal from the Ministry. He wants to go, as we heard that he wants to go, and this is the ideal opportunity and I am happy for him. The farmers have some respect for him. I have to be very kind to this Minister, as I said, he has performed very well in the past. Why doesn't he, today in this House in this session, announce an increase in the price of paddy and rice?

Cde. Speaker, I am not asking for anything unreasonable. They are entitled to an increase. Do you want me to name all the things that have gone up? Everything – machinery, parts, fuel, fertiliser, transportation. Every single thing went up since 1977 and you could imagine what the cost of production is today 1979. Why don't you be reasonable and why don't you look for the cause of the lack of production instead of wasting time pointing fingers unnecessarily. If, according to the Minister who spoke last night, this could be a new year, it can provide new hopes, well, you have the opportunity. Pay the people and they will produce, give them incentives and they will produce, encourage them and they will produce, give them the right to administer over the very area in which they operate and they will have a change in the production of rice and a healthy change in the economy of the country. **[Applause]** And rice can contribute significantly in taking the country out of its current crisis.

Cde. Speaker, what is the problem? We have got a situation in this country where, apart from the rice industry, only pro-Government organisations progress. Others, once you are opposed to the Government you have nothing to get even if you are entitled. What does the Constitution mean when it speaks of so many different types of freedom and all are honoured in the breach? It has no meaning. You have to live big, you have to crawl on your belly, you have to set out for crime or you get nothing. You will be penalised, you will be captured, you will be oppressed but some people are prepared for all of that, some people are born with conviction and are prepared to state what is to be said and defend the rights of the people of this country. Cde. Speaker, the net result of all of this is all of this discrimination, lack of motivation, discouraging people, threatening people on the current economic condition, fall in production, no foreign exchange, poor social services, malnutrition, crime and delinquency.

Let us look, Cde. Speaker, at the 1968 Budget. In the Capital Estimates last year, the sum of \$22.6 million was allocated to agriculture. What is shameful and what I want an answer to is that only \$12.6 million was met. I thought last year when I spoke I was putting up a case to the Minister who undoubtedly failed in the Cabinet to persuade his colleagues to give him more. We were willing on this side of the House to support supplementary expenditure for agriculture but I am ashamed that the year has been completed and the Minister did not have the capacity, or the



Ministry, or the two, to spend the money and in fact you have got \$12.6 million remaining in that Capital head at the end of the year.

**2.55 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, some people cannot understand. We are talking about a productive sector and there are certain heads that have been identified and are vital to developments, like water control and other ancillary works both internal and external. It would follow that if the sum of money allocated was not spent and the work was not done, and we know it was not done, then something is wrong. So you have failed. In the 1971 Budget Speech these words were said “To achieve self-sufficiency in food, it will be necessary to replace the \$13 million worth of imported foodstuff”. In 1972 that figure was not changed. Government might talk about inflation. It might allude to all types of arguments. But the food bill in 1976 had been \$62.9 million. This Government is saying it will cut down because we are not producing. In 1977 it was \$ 67.1 million, in 1978 it was \$64.4 million and the Government has projected \$67.9 million for 1979. That one must worry anybody because it means that you have entered a new year and you are still catering for \$78 million for foodstuff. The curtailment in essential food items could not have been more severe than it has been. The results are shortages, Guylines, contraband, smuggling. The people in the hinterland areas probably did not even hear the word “smuggling” several years ago, but that word is now used every day. How could Government people ask the question why smuggling is going on? There is something called “substitute”. If you want to change some habit, Mr. Vice-Chairman of the P.N.C. –

**The Speaker:** Cde. Persaud, you are not addressing the Vice-Chairman of the Party.

**Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud:** Sorry, sir. The truth is that with all the curtailment, with all the shortages and so many things absent from the shelves, things essential to the existence of man, the food bill is still the figure I have given. I am not saying for one single second that we must not import food. I am saying that until the Government can produce to feed the people of this country, we have to import. Government has been hiding behind the word “inflation” for too long. Despite the inflation and the world drain and what have you. Guyana has always been known as the bread

basket of the Caribbean. Many agricultural economists and people who have been attached to the agricultural processes have written countless volumes for us to read, among them being Mr. S. S. Naraine, who wrote on land use. The fact is that the Government in other schemes has failed. I have already spoken about rice. On another occasion I will give the figures. Why is it that we are importing oil in such large quantities when coconut is the third largest industry in this country. It has been completely neglected since this Government came into power. I have on many occasions persuaded the Government to increase the price of copra so that we can reduce the importation of oil. Instead of reducing that bill- that bill has been increasing each year. They have failed in rice, they failed in sugar, and they have failed in oil.

Let us talk about milk now. What is there to prevent us in this country from producing an adequate supply of milk? If you read their own development programme, 1972 – 1976, they were to put up a number of ranches on the coastal belt to meet with the milk requirement. But they have failed. They have not done it. Therefore, the position is that we do not have milk. The milkplant, according to a spokesman, has a capacity to produce 4,500 gallons per day. But they are not getting the supply. If you go through all the figures on milk, you will see that places like Moblissa, in which the Government has expended substantial sums, have not done well. The Minister cannot deny I went up there. When the sun is up the grass is dry and the cows cannot eat. There was a similar situation at Matthews Ridge when they were talking about developing the cattle industry there.

In agricultural development, a number of factors have to be examined, suitability of the soil and many other factors that are vital. There can be no doubt that in many areas they have gone into cultivation and it has been proved subsequently that the soil was not suitable for that particular crop. In fact, I know of experts who have written but who are not here. In Kibilibiri, they used to water with machines and fertilise with machines. I spoke with the man who headed the things. I am not saying that people who are going to produce ought not to be treated well. In fact, one of the great things people should know in this country is that the rural population is 68 per cent of the population but when you look at the disparity between urban Guyana and rural Guyana, you can well understand why there is migration from rural Guyana to urban Guyana. That is also very dangerous.

If we are to produce and change the trend in our economy, we would have to continue keeping those people in all country areas and farming areas. But when parents feel that they have given their blood and their sweat and everything else to farming, and the people do not care, they do not want their children to continue in that non-remunerative exercise. Hence, those people are today migrating into the city of Georgetown. Soon you will face another danger in that those people from the rural areas are likely to migrate outside. You decide if you want to have that happen to Guyana.

**3.05 p.m.**

We should have been able by now – and the Minister would not deny it – to get up a condenser where we would have been producing other things, by-products like cheese. Cheese is so scarce that when you give a child a little piece of cheese, you can imagine how that child feels. That is the situation. In fact, agriculture must be the base for industrial development but we are not seeing the evidence of such moves by the Government. That does not call for intellect it calls for simple commonsense which you do not have.

Cde. Speaker, look at the cannery that should have been processing. I am reliably informed that even the generating plant for the cannery at Mabaruma has been removed and that thing is not functioning at the moment. Tell me why we are still importing so many things though from Caritas? I think last year the Minister came with a few bottles of jam and things. Do not come with that this year; we need more than that. In fact, 15, 20 years ago when I made my first trip to Adventure, about a mile and a half from Suddie, I went to a little place and a man was producing jam already. I brought a bottle from there 20 years ago. Don't come with that in 1979. We know we have that but we need more so do not talk about jam this time; you talked about that last year. So, Cde. Speaker, we see failure in all these fields.

And now I come to poultry. If you read the Budget Speech or speeches year after year you will see what I mean. Cde. Speaker, we should have been self-sufficient in hatching eggs. Do you know how much you are importing each year? I know the chaps that are bringing them. I know all that is done in bringing them. So it means that there is failure there too. In fact, chicken is a scarce food item today and look at the price. The poor man cannot get it. If he

gets it once a fortnight he has to be extremely grateful. They said in their programme and I have observed it, two hatching-egg farms will be built on the Soesdyke-Linden Highway. They said this. In fact they said that they would have been producing by 1976- their own projection- twelve million pounds of poultry.

We have not had a report on agricultural production or any production from that Ministry. Why is it you are hiding the figures? Wherever you deserve praise, I am one of those people who would praise you and wherever you need to be criticised I would severely criticise you with one objective, that the economy is neglected, but when you are hiding these results and when you are telling the officers, look don't give them and then you are transferring them and changing them, and when there is no report, then you are fishing, then your figures are viewed with great suspicion so you cannot quote them after this afternoon. You see that they must be public, we must be able to examine them so when you come with the figures, if it is that your officers are fooling you, but will not succeed in fooling us.

Since 1976, you should have been getting a catch of 450 million pounds of fish annually. This is 1979, you can say that you are getting 900 pounds. We are not going to listen to you but many of those things are not true because there is no fish in the market. Cde. Speaker, how can the Minister defend the shortage of cabbage? It is supposed to be, I think, 76 cents a pound – the controlled price. You cannot buy a pound of cabbage in this country for less than 80 cents. This is true, and I am informed that they had cabbage seeds belonging to a company lying in a bond up to September. I don't want to name it, and they could not get the foreign exchange to pay so the thing was left there. As a result, farmers could not get seeds to produce more cabbage. I will give you the name of the company and I will give you all the information on that position. Everyone knows the capacity of Black Bush, to cite one area, to produce cabbage and in fact people should be able to buy cabbage at a much cheaper price. Anything, whether it is plantain, and that is going down to the brass tack of agriculture look at the prices!

What is more is that G.M.C. has failed – and I hope those men who manage that place are here; because they have failed in many respects. Newspaper is not prices, newspaper is not marketing, newspaper is not storage facilities. They should have had storage facilities at

various points in this country and more particularly in places like Stabroek Market and other markets so that we would be able when we are producing more than our requirement to store for the period when we cannot produce.

If you ask the Speaker, he will tell you how many times I have spoken of storage facilities. We do not have storage facilities, buying centres are not adequate. How can we ensure that there is a steady flow of food items if the Government is not giving attention and thought to these matters? I am sure now that the food factory, they call it Guyfood, on the East Bank has enough space because they are not getting enough shrimp and so on. And those storage facilities can be used at the moment, all you have to do is the alternative. You do not have the money, you do not have the facilities now. The G.M.C. is not getting farmers' produce to buy at the moment. Let them show the record and see the quantity they got over the last two years. Why? The prices are not attractive, there is no proper link or co-ordination between the G.M.C. and the farmers. Indeed, and even when the G.M.C. buys in certain places, they are so careless that things remain at the wharves and they spoil. Let them deny that; we have seen with our own eyes from time to time. Cde. Speaker, the result is that prices are very high in the markets today. Who are the people getting the money?

### 3.15 p.m.

Let us take eschallot. Vendors buy it for \$3.50 and \$4 a pound but it is sold for \$10 in Georgetown. Obviously the G.M.C. does not have the facilities so that the farmers can sell to the G.M.C. at a better price and still that particular item can come to Georgetown and go into other places in the country at more reasonable prices. Those are some of the very bad situations that exist in agriculture. Tell me why we should pay forty cents and fifty cents a pound for plantains? Yams are sold at \$1.50 per pound and you have to beg. So when Members on the Government benches are talking about changing the eating habits of people, they must bear in mind that people grow up with a certain background and if you want to tell people what to eat, when to eat and how to eat, at least be reasonable. You are taking away what they are eating and you are not giving them anything in return. That is the position with agriculture in this country.

I am told, and the Minister can deny, that black-eye cost \$5 a pound. I am giving him

a chance to say that I am wrong. I know the price is \$1.32 but I am told that that is what it is costing. I think the time has come to give us an audited statement of the inputs in all projects. How will you be able to know if you are producing at costs that are remunerative, or whether you are losing all the time. Our information is that wherever and whenever you can bring something to show, the cost is fantastic and it is because you have been so excessive in spending that you have got something. This is in your interest and I think the time has come for a proper examination by experienced men who can carry out that survey and produce to this Parliament a statement of the inputs into all projects. I am told that the black-eye, soya, corn project in Kibilibiri has been abandoned. It has been shifted to another place. It means that they are doing some work along the same line somewhere else, which means that that project has failed and Kibilibiri, according to figures available to me at the moment used up more than \$3,719,866. Without referring to the Mahdia/Annai road, the many millions that have gone into that, there is nothing going on with the Upper Mazaruni Road Project at the moment. These are areas that were given priority over and above agricultural production.

**The Speaker:** You have ten minutes more.

**Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud:** In this Budget Speech, the Government spoke of the increase in cost projects like the Tapakuma and the M.M.A. They said that these projects are now affected by cost. They have spoken about the acreage that can be brought under cultivation. If the Government now faces price escalation, it is because the Government has moved too late. The M.M.A. should have been given priority. I recall standing on this side of the House moving a Motion and calling upon the Government to introduce the M.M.A. scheme. I know the Minister himself sits as Chairman over that project and he will argue about the acreage involved there as against what obtains throughout the country. But let them admit that they have not gone for the corn as yet. They were involved probably for the whole year in feasibility studies and what have you.

The project has to be started and, in fact, they have been losing men from there already. I am told that the type of personnel there is not suitable. I do not want to name a gentleman who

lives on the West Coast and who works on that project and who had to complain about interference and the type of people who work there. So you have a number of other things that are still impeding the M.M.A. project and who had to complain about interference and the type of people who work there. In fact, the P.P.P. started that project, we spoke about it. We feel that it is a good project and we feel that the project must be encouraged. But people must not believe that that can bring relief to the grave economic situation that exist in the country because that will take a long time before it can move off. The reason why they have to pay such high costs at the moment is because they waited too long before they started doing anything. Originally, the Development Programme for 1972/1976 provided \$10 million to start the project and they did not do anything. Even then, the amount voted could not push the project as it ought to have been pushed.

We therefore call from this side of the House for the Government to review its policies, its programmes towards agricultural development bearing in mind that they themselves declared the following at page 18 of Budget Speech. It states:

“The performance of the economy in 1978 was disappointing. The physical production targets set in the main sectors of economic activity were not achieved”.

**3.25 p.m.**

They have been pussy-footing with respect to land reform. The result is that farmers are suffering, legitimate farmers, even if they want to choose, particularly on the Essequibo. The Minister would like to tell us what he is doing about Taymouth Manor. I spoke to him personally, I wrote again positively. What is the position with respect to those estates? What is happening with land reform, where is the legislation? Bearing in mind that last year he said that it was coming and coming speedily. Well, his speed means one year has passed and nothing has happened.

Cde. Speaker, I have a number of specific items to refer to and I will show where people have made representation, where people were willing to help themselves, where people were asking for culverts and certain other assistance and facilities but the Government has not looked.

