

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

/Volume 7/

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

219 Sitting 2 p.m. Tuesday, 5th August, 1980

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (63)

Speaker

*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.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)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Ministers (11)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives
Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Works and Transport
Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House
Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs
Cde. H. Green,
Minister of Health, Housing and Labour
Cde. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources
Cde. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance
Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture
Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C.,
Attorney General and Minister of Justice
Cde. R.E. Jackson,
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent)
Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A.,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

Ministers (2)

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

*Non-elected Ministers

Ministers of State (10)

- Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)
- Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)
- Cde. K.B. Bancroft, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Absent)
(Mazaruni/Potaro)
- Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)
- Cde. J.R. Thomas,
Minister of State, Ministry of Education,
Social Development and Culture
- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,
Minister of State for Youth and Sport,
Ministry of National Development
- Cde. S. Prashad,
Minister of State – Regional (Absent – on Leave)
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)
- Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman,
Minister of State,
Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. F.U.A. Campbell,
Minister of State for Information,
Ministry of National Development (Absent)
- Cde. H. Rashid,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

- Cde. M.M. John, C.C.H.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the
Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip (Absent)
- Cde. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture
- Cde. E.M. Bynoe,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade (Absent)
and Consumer Protection.
- Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic
Development and Co-operatives
- Cde. J.G. Ramson,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Transport

Other members (15)

- Cde. W.G. Carrington, C.C.H.
- Cde. S.M. Field – Ridley(Absent)
- Cde. E.H.A. Fowler
- Cde. J. Gill
- Cde. W. Hussain
- Cde. K.M.E. Jonas (Absent – on Leave)
- Cde. P.A. Rayman
- Cde. A. Salim, C.C.H.
- Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P. (Absent)
- Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S.
- Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.
- Cde. H.A. Taylor
- Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P.

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,
Leader of the Opposition

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran,
Deputy Speaker

Other Members (12)

Cde. J. Jagan
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., Opposition Chief Whip
Cde. Narbada Persaud
Cde. C. Collymore
Cde. S.F. Mohamed (Absent)
Cde. I. Basir
Cde. C.C. Belgrave (Absent)
Cde. R. Ally
Cde. Dalchand, J.P.
Cde. Dindayal
Cde. H. Nokta
Cde. P. Sukhai

Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, J.P. (Absent – on Leave)
Mr. M.A. Abraham

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F.A. Narain, AA.
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

2.07 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Seeram Prashad and Cde. Jonas for today as well as to the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

PRIVATE BILLS

GUYANA AND TRINIDAD MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY ORDINANCE

GUYANA AND TRINIDAD MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY ORDINANCE

Cde. Williams: Cde. Speaker, I would like to present the following petitions:

- (1) Petition on behalf of the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Life Insurance Company Limited, seeking to have introduced in the Assembly a Private Bill to amend the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Life Insurance Company Ordinance.
- (2) Petition on behalf of the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company Limited, seeking to have introduced in the Assembly a Private Bill to amend the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company Ordinance.

The Speaker: Cde. Clerk, please read the Petitions.

The Clerk read the Petitions as follows:

“GUYANA

PETITION

To The Honourable Members of
the National Assembly of Guyana

The humble petition of the GUYANA AND TRINIDAD MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED whose registered office is situate at 27, 28 and 29 Robb and Hincks Streets, Georgetown, Guyana, respectfully sheweth as follows:

1. Your petitioner is a Company incorporated in Guyana by virtue of the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Life Insurance Company Ordinance, Chapter 209 of the Laws of Guyana (1953 Edition).

2. Your petitioner underwrites insurance in several of the Caribbean territories through branches or agencies established therein. By reason of its place of incorporation, your petitioner considers that it would be beneficial to its interests should it establish

subsidiaries in the territories wherein it underwrites insurance having regard to the varying laws applicable in such places.

3. Your petitioner is the promoter of a bill which seeks to enable Your petitioner to establish subsidiaries in the Caribbean territories aforementioned and which also seeks to have the Company's machinery keep apace with the modern requirements of commercial practice.

4. Your petitioner is desirous of having the said Bill introduced in the National Assembly and enacted by the Parliament of Guyana.

Wherefore Your petitioner humbly prays that the Honourable Members of the National Assembly may be pleased to allow Your petitioner to proceed. And your petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Signed this 6th day August, 1975.

THE GUYANA & TRINIDAD MUTUAL LIFE
INSURANCE COMPANY LIMITED

Director C.J. Bettencourt Gomes

Director G.U. Jaikaran

Asst. Secretary N. Singh

Petitioner.

Question - -

That in accordance with standing Order No. 57 (4) the Promoters be allowed to proceed with the Bill

put, and agreed to.

The Speaker: The Promoters may accordingly proceed.

The Clerk: The second petition reads as follows:

“GUYANA

PETITION

To The Honourable Members of the
National Assembly of Guyana

The humble petition of the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company Limited whose registered office is situate at 27, 28 and 29 Robb and Hincks Streets, Georgetown, Guyana, respectfully sheweth as follows:

1. Your petitioner is a Company incorporated in Guyana by virtue of the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company Ordinance, Chapter 210 of the Laws of Guyana (1953 Edition).

2. Your petitioner underwrites insurance in Guyana and in several of the Caribbean territories.

3. Your petitioner is the promoter of a Bill which seeks to insert provisions in the Ordinance for the keeping of a register of Directors and officers of the Company in the head office of the Company in substitution for the provisions relating to the publication of the list of Directors and officers of the Company in the Gazette.

4. Your petitioner is desirous of having the said Bill introduced in the National Assembly and enacted by the Parliament of Guyana.

Wherefore Your Petitioner humbly prays that the Honourable members of the National Assembly may be pleased to allow Your petitioner to proceed.

And Your petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Signed this 11th day of February, 1976.

THE GUYANA AND TRINIDAD MUTUAL
FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY, LIMITED

C.V. Too Chung Director

A. Jekir Secretary

Petitioner”

Question –

That in accordance with Standing Order No. 57 (4) the Promoters be allowed to proceed with the Bill.

put, and agreed to.

The Speaker: The Promoters may proceed accordingly.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following papers were laid:

- (1) State Paper on the Re-organisation of the Local Government System in Guyana.
(State Paper No. 4/1980).
/The Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives./
- (2) (a) Agreement Amending Loan Agreement (Caribbean Development Facility)
(Additional Loan) between Caribbean Development Bank and Guyana.
Loan No. 4/SFR – GU: Dated: December 6, 1979.

- (b) Agreement Amending Loan Agreement (Caribbean Development Facility) (Additional Loan No. 2) between Caribbean Development Bank and Guyana. Loan No. 4/SFR – GU: Dated March 3, 1980.
- (c) Report of the Directors of the new Windows and Orphans' Fund for the year 1974.
- (d) Statements of Guarantees given by the Minister of Finance under section 3 of the Guarantee of Loans (Public Corporations and Companies) Act, Chapter 77:01, for Quarters ended 30th June, 1979, 30th September, 1979, 31st December, 1979, and Aggregate in Force for the year ended 31st December, 1979.
- (e) Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order 1980 (No. 32), made under section 4 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, and published in the Gazette on 6th May, 1980.
- (f) Consumption Tax (Amendment) Regulation 1980 (No.4) made under section 22 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, and published in the Gazette on 6th May, 1980.
- (g) Consumption Tax (Amendment) (No.2) Order 1980 (No.38), made under section 4 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, on