The reason why Guyana finds itself in this state of economic depression is because one of the principal areas has not been properly and fully exploited and that is agriculture. It is not only a question of a plan, it is not only a question of long-term budgeting but it is the application. Wherever the budgeting was done and the canvassing, the application failed. And if there is to be a correction, all these areas have to be examined, if not, 1979 will be worse than 1978 and in fact we will go down the drain in so far as production is concerned. **[Applause]**

**The Speaker:** Cde. Kennard.

**The Minister of Agriculture** (Cde. Kennard): Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud has been very kind to me this afternoon. In the first place, he has allowed that I should say the things he has not said. He reserved for me to speak of the Government's achievements in agriculture. **[Applause]**

I have great pleasure, therefore, Cde. Speaker, to begin my presentation by referring to the Government's achievements in this important sector because the Government's record in agriculture stands as a beacon of example and of hope, as a solution to the economic crisis which now confronts this nation. In particular, our record of achievement in achieving self-sufficiency shines like a brilliant star in a universe – **[Applause]** – darkened by famine and malnutrition in many countries. We don't have that here. The P.N.C.'s determination that this nation should feed itself through its own endeavours has been fully vindicated. Guyana is one country which has gone a long way in feeding itself and let me inform my friends that come hell or high water, we shall continue to do so. **[Applause]**

It is convenient on an occasion such as this for the memories of my friends on the other side to fade. Now let me refresh their memories of the Government's achievements in achieving self-sufficiency in food. First, Guyana has achieved the total replacement of all imports of "ahloo", Irish potatoes. There was a time when we imported well over 20 million pounds of those vegetables from Ireland, North America, from England, and they are now totally replaced by our own home-grown cassava, eddoes, tannias, yams and plantains. Very frequently, we have been assailed that we are producing in such abundance that these things are being thrown away. In addition to ground provisions, we have, as a visit to any market, rural or urban, would show,



abundant supplies of vegetables of every description – spinach, boulders, just name it we have it. I am refreshing their memories; they conveniently always fail to recognise those achievements.

As I said last year and as I repeat again this year, another area of achievement which, of course fails their memory, is our achievement in the production of fish. There is Guyanese fish everywhere on our local market. All types of fish. No longer do we have North American or European canned salmon or sardines or salted or cod fish, we are using our own.

Again I am reminding them that no longer do we have also the things that they love so well, apples and pears and grapes. We are using our own fresh fruits, our guavas, our papaws and mangoes and sapodillas and from these things we are producing many products for as my good friend says, agriculture must be the basis for industrialisation. We are producing the processed products from these raw materials. We consume our own jams and jellies, drink our own fruit drink, and not things imported and made from foreign raw materials. I need not remind them that we are self-sufficient. We do not import “neck and back” as we did some years ago. We do not import salt beef and pickled meat. These things are produced from our own raw materials, raw materials produce by our own farmers.

Finally, even in the area of another two items that they love so much and I refer to split peas and chick peas – that is the right name for channa, channa is chick peas; in the countries where it is grown, it is fed to poultry – we have been making inroads into replacing these imports by producing our own black-eye peas, our own pigeon peas, our own corn, our own peanuts and peas of every description including ... and urid dhal. The catalogue is so long that I would only deprive myself of the time allotted to me to speak by continuing to enumerate further. So let me say that in no other country of CARICOM and in very few countries of the Third World are market places so full of the products of local agriculture. In no other country of CARICOM and in very few of the Third World are so many made entirely from locally-produced foods of such great variety and in such great abundance. **[Applause]**

The net result of all of this is a healthy and robust people. My friends on the other side are great examples. Some are visibly overweight from overindulgence in our native food, their own food, the food of Guyana produced by the farmers of Guyana. Look at them, shining examples of good nutrition from Guyanese food.

**3.35 p.m.**

We have just heard reference to milk. Food habits die hard. Indeed, food habits that have been born from cultural tradition or from history die hard. For example, the use of milk: The majority of the population of Asia, and in particular, of China, consume no milk. They derive their protein from the use of legumes, including soya bean. But we have grown so accustomed to externally – imported food habits that we keep speaking of things that our colonial masters have taught us to consume. Historically, the colonising powers discourage local production of food, including the production of local milk, and they encourage people to eat their own food which they, the colonial powers, produced for export. This was done, first, to concentrate all labour and resources on the production of sugar for export and, secondly, to create a market in our own country for their produce, for their milk, for their potatoes, for their split peas and the others. Those who advocate the continuation of those habits are colonialists in mentality.

We have achieved much in achieving self-sufficiency and in educating our population to abandon alien food habits fostered by the imperialists and, apparently by some neo-colonialists. We have succeeded increasingly in educating our people to consume their own foods. We are forced by sentiment to continue importing some of the foods, the foods about which so much noise is being made on the other side. Among these are milk, wheat flour, split peas, onions and the like. I would like to say, as we have indicated that there are suitable locally produced substitutes. When one is speaking in terms of balancing out trade and cutting out unnecessary imports, one must look to those items which are producible in Guyana because those items, when produced in Guyana, create employment for Guyanese, put more money into the pockets of our farmers and, because of their better food value, to better nutrition of our people.

Reference was made by Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud a while ago to our food bill. But reference to the same Table 3 in the Estimates of Expenditure would reveal that food imports fell

from \$131.2 million in 1976 to \$113.2 million in 1978. It is a decline of some \$18 million from 1976 to 1978. In real terms, this is even more dramatic because the prices of imported foods are much higher than they were in 1976. Prices keep going up so that in real terms the decline in imports was more dramatic.

In terms of importation, let us consider wheat flour. In 1978, we made a positive effort to reduce the importation of wheat flour. We did this by substituting local cassava flour made from cassava grown by our Guyanese farmers. In 1978, the Guyana Sugar Corporation processed some four million pounds of cassava as its two cassava factories at Charity and Look Out. Apart from the cassava flour made from this cassava amounting to 536,000 pounds, there were additional quantities of starch, 7,700 pounds, and 131,000 pounds of cassava meal plus cassareep which was exported.

Because of the large production of plantation as well, these mills processed over 20,000 pounds of plantains into flour as well. I submit that these are commendable output figures for the farmers of the Pomeroon and the East Bank of Essequibo and, indeed, for GUYSUCO. We commend these farmers.

With respect to replacing imports of split peas and chick peas or channa, emphasis, we know, is on the production of legumes. These crops, particularly unsplit and unpolished, are far more nutritious than split peas which originate in North America and in Europe. We are cultivating these crops on farms and State farms such as the GUYSUCO farms, the National Services farms, and at the Guyana Rice Board farm at Black Bush Polder. While the output of legumes about a decade ago was less than quarter of a million pounds, it reached 31/2 million pounds last year 1978. This is about 40 per cent of imports of split peas. Production will be greatly accelerated in 1979 and all imports should be replaced in 1980.

Rapid strides were made in replacing the importation of onions by growing eschallots. The efforts of the farmers on the Corentyne Berbice and on the East Bank and East Coast Demerara should be specially recognised and they deserve our congratulations as well. There is comment on the price of eschallot, but no one should envy those farmers their profits. We have just heard an appeal for a higher price for rice. Why try to penalise the farmers on the issue of

**20.3.79**

**National Assembly**

**3.35 – 3.45 p.m.**

eschallots? You cannot contradict yourself, in the same breath advocating a price increase for some farmers and advocating a reduced price for others. We should not envy those farmers for the good profits they make from eschallots. We trust that this would encourage other farmers to produce eschallots as well. Production will be further expanded in 1979. In addition at Black Bush Polder, onions will be produced as well.

The production of milk is constantly on the increase. A few years ago, for example, there was not a single cow at a place called Moblissa and there were no dairy cattle at Ebini. I am proud to say that in 1978 the quantity of milk produced at these two centres amounted to 122,752 gallons. The milk which is now consumed on the East Bank of Demerara is milk emanating mainly from the Moblissa Dairy Farm. It is a great achievement.

**3.45 p.m.**

In the Abary it is intended under a project that is being looked at by the Inter-American Development Bank to set up a major dairy farm to produce milk for the people in the Berbice and East Demerara region. So you will get some milk from the Abary as well. That is owned by the Government, I can assure you. So we are making these strides in our milk production. And let me remind our comrades who last year spoke of the need to increase the price to farmers that the price to the farmers was increased last year. The milk pasteurisation plant in 1978 increased the price paid to our farmers for milk, giving them the necessary encouragement to deliver more milk to the pasteurisation plant than ever before.

Poultry production as I indicated continues to grow and last year the production was 22.9 million pounds compared with 16.3 million pounds in 1977. In the poultry industry, of course, the demand for poultry meat is growing very steeply indeed, by the creation of additional eating houses, for example. During last year, we established two hatching-egg farms in Guyana. One farm was established in Berbice at No. 19 and the other farm was established at Soesdyke. We decided to establish these farms in co-operation with the farmers themselves. And both producers have done very well indeed. Now, despite those endeavours, they have not been able to meet the demand. I concede that. They will be expanding their output this year and additional hatching-egg producers will come into the market as well.

Cde. Speaker, agriculture, in the context of the responsibilities of the Ministry includes fisheries and the members seem to have avoided that aspect. Cde. Persaud did not speak much about fish because fish is an area of very significant progress. Since we enacted the Maritime Boundaries Act at the end of 1977. Guyana has extended its economic zone by a further 200 miles, adding tremendous wealth to our nation. And this act, the Maritime Boundaries Act will go down in history as an event of far-reaching importance to the everlasting glory of the People's National Congress. **[Applause]**

We have maintained strict vigilance over this area. We know we have been impounding trawlers which have been coming from foreign countries and depriving us of our resources. The administration in force is very tight. We have introduced licence fees for trawlers operating in this zone and this measure, the licensing of trawlers, now contributes some \$2 million annually to licence fees in general.

In addition to encouraging our own fleet of fish in this area we have entered into a number of agreements. We have agreements with Barbados, with St.Lucia, with Libya and Cuba to fish off our banks. These agreements provide for the processing of catches in Guyana with the payment of fees and the sale of part of the catch to Guyana to increase the supply of fish to our own population. So we are deriving substantial economic benefit from these agreements.

With respect to the landing of fish to the Government which is mandatory for all trawlers, be local or foreign, in 1978 a total of 4,610,000 pounds of fish was delivered to Guyana Food Processors Limited, the Government's buying agents, 4,610,000 as compared with 674,872 pounds in 1977, a seven-times increase in landing to the Government to be sold to the population at modest prices. The shrimp industry did well last year by exporting 8,069,000 pounds of shrimp compared with 7,601,000 pounds in 1977.

Cde. Speaker, I have reminded my friends of the record of these achievements in order to emphasise that we are achieving our objective of feeding the nation of Guyana, of feeding ourselves, and these achievements are the pride of Guyana and the envy of the world at large. But we try not merely to feed ourselves but to feed others. Thus, in 1978, we left the detractors completely dumbfounded because Guyana exported in 1978 the largest ever quantity of rice.

In 1978, our exports of rice totalled 104,761 tons. The value was \$96 million. Both quantity and value were an all-time record. So we are not only feeding ourselves, we are feeding others and the record is right. We did this last year, this rice record, and I think those cheers that I had a moment ago really belong to the rice farmers of Guyana. **[Applause]** They belong to the rice farmers because of their heroic efforts despite the mounting by the R.P.A. of marches to nowhere and urgings not to produce by calling them out daily to attend meetings that had no end. But congratulations are in order for the P.N.C. Government as well. Congratulations to the P.N.C. Government for demonstrating continued faith and confidence in our rice farmers and for its unflagging support and assistance to them.

The rice farmers and the rice industry have been growing from strength to strength. There are occasional setbacks in production because of bad weather and though we achieved high exports last year, production was low because of adverse weather. When the weather improved, the production was increased. You know, rice is very sensitive to both rain and too much sunshine.

But the industry, basically, is becoming more and more efficient. A decade ago the rice industry used hardly a bag of fertilizer. Last year it used 13 tons of fertilizer and with the use of the high yielding varieties distributed by the Rice Board, the national average yield per acre increased from twelve bags per acre to eighteen bags per acre. As you know, many farmers reap two crops of rice each year of 35 bags per acre of this high-yielding variety.

**3.55 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, having dealt with 1978, I now turn to our plans for 1979 as depicted in the Budget. Having been speaking of records, I would start by saying that the Budget for 1979 is a record budget for agriculture. Despite all the financial constraints, despite the economic crisis, more money has been provided for agriculture in 1979 than ever before, amounting to some \$80.4 million between capital and current expenditure. Calculated as a percentage over the 1979 Budget, the increase is of the order of some 142 per cent over 1977 and 36.2 per cent over 1978. The major investment is in drainage and irrigation to make land presently cultivated more production and to bring virgin lands into cultivation.

We have been speaking of M.M.A. and Tapakuma and the Black Bush extension and the Minister of State has given us the details of these projects. I will not repeat what he said. I will only emphasise that these three schemes are very large schemes indeed, and collectively, they embrace an area which is six times the size of Grenada, about which we are speaking so much these days. The projects at full development will yield a value of output exceeding the capital investment and the capital investment is \$500 million. So each year we will be reaping at least that amount in terms of the value of crops. In addition, crops such as legumes, corn and soya beans, a whole range of vegetables, beef, milk, and fresh water fish will be produced. These projects represent a veritable cornucopia to feed Guyana abundantly with large surpluses overflowing into the markets of the world.

The Opposition has been speaking about land reform and that the Government has not been doing enough. As I indicated last year, the greatest act of land reform in this country was the nationalisation of lands owned by foreign owners in the sugar industry. The concentration of effort last year and this year will be to look at land which has been given to Guyanese, in good faith, but which is not being used. This is State land. We have done a recent survey and have found that well over 25 per cent of the land allocated is not being productively used. The Ministry is in the process of reclaiming these lands and re-allocating them to more deserving Guyanese for production. That is land reform.

Where private property is concerned, the proposed new Constitution will ensure that swift action can be taken in places where privately-owned lands are not similarly used and developed. So let us await with anxiety the new Constitution.

Within the Estimates, there are a number of new projects to be attempted in 1979. For example, we shall be building a large re-build and repair workshop at Burma which will cost \$2.5 million, with assistance from the D.P.R.K., who will be supplying materials, equipment and technicians. Then there is a major project for our food crops farmers, the ground provision farmers, the legume farmers and the vegetable farmers. We are at the final stages of negotiating a loan of \$15 million (Guyana) from the Inter American Development Bank, which loan will be used for the setting up of marketing depots in the country. This would meet Cde. Persaud's

recommendation that there should be proper places where farmers can deliver their produce. It is proposed to build seven such rural marketing centres for produce to be delivered, to be cleaned, graded, bagged and packed for delivery to the city. In addition, seven agricultural service centres will be established which will give service to the food crop farmers, controlling their pests and diseases, supplying them with their fertilizers etc., and then of this loan, over \$8 million will be assigned to the Agricultural Bank to be used as loans on soft terms to food crop farmers. Finally, the loan will provide for equipment and technical services to upgrade the Guyana Marketing Corporation. A good deal of this money will be on grant terms and the rest of it will be on exceedingly soft terms. In order to assist that sector a grant has been received from the United States Agency for International Development in the sum of \$1.5 million for us to produce seed and planting material for farmers in the food crop sector.

Cde. Persaud has been speaking about the needs of many farming communities for minor works, for a dam here, a sluice there, grading of a dam elsewhere, minor river defence, and so on. There is provided in the estimates the sum of \$1,665,000 under a head called Agricultural Development. Of this sum, \$1.3 million represents a free grant to the Government under the International Fertilizer Fund and this will be used to provide these facilities: new sluices, river defences, stelling, minor drainage and irrigation works, and access roads. In addition to this, these small needs of our farming communities, with particular references to our cane farmers, will be met by the use of \$1 million from the Sugar Industry Rehabilitation Fund, to improve drainage and other infrastructure in cane farming areas such as the Canals Polder and elsewhere. Farmers in general will continue to get the services of the Ministry in terms of advice, planting material and the like, and also to continue to getting agricultural credit from our Agricultural Bank. In 1978, the Bank issued as credit to farmers, some \$7.1 million. This sum will be greatly increased in the New Year.

On the topic of other crops and in reference to the remarks about what is happening with the coconut industry, I wish to say that the coconut industry on State lands and also on private lands, particularly on the coast, has suffered from bad management, bad husbandry,



bad ownership. The owners of those estates seem more in the habit of extracting wealth from the estates and putting little or nothing back for the sustenance of the coconut farms. Production has reacted negatively through neglect of the owners.

The price of copra, the price for crude oil is very high prices, but there is this attitude of neglect? What we are doing is working among these farmers to encourage them to improve that standard of husbandry and in addition to this we are seeking additional sources of supply of edible oil, notably from the African oil palm; the Guyana Sugar Corporation is the leading light in this regard. At Wauna, some 2,000 acres of this oil palm have been planted. Last year, the young palms yielded over 10,000 gallons of edible oil. GuySuCo's target is 10,000 acres and at full development that large State farm of oil palms will produce enough edible oil to meet all the needs of Guyana.

**4.05 p.m.**

In addition to this, as you know, we have been promoting the development of the soya bean on the Ebarabo Savannahs. The operation at Kibilibiri to answer another questions have moved to Ebarabo, we are concentrating at Ebarabo, at Ebini and at Kimbia; in order to consolidate our work at Kibilibiri we shall be engaged in cattle and sheep farming as well as the production of tobacco. A lease has just been granted to the Demerara Tobacco Company to produce large acreages of tobacco there, the soil is suitable, to meet the local demands for tobacco and therefore more cigarettes for the population.

But coming back to edible oil, we have these additional sources, the oil palm farms operated by GuySuCo, the soya bean being produced at Ebarabo and to be produced at M.M.A., and we shall be installing the solvent extraction plant, which is in Guyana, to extract oil from rice bran and other oil seeds.

Cde. Speaker, all these diverse and massive agriculture development projects will require trained staff, trained farmers. We are well aware now that agriculture has been important place on the curricula of schools, secondary and primary, and school farms are being established increasingly on a commercial scale, for example, at Bladen Hall. At the

Guyana School of Agriculture we plan an expansion and at the moment there are 167 students enrolled there. So great is the demand for these trained agriculturalists that jobs are awaiting for everyone who graduates. At the University of Guyana where the Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture is being awarded, there are 23 students. Cde. Persaud has been asking me about what is taking place in relation to the training of agriculturalist at U.G. More than this, we are sending students away to study. At present we have ninety-nine young people abroad in training in agriculture and veterinary medicine and twenty-five more being sent this year. In addition to this we shall be sending overseas twenty-nine serving officers and six farmers for this first time for training in specialised subjects for short durations.

Cde. Speaker, a number of issues were raised during Cde. Persaud's presentation and I take this opportunity perhaps to refer very swiftly to some of them. In his preamble he referred to mobilisation of people and he said that it is necessary to gain the confidence of the people, to mobilise them in order to ensure that they are put into productive employment. This is the sole purpose of the People's National Congress both through the Ministry of National Mobilisation and the Ministry of National Development, through the structure which exists in the countryside for getting people involved in the affairs of Government. The numerous "face the community" meetings that are held mean that the people are being involved, the communities are being involved in decision making, in exposing their problems for solution. And added to this, there was mounted last year the Peoples' Congress where people had a further opportunity at the highest level to participate in national planning and national decision-making. Does he require any more evidence of the commitment of the People's National Congress to people and of its action in mobilising them for development and progress?

He referred to migration, that people were leaving the country for greener pastures elsewhere. Outward migration is not a phenomenon peculiar to Guyana; it is a phenomenon of the twentieth century. Englishmen are going to Canada, Canadians are going to England, Australians to Europe, Europeans to Australia, Trinidadians, Jamaicans to Canada and vice versa. People are moving around the world and this is no phenomenon. But let me say this some are moving to Canada, which apparently is the favourite place.

In 1978, the economy of Canada showed negative growth. In fact, the economy decreased by some 0.3 per cent. Unemployment has increased. It has jumped from 8.4 per cent in 1977 to 8.7 per cent in 1978. What are people going there for? Food prices in twelve months last year in Canada rose from 19 per cent. And the Government of Canada is now urging Canadians to consume everything Canadian. They are now learning the things that we have been preaching here in Guyana for Guyanese to do. They have this type of phenomenon, then why are people moving in that direction? Perhaps they are going for the potatoes. Let me submit that our cassava and plantains are much better than potatoes. You know that! So much for outward migration.

With respect to staff, the observation was made that we are losing staff as well. Again, there is a movement of staff, of professional people all over the world into the international agencies from one country to another. In Guyana, we have got an inward migration of skilled professionals from many countries, India, Korea, elsewhere. It is again a phenomenon but let me say this, that if one were to examine the staff on the estimates, one would observe that today we have a larger number of professional staff servicing the Ministry of Agriculture in Guyana than we had a decade ago, or five years ago. There are more professionals working in the Ministry of Agriculture today than we had ten or five years ago, so what we lose, we sometimes gain from other countries and we gain from those students who are at our University, at the School of Agriculture and overseas, who are returning to take places left vacant by others who want to run.

**4.15 p.m.**

Cde. Persaud spoke about the Guyana Rice Board and the lack of farmer's representation. On the Rice Board, farmers have been accorded membership. Let me further say this. When the Rice Action Committees were conceived as rural organisations integrating the farmers, the official agencies, and the Local Authorities, so that co-operatively they could combine their energies to develop the rice industry, the R.P.A. was offered positions on the Rice Action Committees, but the R.P.A. refused, so they can blame only themselves for not being on the membership of the Guyana Rice Board.

Cde. Speaker, a budget presentation by a Minister of Agriculture would be incomplete without reference to the sugar industry, our major industry in the agriculture sector. The sugar industry continues to perform below its potential. It is a fact that the industry is performing below its potential largely because of the uncertainty as to whether the labour force would work or not. Over the past decade, production decline was directly attributed to labour unrest and the withholding of labour arising from misguided political dicta. This was dramatically demonstrated in 1977 when output fell to 241,000 tons because of an alleged workers' demand for payment in excess of the asset value of the industry. There was a little recovery last year, 1978 when 224,000 tons were made. Last year, of course, there was not as much irresponsible behaviour or demands. Now, in 1979, there is enough sugar cane on the ground to achieve over 360,000 tons. Will they allow the workers to work this year? **[Interruption]**

**The Speaker:** will you allow the Minister to complete what he is saying?

**Cde. Kennard:** The workers do want to work because they are paid fair wages, higher than we pay some of our workers in the Ministries. There are, in addition to wages incentive payments including a non-taxable bonus and a wide range of other benefits. All that I would say at this stage is that I trust that the workers will be allowed to work and to achieve this target of 360,000 tons. GUYSUICO is spending a great deal of money in improving and maintaining its factory facilities. Much in terms of money, effort and energy, is being expended in improving and maintaining factory and field equipment and the Corporation is going from strength to strength in other fields, in the growing of other crops as I have mentioned. So is GUYSUICO's sister Corporation, the Guyana Liquor Corporation, largely with the support of comrades in purchasing the products of the G.L.C.. The Liquor Corporation is doing very well.

With respect to cane farmers – and that I am sure will come up again – we are restructuring the Guyana National Cane Farming Committee next month. We have just completed establishing the liaison committee between the estates and the farmers in all areas - - **[Interruption.]**

**The Speaker:** Comrades of the Opposition, will you give the Minister a chance? When Cde. Persaud was speaking there was not so much heckling.

**Cde. Kennard:** The cane farmers will be elected by the liaison committees to sit on the National Cane Farming Committee so that they will have a say in determining the role and the future of the cane farming industry.

My time is approaching its end. Let me perhaps deal a bit more fully with the fish industry. Thanks to the negotiations and the initiative taken by the People's National Congress, the fishermen of the Corentyne have security for fishing in the Corentyne river. This will help further to increase the supply of fish to people in that area. In addition to this, the fishermen in the Georgetown area will be benefiting from the Fish Port Complex which has been built and which will be expanded this year. The facilities will also increase the ice supply this year. The ice will be manufactured as part of the services rendered by the Fish Port Complex and there will be berthing and servicing facilities for those fishermen as well.

The catalogue of efforts that will be made in 1979 to develop our agriculture – to assist our farmers in every respect, to assist our farmers by improving their drainage and irrigation, by giving them more loans, by making more inputs available such as fertilizers and insecticides at subsidised prices, the whole question of the importation of spare parts, combines and tractors – is being examined at this very moment in order to increase the flow to the rice industry, in particular, to allow the farmers to plant a larger acreage and to have the tools to do the job. So 1979 will be a year of opportunity for farmers to make their contributions in alleviating the economic crisis. I would wish to repeat in closing and to emphasise once again and to plead with the Opposition and its adherents to let workers work and let the farmers farm.

**4.25.p.m.**

**The Speaker:** Cde. Duncan.

**The Minister of State, Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operatives (Cde. Duncan):** Cde. Speaker, thank you for this opportunity which enables me to contribute to this Budget Debate of 1979. There is a lot to be said in support of the proposals contained in the 1979 Budget as presented by the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives.

Like in previous Budgets, this Budget will bring about changes in favour of the development of the people of this country. In fact, it must be said that as a result of previous Budgets our people have seen many changes throughout the length and breadth of this country both in the urban as well as in the rural areas. But there is always room for improvement. In fact, development, as has already been stated by previous speakers, is something continuous. It is never ending.

Perhaps I can quote from the Budget Speech as presented by the Minister of Economic Development in which he stated on page 3:

“In the years since Independence, the policies promoted and sustained by the Party and the Government have brought about profound changes in our social and economic structures and relationships. These policies have moreover deepened the political consciousness of the Guyanese people and inspired in them an understanding of the nature and problems of the national development. In consequence, the Guyanese people no longer accept the passive role of merely filling a crowd scene in the drama of national life: they demand the right to be fully involved, as active participants and protagonists, at all stages and in all aspects of the process of national development”.

Cde. Speaker, bearing this always in mind, this P.N.C. Government will always continue its development programme with people’s active involvement. This Government, as is well known to all locally, and abroad, has kept the Guyanese public politically conscious of the needs of national development as can be seen in real terms today. Even the blind can feel the effects of several changes in Guyana.

It is quite clear to us that the business of national development of any country is not for a few politicians, public servants and others. And this was stated on pages 7 and 8 of the Minister’s Budget Speech. It is known that the business of the national economy is the business of all the people. In fact it is the business of all the people throughout the world. This requires our active and intelligent participation in all aspects and all stages of our development.

So it is not a mere matter for the Government, it requires the full participation of all our people. One of the mistakes that had been made by other people, especially the Opposition Parties, in many parts of the world, like the Opposition Party in Guyana, was to

revert to what is described as non-co-operation, or civil resistance and perhaps disobedience. Here in Guyana, we have seen that kind of behaviour and it must be realised, however, that development, as I have stated earlier, is not something that can be stopped; it is something that must go on. Whether you boycott or not changes must come. It is something like aging you cannot stop it, just as you cannot stop the day, week, month or year, or for the matter the generation from moving or changing it is something that has to come in any case.

If we refer to behaviour like that of the Opposition Parties where they boycott development processes here and there, it is not boycotting the work of the Government, it is boycotting the development process of all the people. But Cde. Speaker, we have tried to overcome this kind of effect of boycotting in this country, and despite the boycotting practices by the Opposition Parties, there have been many changes in favour of most of the people in this country.

Perhaps if we look at pages 27 and 28 of the Budget Speech we will see that the Minister who presented that Speech says that we have human duties and rights. I would like to quote from these pages:

“We will persist in our struggle to ensure to every citizen the right, as citizen, to food, clothing and housing; to educational, medical and recreational facilities; and to the other basic amenities necessary for modern, civilised existence”.

Here, Cde. Speaker, we are reminded that we have those duties and rights and this Government, the P.N.C. Government as a political Party which all progressive thinking people support, has always been consistent, from its inception. Let us say, for example, from the inception of the People’s National Congress, before it became the Government of Guyana, there was written in the Constitution a provision for people to be made conscious of what they have to do, and that is, for people to be involved in the developmental process by their own efforts in order to develop their communities which would result in favourable national development. These are not mere words; these have been implemented during the life of this Government as can be seen.

**20.3.79**

**National Assembly**

**4.35 – 4.45 p.m.**

**4.35 p.m.**

One of the objects of the Party is to get people involved in their in their community development. This we have done, as had already been emphasised through the various Regional Ministers who have spoken. For example, progress has been made in all the hinterland areas since Independence in 1966. Nursery, primary and secondary schools have been established in all hinterland areas. Adult education programmes have been going on. Our programmes for hinterland scholarships have been continuing and expanding. So far as I understand it, up to the end of 1977 there have been 409 persons trained from those hinterland areas and in the year 1977 I understand additional scholarships were awarded by this Government to the hinterland students.

Many technical skills have been acquired by these students. We continue to train students in the Guyana School of Agriculture, the Government Technical Institute, the Guyana Industrial Training Centre, the Cyril Potter College of Education, the University of Guyana, the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College, the Medex Training Centre, Carnegie School of Home Economics and the Public Hospital. Of course, there are other educational institutions in the city where we train such students. The results of the training given to those people from the hinterland are obvious and with those skills which they have gained, in partnership with the Government, they will develop their communities in which they live. In the same scholarship programme, the Government provided books, school clothing, financial allowances, medical care and finance for incidental expenses during the time they spend in school. These things cost money.

There were speakers from the Opposition side who said they wanted to look at the figures for Amerindian development. Perhaps I should say that this Government does not and will not treat Amerindians as if they are being inferior to other Guyanese living on the Coast. In the hinterland areas also, the following school facilities have been established in the various places: the Burnham Agricultural Institute, Port Kaitume Community High School, Mabaruma Secondary School in the North West Region, Bartica Secondary School, Kwakwani Secondary School in the East Berbice/Corentyne region, St. Ignatius School in the Rupununi region. In addition to these, nursery school education has been expanded to all these areas in the hinterland.



Those which come to mind immediately are at Matthew's Ridge, Port Kaituma, Mabaruma, Wauna, Hosororo, Bartica, St. Francis, Orealla, St. Ignatius.

These are new developments. These developmental processes are new aspects of development which have happened during the life of the P.N.C. Government. New primary schools have been built also during the life of this Government and those areas that are now well known are those at Hosororo in the North West, Kurupung, Monkey Mountain. Monkey Mountain perhaps is an area known to many people but it is new building that has been put up during the life of this Government. Monkey Mountain is well known to the P.P.P. because of Barney Johnson. But this school has been built during the life of this Government. These were all efforts of the people and it is the implementation of one of the objects of the Party, that is, to develop the communities by the efforts of the people in partnership with the Government of Guyana. Of course there are others that do not readily come to mind. But no doubt the idea of developing our country is rapidly catching on by the people. Additional teachers' quarters were built at Abrams Creek, Kanarang, St. Ignatius, Monkey Mountain, Shea and a few others.

With the introduction of the Guyana National Service, which perhaps is well known to the Opposition Parties, various students from the hinterland areas have taken advantage of the training facilities in the centres at Papaya, Kimbia and Tumatumari. Here again there are opportunities for hinterland students as they are available to the coastal students. There are students' training courses in various technical skills. Teachers from the hinterland schools have also been trained as supervisors for young brigades in their own schools in the hinterland. I should say that although I am speaking about the hinterland it must not be misinterpreted to mean that the Government wants to continue with this separation of hinterland areas from coastal areas. In fact, the policy of the Government is to treat hinterland areas just as it treats coastal areas. In other words, Guyana is for Guyanese, not for inferior and superior beings. But for the purpose of explanation, it is necessary to perhaps name these places so that although figures may not appear under one head, there is a lot of Governmental Ministries and Departments under which allocations have been made to develop those areas in the hinterland.

4.45 p.m.

In agriculture, we have just heard Cde. Kennard who is the Minister of Agriculture, mentioned that the Government continues to give technical assistance to hinterland farmers.

In most areas they are now engaged in commercial farming that is in addition to what was well known as subsistence farming. We must not lose sight of the fact that people are doing commercial farming with their problems and that it is well known that in development, whether it is this country or in other parts of the world, the Government must be associated with such development.

The well-known areas are the main producing areas as we know them in the hinterland at Paruima, Kato, Karassabai, Annai and Aishalton. The crops being produced are onions, peas of different varieties and peanuts as commercial crops. Of course, they grow rice, they grow potatoes, they grow ground provision at subsistence level. They cannot starve unless they, like the P.P.P. discourage others from producing food. Unless, perhaps, as I explained last year, there are periods of drought and flood which sometimes affect them. But they cannot starve.

The Guyana Airways Corporation continues to assist our farmers by transporting their produce from all the hinterland areas. Recently, as it should be now well known, the Government has acquired two 748 aircraft to satisfy the needs of the hinterland population. Of course, we also use these aircraft to export goods outside of Guyana. So these aircraft go beyond the boundaries of Guyana to the Caribbean.

Of course, there is another aircraft, a DC 6, that goes as far as Miami in Florida. These, obviously, are utilised for the benefit of our farmers and residents of the hinterland areas. The Government continues to execute programmes of upgrading airstrips in the hinterland. I know between Imbaimadai and Apoteri money will be spent in the interest of our hinterland population and this did not happen by accident because Apoteri is an important production centre where we produce balata which is one of the export earners of foreign exchange for this country. So there will be further development at Apoteri.

There are other airstrips in the hinterland that we can talk about. In medical services, our medical personnel continue to serve these far-flung areas, the difficult areas, and we have people in training at the Medex Centre in Georgetown. More recently in addition to the existing health centres, more health centres have been built. During last month, I had the honour of declaring open three centres, one at Karaudanawa, the other at Awarewaunau, and one at Shea.

In the Rupununi region, these centres will be run by local people from within the communities. This kind of programme, although it is new, covers wide areas of the North West, Mazaruni, Rupununi because of their remoteness.

I would like to conclude by saying that the present Government is committed to socialism and that it is now well known that the Amerindians have benefited tremendously during the term of office of this P.N.C. Government. It was not the P.P.P. Government from 1964 to the present time. The Amerindians have been enjoying free education, free health services, free transport by air, land and water when they are sick; old age pension and public assistance; conference expenses borne by central government, that is Conference both in the regions and in Georgetown; National Awards for those dedicated leaders from the hinterland; free land titles to Amerindian lands, free gun licences, duty-free vehicles and other attachments related thereto ; free technical advice for economic development; Village Councils have the right to levy within the villages for economic development. The right to worship has been preserved; freedom of movement within the country has been maintained and that is from hinterland to the Coast and vice versa. Free legal aid; the right to leisure and as a socialist Government we the people will be part of drafting a new Socialist Constitution. Under that, I am sure inferiority and superiority complexes that had been maintained and sustained by the Colonial administrators will be eliminated.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Ally.

**4.55 p.m.**

**Cde: Ally:** Cde Speaker, listening to the various speakers from the Government side, I have come to the conclusion that the Budget for this year is nothing else but an empty one, as empty as that of the P.N.C. itself. Guyanese are suffering. They were suffering during the

colonial days but it is getting worse under the P.N.C. People are starving. Things were bright, Guyanese had the opportunity of enjoying life just for a few years and those years were during the period 1952 to 1964. The reason for this is because of the P.P.P.'s agricultural policy. As a result of the P.P.P.'s agricultural policy then, there was plenty of everything, especially foodstuff. When I listened to the Minister of Agriculture today, I got a good picture of what I was thinking of. Every pack of cards has two jokers, but the P.N.C's pack is a pack of jokers. They are talking about production and productivity, and produce or perish.

This Government, after its burning and looting while it was in the Opposition, this Government which was shouting coolie Government, rice Government, immediately in late 1964 when it got into Government by foul means, because of its belief that agriculture really belonged to the Indians, put its feet racially, maliciously and wickedly, and started to destroy agriculture. It is a shame and disgrace for this Government to come here and talk about milk. In 1964, the milk pasteurisation plant was being supplied with 2,500 gallons of milk, but because of the Government's policy, it has destroyed the milk industry and the plant had to be closed down completely. Today, only 1,500 gallons of milk per day are being supplied to that plant. How are you going to get production? If the Government was encouraging the milk industry, today the milk pasteurisation plant should have been supplied with 7,000 gallons of milk. It is because of the policy of this Government that we are suffering today in this country.

Let us take, for instance, the cattle industry in general. In the year 1964, Guyanese could have gone to the butcher's shop and purchased beef at the price of 44 cents and 56 cents a pound. How much for a pound of beef today? It was about \$3.50 or \$4 a pound. This is so because of the P.N.C.'s policy towards agriculture. They have wickedly destroyed these industries. At No. 50 village, there were five butcher's shops but because of the policy of the Government, all those butcher's shops have disappeared. If the people want beef, they would have to travel to the municipal markets and it is very expensive.

Let us take livestock. In Canada, you can go to any one of the farms and purchase a live sheep weighing 80 to 85 pounds and costing \$30 to 32. In Guyana, a live sheep of the same size will cost you approximately \$200. This is because of the policy of this Government. We are not

getting those things. Climatic conditions over there only permit the farmers to keep these animals in the pastures for six months, when our climatic conditions permit us to keep them from the beginning of one year to the end. It is because of the policy of this Government that things have become scarce.

I heard the Minister speaking about fish. Cde. Ram Karran asked about hassar. Brazil and Trinidad and Tobago are exporting hassar to America and London and it is being sold there cheaper than in Guyana. It is because of the policy of this Government. You see this is what I was saying just now, that the P.N.C. has a pack of jokers. If we were in a position to export hassar, that could have brought in foreign exchange. In Suriname the people are not suffering for this fish because they grow their own. But in Guyana this Government does not grow a thing.

The Minister said that Guyanese would have to change their tastes and he talked about many substitutes for potatoes. I can remember very well in this House when the Prime Minister moved the Bill to ban potatoes. When he was asked by the Leader of the Opposition what would be the substitute, he shouted out “eddoes”. What has happened with the eddoes today? During those days people were not eating eddoes because it was slimy. If you go on the Corentyne River now it will surprise you to know that deep down in the river people are using hog mesh to prevent hogs from destroying the crops. Yet, with all of that, before you are ready to harvest, the hogs are digging holes. When we told the Members of Parliament on the Government side that wild animals and birds were destroying the crops and the people needed guns to shoot, they are behaving as if they are wild hogs and the people will shoot them.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Ally!

**Cde. Ally:** I am sorry. Farmers are not getting guns to protect the things they are producing so that we Guyanese could eat well in Guyana. At Jonestown the people had guns. I do not know who they were preparing for, and they were not licensed.

**The Speaker:** You were speaking for 12 minutes. I will take the suspension and when we come back, you will have 18 minutes more. The Sitting is suspended for 30 minutes.

*Sitting suspended at 5.05 p.m.*

5.25 p.m.

*On resumption –*

**The Speaker:** Cde. Ally, when the suspension was taken, you were speaking. You have 18 minutes more.

**Cde. Ally:** When the suspension was taken, I was making the point that eddoes are being substituted for potatoes. The Minister of Agriculture in his speech in replying to Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, mentioned the substitute for potatoes. Now we will have cassava, plantains etc. Cde. Speaker, as I have said before, because of the agricultural policy of the P.P.P. and all of us know, cassava was so plentiful that you could have kicked it about in the street; it was then two and three cents per pound. Plantains were three cents for two pounds. They are so expensive today because of the agriculture policy of this Government.

This Government is talking about production and productivity. That talk cannot take us anywhere in this country unless the Government makes up its mind to do the things in the best interest of the farmers. For this present rice crop, Cde. Ambrose and many others told you that many acres of rice were lost completely due to poor drainage and irrigation. This Government has no interest.

**The Speaker:** What is the relevance? What does acreage have to do with loss of rice?

**Cde. Ally:** This is what I want to point out. The point I am making is that while farmers are trying to plant food, because of the maladministration we have at the moment where agriculture is concerned, instead of food growing, grass is growing. I think the farmers are doing their best to produce.

I want to point out a few things that are going on. Let us take Black Bush. When we had the last Financial Paper before this House I asked the Minister of Agriculture questions in connection with Black Bush Polder where trenches were not cleaned and as a result of that, farmers could not get the necessary irrigation water. The Minister said it was not true. Letters were sent to the Ministry of Agriculture, to the Prime Minister and another to the Chief Engineer

informing them of the drainage and irrigation problems. As a result of these letters they put men to make water tracks in the trenches.

The Government does not have production at heart; the members only prattle about it. Prattling will not help us. In Black Bush Polder, people plough their lands waiting on water and cannot get water. Over 25 per cent of the land still remains unplanted. They are waiting on water up to now. This is the same thing going on in the Block III area where people are paying rates for irrigation water but cannot receive this necessary service. If the Government is interested in production, then it should do everything possible to see that the people get the necessary irrigation water so that they can produce.

Grass is taking over the rice. People are trying to grow food but because of the Government's attitude towards this, grass is growing. Let us take the Corentyne for instance. Another thing that is forming an obstacle towards production is the toll gate on the Corentyne road. I appealed to this Government several times already to see that agricultural machines have free access. The farmers are living on one side of the toll gate and have their farms on the other side. They have to pay unnecessary toll fees. And not only going to the fields but even to the mills, this way they will have to pay. The law is that you should have animal-drawn carts, but a human being pushing the cart cannot be charged. They save the toll fees. These are some of the hardships that farmers are faced with. I think if the government is serious about the situation then it will do something.

There are so many things to talk about. I would like to refer to something which is very important at the moment. Let us take, for instance, Crabwood Creek area. Crabwood has 9,389 acres of land. The R.P.A., the R.M.B., and the Local Authority at Crabwood Creek, met the Management of Skeldon Estate; they would guarantee to provide the 9,389 acres of land necessary irrigation water. This matter reached the Government. Nothing has been done and the land is lying idle. If you cannot put down one single pump to irrigate the land, how much interest does this Government have in relation to production and productivity? It is a puzzle to me.

5.35 p.m.

There is a lot of hardship that the people of the Corentyne are faced with because they are not getting the necessary foodstuff as the Government is claiming here. People are suffering; there are shortages on the Corentyne. As a result of this, farmers are affected. For instance, the distributing centre cannot get goods and an outlet is a great distance away. I would like to say that if you go to a shop all that is available is salt, flour and sugar. People are sick and babies are suffering badly. You cannot get things like coffee, tea, butter, cheese, sago, Ovaltine, Quaker Oats. This is really a criminal act where the people are concerned because people are dying out. This is something that is affecting our people badly on the coast, not only the people working in the rice or provision farms but even sugar workers and all other categories of workers.

Let us take Black Bush Polder. The Ministry of Agriculture has set up a land selection committee in that area made up of a whole set of people. Cde. Oscar Clarke is the Chairman of that Committee. The R.D.O., Cde. Hamilton, is the Vice-Chairman. But this Committee sits once a week and it is costing this committee \$300 every time it sits. There are usually lavish meals prepared, especially drinks. For six months it cost the Government \$7,800. That will give us only twenty-six meeting for the six months. How many people were interviewed? Those are people who were there on the lands already. People were on the lands for the past fifteen years. Out of the number of people interviewed only 32 were approved. I was made to understand that one person lost consciousness in front of this committee because of the harassment.

**The Speaker:** Three minutes more.

**Cde. Ally:** I would like to tell you that this is a very expensive committee and I do not believe that the people of this country can afford such a committee. This committee is not doing the work that should do. People who sit on this Committee have lands and they have no right. They are not paying the rent. One gentleman who is a member of this committee owes over \$2,500 rent on his plot. There are people who have several lots of land. This committee is not looking into that. Because of bribery and corruption in that area people are suffering badly. Cde. Speaker, I would like to appeal to this Government that it should change its policy towards



agriculture. It should stop talking and act if this Government really has the interest of agriculture at heart and if it has the interest of the people at heart.

**The Speaker:** Cde . Ally, your time is up. Cde. Jackson.

**The Minister of Foreign Affairs** (Cde. Jackson): Cde. Speaker, on Monday, March 12, 1979, my colleagues, Cde. Hoyte, the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives, summarised both the situation of Guyana and the approach of this Government in unforgettable and forceful language in the penultimate paragraph of his speech. I crave your indulgence to remind this Assembly of what he said:

“These are difficult times. It would be the easiest things in the world for the Government to eschew those unpalatable decisions which are nevertheless absolutely necessary to protect the vital interests of the nation. The Government has never defaulted in its duty to the nation, and does not now intend to do so. It will never jeopardise the safety of the nation for cheap and fleeting political gain. Its duty is to give firm leadership – and it does so now”.

These considerations apply to the domestic sphere no less than to the area of external relations.

In the face of the escalating prices of essential imports such as capital goods and fuel and static or decreasing prices of our exports, it is not a matter for argument, I suggest, that our difficult circumstances are largely due to external factors which impact so severely on our small and open society. Hence, simple realism dictates that within the constraints of our limited resources we must give careful and sustained attention to the external environment, that we should seek to maximise opportunities and to ward off hazards, and that we play an effective role in the establishment of that New International Economic Order which would be supportive of our own efforts at a national level.

The past year has witnessed several trends in the global economic system which have had a negative effect on the economies of the developing countries, especially the non-oil producing ones. Protectionist measures increasingly adopted by some developed countries have curtailed the exports of developing countries and have added new burdens to their already difficult economic situation. There is growing competition for financial resources in the expensive capital

markets and a stiffening of the conditions attached to borrowing in them. After a brief standstill, the price of fuel has been increased and further rises are scheduled during the course of this year.

**5.45 p.m.**

Some of those, Cde. Speaker, who profess to sanctify the principle of free trade have, by manipulation and intervention, introduced new rigidities in international economic relations. And, Cde. Speaker, progress toward the achieving of a New International Economic Order has been slow, halting and uneven.

Cde. Minister of Economic Development has outlined the new arrangements and described the new mechanisms which are being put in place for the planned use of scarce resources. Naturally this will guide the utilisation of resources in the implementation of foreign policy. However, Cde. Speaker, it is apposite to note the special difficulties and problems with which the planner of foreign policy must cope, for in the planning of external relations, account must be taken of the sometimes unpredictable conduct of sovereign States and emerging incalculable factors such as new technology. Especially is this so at a time of rapid and accelerating change in which the configurations and the very meaning of power are shifting within the international system. Given this situation a small power such as Guyana can best secure its national interests by pursuing a balanced strategy of diplomacy consistent with our ideology and responsive to our needs.

Since the last Budget, Cde. Speaker, we expended much energy on regional relationships. We have sought, through studied and carefully planned initiatives, to consolidate and strengthen our relations with our neighbours and to contribute to the regeneration of the CARICOM experiment.

Some of the main developments are well known. There was, for example the visit of President Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela – the first by a Venezuelan President to Guyana. During that visit we were able to demonstrate the vitality of our nation, to make manifest our desire as a self-reliant people to live in peace with our neighbours on the basis of mutual respect

and sovereign equality, and to convey our willingness to engage in friendly and mutually beneficial co-operation. President Perez' visit was a symbolic of the cordial relationship between Guyana and Venezuela which was enhanced during his term of office and the way in which our two countries have worked together in international forums in promoting those Third World objectives to which we are both committed. In more recent days, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Cde. Hubert Jack, represented Guyana at the inauguration of the new Venezuelan Head of State, President Luis Herrera Campins. We look forward to the maintenance and expansion of our relations with Venezuela under the new administration.

This time last year, an acute state of tension existed between ourselves and our neighbour to the east, Suriname. Since then we have witnessed, through the pursuit of quiet and persistent diplomacy, a process of normalisation with Suriname and a steady movement towards the restoration of traditional ties. Our citizens once again freely exercise their rights to fish in the Corentyne River and the difficulties imposed on people-to-people contact across the border have been attenuated. Exchanges between our two Governments and peoples have intensified and a spirit of goodwill and co-operation has been replacing steadily one of hostility and mistrust.

More latterly, Cde. Speaker, officials from Guyana and Suriname have been holding discussions in Georgetown and in Paramaribo with a view to concluding a fisheries agreement. Considerable progress has been made both during these meeting and through diplomatic channels. Consequently, a team of Guyanese officials will this week to proceeding to Suriname for the next, and hopefully, final phase of those negotiations. If we are successful, as I am confident we can be, in concluding an agreement, considerable advantage will accrue to both countries. The agreement, Cde. Speaker, will permit an agreed number of Guyanese and Surinamese trawlers to operate in the respective exclusive fishing zones as well as enable a number of Guyanese artisanal vessels to fish in marine areas under control of Suriname.

But beyond such an agreement, Cde. Speaker, we are continuing to examine ways and means of deepening the processes and forms of co-operation between our neighbouring Republics. In this connection, we look forward to an early opportunity to communicate the

present dialogue in exchanges at the summit level. Guyana will continue to work purposefully for the improvement and consolidation of relations with Suriname.

During last year, Cde. Speaker, we sought , as was natural, to maintain and further develop our relations with Brazil. At the bilateral level, the meeting in Georgetown two months ago the Guyana/Brazil Joint Commission represented a significant development. The Commission made recommendations on concrete programmes for economic and cultural co-operation in areas such as health, sport, geology, education and science and technology. We intend to pursue vigorously those recommendations.

Committed as we are to collective self-reliance and the promotion of economic co-operation among developing countries, Guyana actively participated in the articulation of the Treaty of Amazonic Co-operation which was signed in Brasilia on July 3, 1978, and which we have this month ratified. We are convinced that the Treaty provides a framework for schemes of joint and co-ordinated action which could redound to the mutual advantage of the participating States.

Cde. Speaker, factors external to the region continued to impose serious constraints on the process of integration within the Caribbean Community. Nevertheless, several member States instituted appropriate adjustment mechanism to crops with the ever-increasing prices of petroleum and petroleum products and the spiralling cost of goods and inflation imported from the developed market economies. Shying away from public recrimination, the Community got down to sober and serious analysis which led to the adoption of action-oriented programmes designed to inject momentum into trading and other arrangements envisaged under the Treaty of Chaguaramas. Thus, Cde. Speaker, after a considerable hiatus, the Council of Ministers held two meetings during which they agreed on measures for stimulating trade as well as giving impetus to action in areas involving the rationalisation of production. It is significant to note, too, that the Standing Committee of Foreign Ministers, which has been in limbo for almost three years, resumed its activities in January of this year.

The Government views the reactivation of this Committee as important. With the recent accession to independence of the Commonwealth of Dominica and St. Lucia and with the

projected early independence of other Associated States, a functioning Committee of Foreign Ministers is an indispensable forum for exchanging views on foreign relations and for optimising co-ordination of responses and action among these States of the Community in the wider interests of the region. Other areas of functional co-operation in health, education, agriculture, to name some, continue to receive full attention.

**5.55 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, all these developments augur well for CARICOM. Yet, to the extent that there continues to be difficulty in convening the supreme organ, the Heads of Government Conference, to that extent will the achievements of CARICOM be limited.

Ever since Christopher Columbus, as he and others since him thought, discovered the Caribbean, our region has been one in which external forces have contended for control and influence. Today, several lines and outreach of external power still intersect in the Caribbean. The inclination to act and react in accordance with a concept of interdependence which inheres in a Caribbean past dominated by imperialism and colonialism is still present.

This situation clearly has far reaching implications for the region as a whole. It imposes obligations on the independent as well as the non-independent members of the Caribbean Community. If it is to be successfully challenged, it requires an active Community, alive to its strengths no less than to its weaknesses. The Government therefore fully participated in steps which were directed towards the strengthening of the Caribbean Community. We never hesitated to play our part and we will continue to do so. Looking ahead, a Summit is eminently desirable. The Prime Minister indicated in his address to the nation on 23<sup>rd</sup> February this year his “hope to attend the CARICOM country, Grenada, the implications of which have a deep significance for the region as a whole. It was in recognition of the special importance of those events for the region that this Government took the initiative, on the same day, to have convened in Barbados on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March, an extraordinary meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Independent countries of CARICOM. In our view the sequence of events, and their antecedents, made clear that their determination was a matter for the people of Grenada and the people of Grenada alone. It could not be otherwise. We therefore expressed some of the principles which informed

Guyana's attitude to the new situation. The P.N.C. Government has stood unswervingly by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. We have on countless occasions reiterated our call for respect for this principle, and it is a principle accepted without reservation by all States of the Non-Aligned Movement. We have also obtained at the United Nations majoritarian support for it, and Guyana, along with Non-Aligned and other developing countries, has called for the adoption by the international community of a declaration in this regard.

That principle – the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States – was not the only one applicable. Its adjunct, non-intervention by outside forces, was equally so. I am happy to say to this National Assembly that at the meeting of Ministers in Barbados, there was no dissent from these positions. It is against the background of the universal acceptance of those important principles that the consultations in Barbados proceeded.

Cde. Speaker, there is a new Government in Grenada. It is in effective control. We are confident that the States, member of CARICOM, and indeed States beyond, will not allow, by their actions, these recent developments, either to halt the march to organic unity in the area or retard the assertion of independence and the processes of Caribbean integration. Consultations in the English-speaking Caribbean are continuing today. A determination in keeping with the objective realities of the situation in Grenada is not far off – I repeat, is not far off.

Beyond the region, Guyana has sought to secure the achievement of our longer range objective through co-operation with like-minded States, especially within the Non-Aligned Movement.

In a very few months, early in September, the Non-Aligned Movement, which is today recognised as a powerful instrument for change within the international system, will hold its sixth Summit Conference in the Caribbean. The convening of the Summit in Havana is in global recognition of the role which the revolutionary people of Cuba have played in the struggle for political and economic emancipation. It is also a recognition of the role of the Caribbean peoples within the Latin American region and of our special vocation as peoples who, because of

geographic and other links, provide a bridge between the three great regions of the developing world.

Guyana, which is a member of the Co-ordinating Bureau, continues to play an active role within the Non-Aligned Movement. During the last twelve months we have participated in meetings of the Bureau at Ministerial level in Havana and, more recently, in Maputo, where we met in extraordinary session to consider the escalating problems of Southern Africa and to co-ordinate action.

In July 1978 the Movement held a conference at Foreign Ministers level in Belgrade in keeping with the custom of meeting at the mid-point between Summits to review and appraise the international situation and the circumstances of the Movement and to chart a course for the next Summit. The Movement met in Belgrade in the face of profound challenges posed both externally and internally to its future coherence and unity.

There was a time, Cde. Speaker, when major powers had in common hostility to, and disregard for, non-alignment. But with non-alignment's successes in exerting positive influence in the international system, notably through hastening the processes of decolonization, old attitudes of some powers have given place to acknowledgement of our role and others to strategies of an interventionist character. Those latter are to be deplored, for they are hardly disguised attempts to interfere in the affairs of the Movement. At Belgrade we rebuffed all such efforts. There, the Non-Aligned Movement reaffirmed its commitment to the time-tested principles on which it is founded and to the maintenance of the Movement as a truly independent global factor concerned with the establishment of a new democratised system of international relations.

The conference drew particular attention to the fact that membership of the Movement has always been open to countries irrespective of their choice of social and economic systems, the main criteria being the commitment to independent action, to the avoidance of bloc military alliances and, as Cde. Prime Minister recently emphasised, the opposition to imperialism and colonialism in its myriad manifestations. But, Cde. Speaker, the future of the Movement is also threatened by difficulties internal to it. One such is the ascription to groups which, whether

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**5.55 – 6.05 p.m.**

founded in geography or creed, may tend to diminish the inter-regional and wider solidarity which is the Movement's main instrument for change. It must be a major objective to ensure that regional or group arrangements, as is the case of the O.A.U., will enrich the experience of the Movement and strengthen its solidarity.

We must likewise see to it that conflicts between Member States are contained and resolved in peaceful ways. They should not provide opportunities for external manipulation in peaceful ways. To this end, the Movement has already identified mechanism for mediation and conflict resolution. It will be one of the tasks of Havana to promote the use of such mechanism and to advance the cause of internal unity.

**6.05 p.m.**

Meeting in the Caribbean, we consider that the Movement should give particular attention to accelerating the processes of decolonization in this hemisphere, including in particular the case of Belize, the aspirations of whose people for Independence continue to be frustrated. Havana should likewise provide an opportunity for a searching scrutiny of those factors which impede the establishment of the New International Economic Order. As the Cde. Leader said on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, "Guyana, led by the P.N.C., intends to contribute to the continued strength and unity of the Movement and to making the Caribbean meeting a historical one".

Nowhere is lack of commitment to a new order more clearly demonstrated than in the field of commodities. Sugar is a good example. Both developed and developing countries have asserted from time to time that an equitable order is dependent on the conclusion of commodity agreements. But ambiguities in the approach of developed countries to the International Sugar Agreement has demonstrated that their interest is apparently limited to those agreements which would ensure them the sustained supply of cheap raw materials vital to their own development. There is little sign as yet of the acceptance of policies based on a mutuality of interests.

The International Sugar Agreement, so carefully and painstakingly negotiated, went into force on a temporary basis on the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1978, for a period of five years. Now, fifteen months later, it is still temporary in status. For example, the U.S.A. has not only failed to ratify



the Agreement but has erected further protectionist measures for its own domestic production by the imposition of new duties and fees on imports amounting to increases, it is estimated, of the order of one thousand percent. For Guyana and some other sugar producing countries in this hemisphere, the situation is worsened by the refusal, although we meet the conditions, to include us on the list of countries eligible for treatment under the GSP. The European Community, for its part, has neither signed nor ratified the I.S.A.

Earlier, I observed that the resort to protectionist measures by industrialised countries penalised a whole range of exports of the developing countries, ranging from traditional raw materials to semi-manufactured and manufactured goods.

These and other restrictive measures more than balance out the transfer of resources, bilaterally and multilaterally, to the developing countries. They are even more punitive on those developing countries which, having achieved comparative advantage in some areas, are denied, through one means or another, full access to the markets of developed countries. The developing countries are united in their resistance to these short-sighted policies. Meanwhile, within the ambit of those considerations, Guyana is seeking to safeguard and improve markets for its exports.

Cde. Speaker, we are a member of GEPLACEA, the Latin American and Caribbean Association of Sugar Production and Exporting Countries. We are convinced that the Producers Association is an important defence mechanism in the armoury of developing countries in pursuit of external economic policies. GEPLACEA has played a necessary role in co-ordinating negotiating positions. Through our Embassy in Washington we are keeping in close touch with the approaches of the region. Our Minister of Trade is at this moment in the Bahamas attending a meeting of the ACP Group concerned with the negotiations of a satisfactory successor treaty to the Lomé convention. The Sugar Protocol, which aims to protect the sugar market in the E.E.C., is an important element in such negotiations.

Cde. Speaker, there is no doubt in our minds the improvement we might secure in overseas sugar markets is only part of a final solution which must aim to move Guyana beyond the linkage of the former plantation economy to metropolitan markets. That solution is a long-

range one on which we have already embarked. As far as sugar is concerned, it lies in diversification to usage, and the development of industries in Guyana which utilise sugar. One such in which we have an increasing interest is the production of industrial alcohol. It has been demonstrated that such alcohol can significantly reduce the dependence on petroleum imports. Moreover, there is the marked advantage that is derived from a renewable resource. We are maintaining close contact with those countries, especially Brazil and Peru, which are developing appropriate technologies for the alternative use of sugar.

While sugar is of immediate interest, the negotiations on it must be pursued within the framework of the New International Economic Order. No programme for national development can be effectively implemented when gains at a national level are siphoned off into coffers of the developed world by an international economic system designed by the developed to operate in their interest.

I have already noted how progress towards the New International Economic Order has been jeopardised by the lack of adequate response by the industrialised countries to an effective programme for commodities. A keystone in the structure of the New Order is the proposed Common Fund, the necessary mechanism for the stabilisation of the exports of those few commodities which form the narrow base of many post-colonial societies. The industrialised countries have shown some change in the attitude to the creation of an effective Fund. A further negotiating conference on the Fund is now in progress in Geneva and we must await its outcome.

The integrated programme for commodities is perhaps the most important element in the New Order. But there are other pillars which are equally essential parts of the edifice. Guyana will continue to urge that concessional financial resource should be increased substantially and their flow made certain and secure, that debt relief must be approached within a development perspective with the objective of bringing about a real transfer of resources, and that the transfer of technology must cease to be a technique for control and exploitation. There must be serious effort for the build-up of the industrial capacities of the Third World so as to enable a higher degree of utilisation of our human and natural resources.

Cde. Speaker, it is essential that the developing countries, in the face of divisive tactics, should carefully co-ordinate positions and, perhaps, elaborate new strategies for negotiations with the developed world. We must look increasingly to our resources, to the pursuit of programmes of collective self-reliance, of economic co-operation among developing countries at the regional and inter-regional levels. We are convinced that such projects of co-operation provide not only the effective basis for bringing to an end the present unequal terms of exchange between the North and South, but will provide the developing world with a source of countervailing power vitally necessary for the effective pursuit of negotiations on the New Order. All these positions and others Guyana has consistently urged in all appropriate forums while, nationally we pursue a policy of ownership and control of our natural resources.

More recently, Guyana played its full part in the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 held in Arusha, Tanzania, preparatory to the UNTADV Conference in Manila. We expect to be in Manila and at the forthcoming Non-Aligned Conference where these ideas and projects will be pursued.

An effective regime for the seas of the world is an essential element in the new Order. The resources of the seas, whether of fish or minerals, can have, and are already having, an important impact on the development of food supplies and mineral resources of developing countries. Already this Government has utilised the generally accepted concept of a fisheries zone to negotiate fisheries agreements with regional and other States which will significantly enhance the development of this resource. It is, therefore, essential that we should continue to be active in the negotiations on the law of the sea. We will thus be sending a delegation to that Conference which resumes in Geneva this month. The negotiations have gone on for several years and considerable progress has been made. I hope that at the forthcoming session the remaining obstacles will be removed and that agreement can be reached on a body of law which recognizes the mutuality of interests of all countries in the utilisation of the resources of the sea.

### **6.15 p.m.**

The negotiations for a new International Economic Order are taking place within the construct of an emergent planetary economy. The Socialist Bloc countries are increasingly

involved in the global network of economic transactions. During the year we will continue to expand and strengthen our relations with all socialist countries. To this end our Embassy in Moscow established nearly a year ago will be consolidated so as to provide the basis for non-resident representation in Eastern European capitals.

Cde. Speaker, I have not attempted within the scope of this debate to provide the House with a tour d'horizon of the international milieu or to deal with all the aspects of our foreign policy. Instead, I have sought to focus attention on certain areas of concentration of national interests.

The present phase of evolution in the international system is characterised by rapidity of change and by the complexity of the factors involved. It is a world in which peace is not secure and in which the hopes which détente aroused for global peace are yet unfulfilled. It is a world in which some major powers still seek to arrogate to themselves the role of the directorate for global change. Even as traditional forms of economic domination continue, new and subtler techniques of exploitation are increasingly employed.

Parallel are methods which have been developed for the coercion of states or interference in their internal affairs, methods which include the organised use of mercenaries. In addition, and importantly, is the thrust of issues which are planetary in their range as, for example, the global management of the seas, which already alluded to, the preservation of the eco-system, and the conservation and development of conventional energy sources and the search for new ones. Within this spectrum of change one thing is certain. It is that small States are especially vulnerable. Without the resources of appropriate power, our chief defence must lie with a carefully developed and skilfully pursued diplomacy. It is our first line of defence against threats, or pressures from any quarter, whether economic or political.

In the exercise of diplomacy, all small States must look to the United Nations. Guyana fully supports the Non-Aligned Movement's commitment to the strengthening of the World body. In the more than thirty years of its history it has achieved near universality of membership. Indeed, Cde. Speaker, this is one of its major successes, the acceleration of the processes of decolonization which has brought so many additional States into the international community. It

is true that the U.N. has registered some failures and that its painstaking work hardly ever attracts the headlines. But to look always for dramatic successes is to misunderstand the nature of the U.N. It is a body established by sovereign states and subject to their will. It operates through the slow promotion of new ideas and values which avail in the end to bring about change. It is, to take one example, through the United Nations that the Movement of the Non-Aligned has secured universal acceptance of doctrines such as the permanent sovereignty of a people over their natural resources, a doctrine which has provided a basis for the repossession of wealth alienated in colonial times – a doctrine which we have applied effectively in Guyana.

I have already mentioned the range of global issues whose solution is dependent on planetary management. The U.N. is best suited to secure the necessary global consensus and to set in place the required mechanisms. At the same time it is acknowledge that in certain areas, such as peace-keeping, the U.N. has not always been able to take effective action because of the inability to activate machinery identified in its charter. This is an area which, together with the implementation of the New International Economic Order, is among the chief concerns of our diplomacy at the U.N.

Cde. Speaker, this Government has during last year conducted our foreign policy with assurance and with dignity. We have never wavered in our purpose – the preservation of the security of the State, the promotion of national development and the welfare of our citizens at home and abroad.

The year ahead calls for fortitude. It calls for guts, for patriotism. Ancient shibboleths will not suffice and the mere parroting of old solutions to new problems will just not do.

Let us all rise to the challenges and the opportunities of 1979.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Jackson, may I congratulate you in your maiden speech to this Assembly which was made in relation to the budget presentation, and which was indeed an informative presentation.

Cde. Taylor.

**Cde: Taylor:** Cde. Speaker, in making my contribution to the 1979 Budget Debate, I would like to direct my attention to youth and hinterland development. However, as you are aware, this is my first major contribution in this forum and it is significant that one needs the will and dedication of the P.N.C. to involve the people of other sections of our society in decision making even at the highest forum in the most crucial and important issues of this nation. The Government, directed by the P.N.C., proposes to spend in 1979 several millions of dollars on the development of youth. The Guyana National Service, established in 1974, continues to play a significant role in all-round development of the nation's youth. So far this institution has made a tremendous contribution to the national economy. Since its establishment, the Guyana National Service has established training centres at Papaya, Kimbia and Tumatumari. There is also a centre at Itabu where it runs a stone quarry. While the establishment and up-keep of the service cost money, the benefit to the nation has been invaluable.

The Guyana National Service offers meaningful employment to hundreds of Guyanese and thus it helps to ease the unemployment problems. On the other hand, at a time when national unity is necessary, National Service brings together in one environment Guyanese of different ethnic origins, different cultural traditions and different social and economic standings. This is a remarkable achievement since new values and new standards are practised by a wide cross-section of our community and different experiences shared. We, Guyanese, can be found in every country and in every continent of the universe, but not many of us know the beauty of our dear motherland. Before the G.N.S was set up, these places were little known, but today these places are some of the more important places in Guyana and many of us have actually visited them, including the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh. That is the Guyana National Service.

### **6.25 p.m.**

Before 1974, only a few institutions catered for the technical training of the young Guyanese. Today, however, young men and women are benefiting tremendously from the technical training that is available at the Guyana National Service. Many have become competent carpenters, joiners, plumbers, masons, electricians, bricklayers, radio operators, and last but not least, agriculturalists, just to name a few of the skills offered by the Guyana National Service,

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**6.15 – 6.25 p.m.**

while many are yet in training in the fields I mentioned. Some of the graduates have found jobs in various places and are now actively participating in nation building.

An examination of this organisation will show that they are self-sufficient and are engaged in the production of food. In 1978, black-eye production yielded 320,000 pounds

**6.25 p.m.**

and in 1979, so far, they have reaped 150,000 pounds, and harvesting is continuing apace.

Ginned cotton in 1978 exceeded 740,000 pounds. Egg production, despite problems, reached the \$1/2 million mark.

No one can measure the actual contribution of this enterprise of the Guyana National Service to the national economy, nor can they measure the value of training and education being given in this organisation. Who can measure the value to the people and to the nation as a whole? No wonder the opposition forces in this country criticise the Guyana National Service. It is our feeling and conviction on this side of the House that the National Service is here to stay, because to ask us to scrap the National Service is to do our young people a great disservice.

It was the P.N.C. Government that declared war against waste, and we are making full use of our resources. The Minister of Education told us that as much as \$118.4 million will be spent in 1979 on education. This, Cde. Speaker, shows the feelings of the Government for our young people.

As you are aware, in the projects of development under the P.N.C., Government has undertaken riverain development and in urban areas, development has been taking place. We have seen Government's commitment to the regional projects, the M.M.A. and Black Bush projects, to mention a few of them reflected on page 50 of the Budget Speech. It is for this reason that the training of Guyanese in various skills becomes necessary. To this end training in our multilateral schools, community high schools, technical institutes, and our agricultural schools is so vitally important. These programmes will equip our young people with skills needed in their own communities.

Our youths are prepared for the task of national development and the development of their own communities. They are prepared not only to fill vacancies but also for self-employment. I contend that this Budget affords the greatest possible assistance to our development and the prevention of the waste of human resources.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Dindayal.

**Cde. Dindayal:** Once again, we have before us a Budget Speech which is very empty and which is of no significance to the economy of the country and the true position of the P.N.C. Government. We have seen names are being changed. Last year we had austerity Budget. This year we have a fight back Budget just as we have old wines in new bottles that has not got any value and any moral in it.

The fight-back Budget is meant to be tax-free Budget for 1979, but we have seen at the beginning of 1979 that there has been an increase in taxation due to the increased price of oil. No doubt the P.N.C. does not want this to be recorded in this Budget. That is why this has been done and it is nothing for this Government to increase taxation on many items during the year as we have seen. Nothing will be able to stop the P.N.C. Government from putting forward to us a mild budget. This was the practice in the past.

**6.35 p.m.**

We heard that the prescription from the Prime Minister will solve the problem, also increased production and productivity. But many other things are needed to have increased production. For instance, increased production and productivity will need to have effective drainage and irrigation facilities, adequate fertilizers and insecticide, duty-free concessions adequate facilities for land preparation and reaping, farmers' involvement, management and control of the rice industry and, above all, democracy. These are all prerequisites to increased production.

You cannot put up the prescription on the board and set the pack and the chute and collect production. Production means labour, sweat and toil. But the P.N.C. Government fails to



realise this. They feel you can use the forceful method against the farmers to achieve their goals. But this is a very sad mistake they are making.

These things I have mentioned which will contribute to increased production, have been denied the farmers by this P.N.C. Government. The farmers are doing their lot. Year after year they are being congratulated by the Government for their performance. Only today the Minister of Agriculture congratulated the farmers for their production.

I say that this Budget Speech is empty. The Budget Speech states that during 1978 there was a reduction in the production of rice by 14 per cent. The Minister of Agriculture has said today that 1978 had a record crop. How confusing is this piece of document before us. That is why I said that this Budget does not represent the true position of the economic situation and the Government's position.

I heard the speakers from the opposite side talking about a socialist construction. They believe in a socialist construction. They even talked about a principled position, but I do not know who really has a principled position. While they are committed to building socialism, one Regional Minister, speaking to the people on the Essequibo Coast, when the question of unemployment was posed to him, said that unemployment is all over the world and he specifically mentioned Cuba and the Soviet Union. He said that in Cuba and the Soviet Union the children are forced to do labour. He said ladies in the socialist countries are only receiving one panty per year.

**The Speaker:** What does that have to do with the Budget?

**Cde. Dindyal:** I am mentioning this because they are claiming that they are socialists, and they are blaming the socialist States. So I do not know about their principled position. As I said before, democracy is needed and workers' participation in managing and controlling the economy is the only way that we can increase production.

During the time of the P.P.P. Government, the farmers, through their organisation, the Rice Producers' Association, were managing and controlling the Rice Marketing Board – and the record is there and can be examined at any time. The Rice Marketing Ordinance was amended by

the P.P.P. Government in 1960 to give rice producers majority control of the Rice Marketing Board. The rice producers' representatives on the Board were increased to eleven and the Board elected its own Chairman.

Through the initiative of the Guyana Rice Producers' Association, the code and panel system was introduced. The Panel Grading system comprised of three trained graders, one nominated by the Rice Development Company, one by the Rice Producers' Association and one was a neutral member nominated by the Ministry of Agriculture. This system was also introduced at the Guyana Rice Board in Georgetown. This system was relatively satisfactory and created a measure of confidence among rice farmers, particularly in the direction of their productive activity. This was a base for the construction of a socialist society. It is necessary to mention that both the Guyana Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Development Company made surpluses for three consecutive years when rice producers had majority control of the Board for the first time in its history. At the same time farmers were not cheated but they were given reasonable grades and fair prices for their paddy and rice.

In 1961/1962, the Guyana Rice Marketing Board realised a profit of \$837,753.00 and the R.D.C. realised a profit of \$211,169.00, making a total of \$1,048,922.00. In 1962/1963, the G.R.M.B. realised a profit of \$613,053.00 and the R.D.C. realised a profit of \$114,931.00, making a total of \$727,984.00. In 1963/1964, the G.R.M.B. realised a profit of \$557,005.00 and the R.D.C. realised a profit of \$145,018.00, making a total of \$702,023.00. Despite the competence demonstrated by the rice producers in managing the Guyana Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Development Company, they were arbitrarily removed from both organisations.

During a meeting of the Guyana Rice Marketing Board held on the 14<sup>th</sup> September, 1966, the price of rice purchased from rice farmers during the autumn crop was reduced by \$2 per bag of 180 pounds of rice and \$1 per bag of 140 pounds of paddy. Certain intermediary grades were also removed with the result that the overall reduction was approximately \$3 per bag, while during the same period, 1965-1970, the cost of production increased rapidly. This clearly shows that since the P.N.C. Government took office and took full control of the Rice Marketing Board, it started to go into losses.

6.45 p.m.

The reduction in prices was done mainly to retrieve from the farmers, the huge amount of over nearly \$9 million suffered by the G.R.M.B. and the R.D.C. According to Mr. Nityanand, the Agricultural Economist of the Government of Guyana, the cost of producing one acre of rice in 1965 was over 20 per cent higher than in 1962. After 1965, the Government withdrew duty-free gasoline and subsidies from the industry when about 45 per cent of the tractors were driven by petrol. While many of these machines became obsolete due to the prohibitive cost of fuel, cost of production increased steadily. Using the economist's calculations as a guide, the cost of production in 1970 was over 33 per cent higher than in 1965, out-stripping income. Farmers survived mainly by exploiting the labour of their own womenfolk and children. Since 1973 there was a little increase in the price of rice but since then there has been no such further increase. Instead of that the prices of rice and paddy have been reduced.

Cde. Speaker, these are the things which are contributing to this economic situation today. My friend said that ignorance can only be eradicated by education and these people are so hard to accept education. They are bent on sucking the blood of the poor farmers. They are a set of human parasites that are sucking the blood of the farmers. Scientists say it does not matter how much fertiliser you throw on the root, 90 per cent of the parasites would attack it.

On two occasions the national minimum wage has increased due to the high cost of living. We agree that the workers must have more. Haven't they got a heart to know that the rice farmers are helping? They must only produce the food for those at the top and deny their families and their children the amenities of life, to which they are entitled?

This is the highest forum of the land, the House of Parliament. For the past years I have been here I have been disgusted to see the attitude of those who are in the seat of power. They fail to realise that the people whom they are pressuring, who are maintaining them, those are the people who are responsible for their salaries - the taxpayers. They are playing with the lives of those people. It is easy to turn the clock back –

**The Speaker:** I do not intend to turn it back, you can be assured of that.

**Cde. Dindyal:** It is not easy to turn time back. It is mentioned in the Budget Speech that the Government intends to eradicate spoilage. We have been hearing this for many years.

I have a Government publication, a Press Release dated 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1973. It states:

“Farmers will benefit during this harvest and thereafter from the coming into operation of the four giant rice drying and storage centres constructed at Ruimzigt (West Demerara), Wakenaam, Anna Regina and MARDS.

These centres – erected at a cost of \$17 million have a capacity of some 10,000 tons of paddy each. However, actual storage will be about twice this quantity since milling of dried and stored paddy will take place simultaneously with receiving of paddy from the field.

Erection of these silos was undertaken by Pemar (W.H.) Inc. Under the supervision of the Weitz Company Inc. – Engineers of U.S.A.

The benefits to be derived from the operation of these silos are:-

**Firstly**, farmers will be able to deliver wet paddy from the field and have it cleaned, dried and stored immediately, thereby saving losses.

**Secondly**, losses due to weevil, rats and other causes which attack improperly stored paddy will be eliminated.

**Thirdly**, expenditure on bags will be greatly reduced since storage will be in bulk and not in bags as at present.

**Fourthly**, the quality of paddy will be greatly improved by cleaning, drying and storage, thereby better quality of rice which would earn the farmer high prices”.

**6.55 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, since 1973, you will be surprised to know, thousands of bags of paddy are being spoilt. There are private mills operating milling cracked rice. That paddy is spoilt paddy. Farmers’ rice is being spoilt in the field for the want of combines to reap. High grade paddy is being reaped and through lack of adequate transportation it spoils before it reaches the mill. The farmer loses in price and the Government is solely responsible for this. Yet they are talking about

spoilage. There is a silo at Somerset and Berks and paddy reaped there has to be transported to Anna Regina to be scaled and then transported back to Somerset and Berks. This is the programme and policy of the Government. This policy of the P.N.C. Government has caused us to be in this position today. Unless this Government carries out an investigation to find out the cause of all of this, it will not be able to eliminate this. We are doing our lot on this side to identify the faults to this Government. We are not in office; we do not have the power to do anything else.

The Minister of State for Agriculture made a statement here in Parliament in his contribution and he said that Government had carried out an intensive scheme to build sea dams all over the country. But the whole of the Hampton Court sea dam broke away and the farmers are being flooded out there. I went with a delegation to meet the Minister and asked him to carry out an investigation into the losses of these farmers' crops and to see what adequate compensation could be given to them. The Minister said that this Government is not giving compensation but he promised that he will go in and carry out investigations. I told him that when he is going to make representations, please ask the farmers' representatives to go there. He said he will invite the farmers' themselves to go there. But from reports, they never invited any farmers to go. I further claim that this area from Dartmouth to Lima should be declared an emergency area. The Minister said it has been declared an emergency area since 1973. Emergency means that you will have to bring work forces from all over the place to get the work done very quickly. Instead of that, workers who were maintaining that locations were taken off and are being paid under that same Head to break strikes and cut cane.

The Minister said that on the island of Wakenaam, a mud sea dam was built to facilitate the people there and a four-foot wooden koker was put down to take care of over four hundred acres of land –

**The Speaker:** Two minutes more.

**Cde. Dindyal:** A letter was sent to the Minister of Agriculture and a copy was sent to the Leader of the Opposition. I will read it. It states:

“Dear Cde. Minister –

**The Speaker:** I don't think we have time for that. Your time is up. Cde. Ackman.

**The Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip** (Cde. Ackman) : Cde. Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity offered which gives me the opening to first congratulate the Minister of Economic Development and all concerned for presenting this Budget 1979 to this House and the nation, and secondly on behalf of our women, to say thanks to him for being honest and frank with us. I am quite sure that in some quarters it was felt that because this honest-to-goodness Budget was not presented earlier that we would have been given one which was either sugar coated, unrevealing, or to say the least Kaldonian in content, but instead, its new approach has allowed our women to understand among other things why our men cannot receive the \$14.00 per day minimum wage at this point in time. We do not believe in taking out of an enterprise that which you have not put in. It was a clear understanding that the climb of the minimum wage was based on the increased production and productivity.

Cde. Speaker, with the advent of the People's National Congress in Government, we have seen tangible evidence to support the emancipation of our women, for instance, the Party's base was and still is the womenfolk of this country, and therefore it had set about to acknowledge the contribution of women and identify their roles.

It was obvious then, that like the rest of the population, we had traits of the teachings of colonialism, since it is the duty of our women to bear, care and mould the young, which will ultimately be the nation, the Party embarked on a programme to educate and orientate us, politically, psychologically, technically, morally and religiously.

**7.05 p.m.**

It was through the policy, of equality for all, of the People's National Congress that we saw the rise in the status of women, to hold important offices in both the public and private sectors. No longer do we only punch the typewriters or take notes and present letters for our bosses' signatures, but we find ourselves – and qualified to do so – in the role of Heads of Departments and carrying responsibilities with the aplomb needed for its execution.

Immediately one could have seen that our Party was treading the New Road, which called for the amalgamation of both sexes if its Socialist objectives were to be achieved. Our Leader and Prime Minister openly called on us to make our contribution not only felt but worthwhile. The hands of our women must be used for development and all discriminatory measures must be removed.

With this encouragement we saw an influx of qualified women entering into fields which before then seemed to hold taboo against us, fields such as technology and trade unionism. We know that education and health were the only areas where we were represented at a certain level, but there was a significant breakthrough all round at all levels, to wit, in education we have Head Mistresses, in Health, we have doctors in specialised areas. To sum up, we are at decision making levels, we can be seen in the capacities of Minister, Religious and Political, Permanent Secretaries, Parliamentary Secretaries, Solicitors, Barristers, and I hope shortly to see Judges. We occupy positions on Boards, important ones at that, we certainly have been given the opportunity for more involvement. It all happened when our Prime Minister presented to this House a State Paper on the equality of women.

Intensive training programmes began for our housewives. This provided the opportunity for us to turn our attention to the acquisition of new skills and improving on what we had. Women broke new ground in the fields of Carpentry, welding, plumbing, painting, and in the fields, and manning the tractors, which at one time was looked upon as a man's job. Thanks must also be given to the W.R.S.M. the women's arm of the P.N.C., for putting into action that consciousness awakened by the Party, therefore the myth of being the weaker sex was then swallowed up in the victory of assault by our women on all fronts working side by side with our men. We have certainly learnt more and benefited greatly through the P.N.C.

We are now in a position to assist in educating our children, educating them to understand when they say or hear the phrase "there is dignity in work", that work is not allotted to sex but that work is work and must be done to the best of our ability at all times in order to maintain standards and increase production and productivity.

We hope to be able to exercise more influence on our men not to participate in strikes which can only spell ruin to our economy but instead to act responsibly. Page 27 of the Budget Speech reads:

“We will persist in our struggle to ensure to every citizen the right, as citizen, to food, clothing and housing; to educational, medical and recreational facilities; and to the other basic amenities necessary for modern, civilised existence”.

Moving from stage to stage, Cde. Speaker, we have seen where our women have made a dramatic entry on the international scene, and this is because of our significant involvement at the local level as well as the consistency of moving towards a Socialist society. We have been able to attract women of other countries to the point of being invited to a number of Conferences with delegate status, hence full participation, as we can well remember when the Chairman of the W.R.S.M. presented a paper at the Mexico Conference in August 1975. This paper dealt at length with what our Government has done for our women and what it had intended to do in the future.

We also saw the National Secretary of the W.R.S.M representing our women at Conferences in Jamaica, Cuba, and Belize, however, what is noteworthy, Cde. Speaker, is that our women through the W.R.S.M, C.A.S.W.I.G. and C.A.R.I.W.A., are now being consulted for our view points on various topics as they relate to women of the Third World. Yet again Cde. Speaker, our National Secretary is now the co-ordinator of programmes for our women's involvement in income generating projects as from 1<sup>st</sup> March, 1979. This course will help to augment the family's income, a method of sharing responsibilities with our men and so ensuring the future of our children.

Cde. Speaker, may I remind this House that through our Government we have churned out women of grit, women of courage and conviction. The women of Guyana have accredited themselves at home and abroad, we have seen them performing at Ambassadorial level, Counsel General in New York, Cde. Benn, Political Counsels in Cde. Claire Johnson and Cde. Doris Collins, these women have proved their worth and we are proud of them and for your information, there are many others for their offering. We have cut across race, as well as class barriers, and surely by now, Cde. Speaker, it is a known fact that we embrace every woman in Guyana even those from the Opposition.



7.15 p.m.

Without losing our femininity, we have worked together with our men to develop this country of ours. We will continue to do so, for it is real joy to work with the spirit of co-operativism, and how else can we show our gratitude to a man so great, so selfless, a man who has given the women of Guyana a new dimension, to play an integral part in the new society, than to support so able a Budget, a Budget of vision, one which has turned the telescope in and has given us a true picture.

Again we do appreciate this and so come 1980, not only the emancipated women of Guyana will be satisfied with the results of collective work, but every true Guyanese will be happy to stand up with the progressive P.N.C., whose ideology is sound, whose policies are accepted, and be counted.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Seeram Prashad.

**The Minister of State – Regional (East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)** (Cde. Prashad): Cde. Speaker, when a year ago I addressed this House on the subject of potable water supplies in this country, I referred to the unrelenting efforts being made by the People's National Congress Government to deal with this problem and its ultimate objective of providing for adequate and reliable supplies of water of acceptable quality for every home in the country. Since then, the efforts of this Government to attain this objective have been pursued with all vigour and determination within the limits of our financial resources.

Guyana may, indeed, be described as the “land of many water”; but in attempting to procure adequate and reliable supplies of water of approved quality in all areas of the country, one is confronted with what, at times, can only be described as the most formidable and daunting difficulties. In the early period of ground water development in coastal Guyana, shallow flowing wells were constructed to supplement surface water supplies. The first well, reportedly drilled in 1841, was completed to a depth of 123 feet at Fort William Frederick in Georgetown. By 1913 at least 76 shallow flowing wells had been constructed to depths of less than 300 feet. However, the

water produced from these wells had notably high iron content and salinity. The shallow production zone was subsequently named the Upper Sand of the White Sand Series.

The relatively poor water quality found in the Upper Sand prompted drilling of deeper wells which might encounter aquifers containing water low in salinity. Between 1913 and 1914, a considerable number of successful wells were completed into the aquifer which is currently designated the “A” Sand of the White Sand Series.

More recently several wells have been drilled into a deeper aquifer zone which has come to be known as the “B” Sand of the White Sand Series. As hoped, these deeper wells yielded better quality water than those of “A” Sand being both low in total dissolved solids and iron content.

The quality of the water produced from the three aquifers zones which I have mentioned is now, and will be in the future, an important factor in the development of water supplies throughout coastal Guyana. Presently, only limited attention is given to water quality conditions in the Upper Sand. This is due largely to the knowledge that the quality is known from historical information to be poor and only a few wells are producing from the aquifer. Chloride content is usually high and may range to more than 1500 parts per million (ppm). Total dissolved solids are known to exceed 3000 ppm and iron content may be as great as 100 ppm. Government records reveal no high production wells to be producing from this aquifer for use in water systems. It is reported that within the last 15 years only a few small diameter wells (two inch) have been constructed in the Upper Sand. It is quite possible, however, that wells in the Upper Sand its proximity to recharge areas, such as along the inland banks of the large rivers, could produce excellent quality water. Water quality of selected well sites in Guyana demonstrates this possibility.

In the sector from Pomeroon River to the Essequibo River, analysis indicates chloride content from 19.3 to 107 ppm. Total dissolve solids vary along the sector from 71 to 330 ppm. These wells would be excellent but for the iron content. The “B” Sand aquifer is not present between the Pomeroon and Essequibo Rivers.

From the East Bank of the Essequibo River to the West Bank of the Demerara River, chloride content is lower than the west. The water classification is excellent, except for some iron content.

The largest unit between the East Bank Demerara River and the Corentyne River Contains the broadest range of water quality of the three areas. Chloride content is generally less than 50 ppm. Total dissolved solids are between 52 and 928 ppm, but generally are less than 120 ppm.

At present only a few wells located in and near Georgetown produce water from the “B” sand. The water quality in these wells is notably better, with respect to iron content, than wells producing from the “A” sand.

Previous studies of the ground water resources of Guyana have considered the possibility of contamination of producing aquifers by encroaching sea water. The concern over this occurrence has been caused by the reduction on hydrostatic pressures noted in the wells and the deeper pumping levels required by high capacity wells drilled within the last decade. To date no indication of sea water contamination has been noted in water quality analyses. Although artesian heads have diminished significantly throughout the years the prospect of aquifer degradation appears remote at this time. The presence of a large recharge area, a broad continental shelf, and apparently well confined aquifers tend to reduce the conditions conducive to sea water encroachment. In addition, well productions relatively small, and will continue to be, in comparison to available aquifer storage inland and that potentially present off-shore.

I have referred at some length to some of the problems encountered, because in fact, they are the principal cause for the increasing expenditure incurred in the construction of wells with reasonable productive capacity and the capability of sustain the ravages of deterioration caused by the chemical aggressiveness of much of the water.

The effects of the economic crisis of 1977 continued into 1978 affecting both operational and developmental plans of the Guyana Water Authority. However, despite these problems, the

quality of service was maintained throughout the year and it was also possible through good planning to carry out more developmental works.

Negotiations on the takeover of the systems operated by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee continued during the year. Concrete proposals have been put forward by Guywa which have been the subject of lengthy discussions. It is expected that this matter will be satisfactorily resolved during the current year.

The water laboratory was able to function properly with an improvement in the transportation facilities. A water quality surveillance programme, both chemical and bacteriological, was carried out throughout the extent of Guywa's operations; and corrective measures were taken when ever any unsatisfactory results were revealed.

During the year 1978, six new wells were completed at a cost of approximately \$1.7 million with two others in progress which are scheduled to be completed this year. The completed wells are at Walton Hall on the Essequibo Coast; La Grange on the West Bank Demerara; Clonbrook on the East Coast Demerara, Albion on the Corentyne, Berbice. In addition, two wells were completed for other organisations, the Guyana Sugar Corporation at Enmore and the Georgetown Sewerage and Water Commissioners at Turkeyen. Work is in progress at Calcutta, Mahaicony, at No. 8 on the West Coast, Berbice. These two wells are expected to be completed before the middle of the year.

For the year 1979, new wells are scheduled for Aberdeen on the Essequibo Coast, a replacement well at Belgrade on the West Bank, Demerara; at Ogle and at Haslington on the East Coast Demerara; Gordon Table in the Mahaicony Creek; Golden Grove on the West Coast Berbice and No. 69 village on the Corentyne at a cost of \$1.4 million.

During 1978, Pump Stations were completed at Onderneming on the Essequibo Coast and Amsterdam on Leguan Island; Parika and La Grange in West Demerara; Land of Canaan East Bank Demerara and Clonbrook in the East Coast Demerara; and at Adelphi, Canje, Berbice all at a cost of \$105.00.

7.25 p.m.

In 1979, Pump Stations will be constructed at Walton Hall and Aberdeen on the Essequibo Coast; at Free-and –Easy on Wakenaam Island; at Haslington on the East Coast Demerara; at Golden Grove, West Coast Berbice, at Alnion and No. 69 village on the Corentyne, at a total cost of \$105,000.

### **Pipelines**

During the year 1978, the following pipelines were laid:-

#### **(1) In Essequibo:**

100 ft of 6” and 40 ft of 4” at Onderneeming, 900 ft of 6” at Walton Hall, 40 ft of 4” at Mainstay, 400ft of 4” at Henrietta and 440 ft of 4” at Wakenaam, Essequibo.

#### **(ii) In West Demerara:**

2,030 ft of 4” along the Nismes Highway, 100ft of 6” at Sisters, 1744ft of 4” at Pouderoyen, 600ft of 6” at La Grange, 210ft of 4” at No.1 Canal, 500ft of 4” at Den Amstel, 300ft of 4” at Blankenburg, 660ft of 6” at Crane, 650ft of 6” at Parika, and 50ft of 4” at Nouvelle Flanders.

#### **(iii) In the East Coast Demerara:**

400ft of 4” to Bladen Hall Multilateral School, 400ft of 6” and 300ft of 4” to the Workshop Complex at Melanie Damishana, 600ft of 6” and 400ft of 4” at Clonbrook, and 120ft of 4” at Brickery- Garden of Eden.

#### **(iv) In the West Berbice Area:**

1900ft of 8” at Perseverance and 160ft of 4” at Bushy Park, Mahaicony.

(v) **In the East Berbice Area:**

2,120ft of 4” and 300ft of 3” in Adelphi-Reliance, 2000ft of 6” in Hanswell-Port Mourant and 320ft of 4” in Bush Lot.

During the current year it is proposed to lay the following pipelines at a total estimated cost of \$171,000:-

- (i) 3,100ft of 6” at Aberdeen, Essequibo;
- (ii) 3,000ft of 42 at Roden Rust, West Demerara;
- (iii) 1000ft of 8” and 3000ft of 6” at Golden Grove, West Coast Berbice and
- (iv) 1500ft of 7” at No.69 village on the Corentyne, Berbice.

In addition to the foregoing, a new 21/2 “Force and Lift” pump was installed in the well at Capoey and a trestle and two-400 gallon tanks were erected at Mainstay, Essequibo.

At West Demerara, a new pump was installed in the Parika well and a new pump Engine at Windsor Forest.

In the East Demerara, a new pump and diesel engine were installed at Clonbrook, while new engines were installed at Victoria and Land of Cannan.

At Perseverance, West Berbice District, a new pump and engine installed.

A new pump and engine were installed at Adelphi and new engines installed at New Forest Canje and at No.19 Pump Station.

During the current year, new pumps and engines will be installed at Walton Hall, Free-and-Easy and Aberdeen in the Essequibo; at Haslington, East Coast Demerara; at Golden Grove, West Coast Berbice; and at Albion and No.69 in the East Berbice area at a total cost of \$1,200,000.

During 1978 negotiations with the United States Agency for International Development resulted in a grant of approximately \$50,000 for pipeline extensions in the Chance – Calcutta are of Eastern Mahaicony. Work on this Project, for which labour was contributed by self-help has

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**National Assembly**

**7.25 – 7.35 p.m.**

now been completed with the laying of the pipelines, 2'565 feet and 800 feet of 4 inches diameter in two areas. This extension will assist mainly in the distribution of portable water from the new well at Calcutta. The extensions will provide an improved and new service to the communities numbering 10,000 at Clonbrook, Two Friends, Dochfour and Bee Hive. The total cost of the Project is estimated at \$132,162 with \$17,360 being saved by the use of self-help labour.

At Albion, Corentyne, Berbice, 1600 feet of 10"; 2,750 feet of 8" and 5,000 feet of 6" pipes will be laid. The new well at Albion has not yet been put into operation. The extension will provide a service for approximately 10,000 people at a cost of \$225,294 with a saving of \$20,277 by the use of self-help labour.

At Kurukururu Township, the pipeline distribution system was extended by the installation of 8,000 feet of 6" and 11,300 feet of 4" pipes at a cost of \$200,625. Labour for the project was by self-help; and at the end of the year work was still in progress.

As part of the Government's general policy to improve water supplies in all the areas of the country, a significant step was taken to embark on a specific programme of improvement for the Linden area. To this end a loan of the order of \$2,315,000 (Can.) was obtained from the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency. Funds were also provided by the Guyana Government to meet the local cost.

**7.35 p.m.**

In 1978 a team of Engineers from GUYWA and GUYMINE visited Canada and through the assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency inspected water treatment plants of types which could be used to render more potable, the quality of water available in sources identified in Linden. Specifications for these plants and their related equipment were completed by GUYWA and GUYMINE and these specifications are now with officials of CIDA and the Canadian Commercial Corporation which is an arm of the Government of Canada

responsible for procurement. Procurement of treatment plants is scheduled to commence almost immediately.

At West Watooka which is on the left bank of the Demerara River and 1/2 mile upstream of the bridge between the two banks, the specifications call for the supply of a Water Treatment Plant designed for 1.5 million gallons of water daily. Provision for expansion on this plant will be made to supply 4.5 million gallons of water daily. The plant and equipment to be supplied and installed include clarifiers, filters, a 100,000 gallons underground clear well and chemical storage tanks and pumps for injecting chemicals into the water. Raw water of this plant will be taken from a point in the river approximately 100 feet from the shoreline via low lift turbine pumps and a 24 inches diameter header pipe.

At Wismar, water is obtained from the Demerara River, and two wells which together produce approximately seven hundred and fifty thousand gallons of water daily. The specifications call for the supply of equipment for the removal of iron from the ground water in the form of a package plant.

Designs for an aerator which will be constructed by Guyanese contractors and made of greenheart lumber will include provision for the oxidation of dissolved iron in the water. Equipment to be supplied for this plant includes a Contact Tank, Filters, Chemical Storage Tanks and feed pumps for injecting chemicals into the water to render it more portable. Provision will also be made for the installation of a 60,000 gallons capacity clear well and suitable high-lift pumps.

At Rockstone the water is taken from the Dacoura Creek via a high lift with minimal treatment at present. The specifications in the hands of CIDA officials call for the supply of a Package Treatment plant of capacity 1.0 million gallons of water per day to render the water more portable. The specification calls for the supply of flocculator to assist in bringing out the settlement of finely suspended particles in the water and filters to remove the settled particles. Chemical storage tanks and pumps will also be supplied for injecting chemicals into the water.



Provision is also being made for the erection of a 50,000 gallons clear well and installation of additional low and high lift pumps to ensure a more reliable supply of portable water to residents in the community.

At Amelia's Ward where a well was drilled in the early 70,s but has not yet been put into service, it is the intention to harness this well with a suitable high lift pump of 1.0 million gallons per day capacity and put it into use later this year. The immediate result of this exercise will be the increased flow and pressure of water to residents in the Amelia's Ward and Retrieve areas which are experiencing low pressures. The specifications call for the design of an aerator to be constructed with Guyanese lumber by Guyanese craftsmen, the object of which is to bring about settlement of iron present in the ground-water. Equipment to be supplied under specification call for the supply of an iron removal package which will include a contact tank, filters, and chemical storage tanks and feed pump for injecting chemicals into the water. Provision is also being made for the erection of a 100,000 gallons capacity clear-well and adequately sized distribution pumps.

Suitable Pipelines and appurtenance will also be installed in areas where, sizes are inadequate to carry the increased flow of water; installed mains are improperly located making it difficult to effectively carry out repairs; development is taking place as in the case of Rockstone Housing Scheme; no water main exists in current residential areas. The financial requirements for the supply of pumps, pipes and appurtenances and preliminary payments to suppliers of treatment plants is of the order of G\$120,000 for 1979.

The estimated cost of design and construction of roads, installation of power supply, construction of buildings for housing equipment at Watooka, Rockstone, Wismar and Amelia's Ward and installations for pumps at Wismar and Amelia's Ward, is \$850,000 (Guyana), which will be met by the Government of Guyana. The total expenditure involves overseas and local, for 1979 is \$2,970,000 (Guyana).

Significant steps are being taken to improve the water supply situation in the Rupununi and Bartica areas, the main features of which I shall outline for the information of the House.

The present system of water supply in the Rupununi villages is by shallow wells, in some cases hand dug to a depth of 20 – 30 feet or drilled to a depth of between 50 – 100 feet. In most cases hand pumps are provided, but a few have windmills. The proposed project will augment what is already constructed thereby improving supplies in some villages, and providing a supply where none at the present time exists in others.

**7.45 p.m.**

A satisfactory water supply in the savannah areas would encourage migration to those sites to serve and help to lessen the migration of the Amerindian population which is to some extent nomadic. Because of the large areas concerned, and the influence the project will have on other areas in the country, the project must be considered not only a regional development but more a sub-national one.

The provision of a reliable water supply will support developmental activities of both the public and the private sectors and should stimulate those sectors to take advantage of the national drives by making the interior amenities more acceptable. The main objectives of the project are better health conditions, a more rapid development of the areas which the country needs to develop and an expansion of agricultural activities.

The project region is mostly agricultural and stock rearing at the present time, but it is hoped, and to be expected, that the development of the project will encourage intermediate activities which will lead up to and enhance, the ultimate plan of population shift and the development of the interior.

The project is intended to construct and equip 46 wells. Pumping facilities will consist of windmill operated pumps, hand pumps, or electric motor-driven pumps. The location of the wells, the approximate depth and the type of pump are indicated in the following list:

- Karasabai - 3 wells to be drilled, New windmill and 3 Hand pumps also overhead tank
- Sand Creek - 4 wells to be drilled, 4 Hand Pumps, New windmill

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Sawariwau	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 hand pumps
Marurawau	- 3 wells to be drilled, 3 hand pumps
Potarinau	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 hand pumps
Awarewaunau	- 3 wells to be drilled, 3 hands pumps
Karaudanawa	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 hand pumps
Aishalton	- 4 wells to be drilled, one mechanical pump electrically driven 1 overhead tank
Achiwuib	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 Hand pumps
Yakarinata	- 3 wells to be drilled, Windmill and two hand pumps
Annai Mission	- 3 wells to be drilled, 3 hand pumps and 1 Windmill
Toka	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 hand pumps
Massara	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 hand pumps
Aranaputa Valley	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 hand pumps
St. Ignatius (School Compound)	- 2 wells electric pump, 1 overhead tank
Como	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 hand pumps
Lethem	- 1 Overhead tank, 2 electrically driven pumps
Monkey Mountain	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 hand pumps
Paramakatoi	- 2 wells to be drilled, 2 hand pumps

It is also proposed to construct four overhead tanks on wooden 45 ft. towers situated at Lethem, Aishalton, St. Ignatius and Karasabai and s small distribution system at Lethem and St. Ignatius. Pipelines will also be laid in other villages as necessary, for example, where an

overhead tank is provided or where a hospital or clinic is situated. Now, fundamental to this project, the Bartica and Rupununi projects will be provided by the Government of the Netherlands at a cost of \$1.7 million.

For more than 25 years, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee has made an invaluable contribution to the economic and social life of the country by providing an efficient supply of water to the labour force residing in the sugar estate housing areas. During 1978, expenditure totalling \$883,000 was incurred by the Committee in the operation and maintenance of 22 wells. It is estimated that the expenditure for this purpose will amount to \$975,000 in 1979.

Further progress was again made in 1978 in the construction of all-weather roads in the rural areas. Two miles of roads commenced in 1977 were completed in 1978. Details are as follows: Roads constructed up to 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1977 equal 67.48 miles costing \$12.9 million; roads under construction in 1977 but completed in 1978 were 1.93 miles costing \$716,439.77. Roads approved and completed during 1978 measured 3.4 miles and the expenditures incurred thereon were \$1.5 million. The total length of these roads was 3.38 miles costing \$1.5 million. Roads under construction during 1979, one at Den Amstel, West Coast Demerara costing \$100,000. Roads approved during 1979 and not yet commenced but will commence shortly, one each at Reliance Abandon, Canje, Edinburgh, East Bank Berbice; Seven Beds Road, Industry. The total length of these roads is 3.27 miles costing \$497,147.00.

The roads at Dem Amstel, West Coast, and the Seven Beds Road, Industry, East Coast Demerara, are to be constructed with clay bricks. It is intended that construction of these two roads as indicated will serve as a pilot scheme for future road construction projects.

These projects were all financed by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee and I would wish to take this opportunity to express to the Committee, Government's appreciation for its generous assistance.

The P.N.C. Government is promoting development of food, of people everywhere, discriminating against none. We have shown in keeping with our policy that we actively bridge the gap between rural and urban living.

20.3.79

National Assembly

7.45 – 7.55 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Resolved**, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> March, 1979, at 2 o’clock. [Cde. Ramsaroop]

**Adjourned accordingly at 7.52 p.m.**

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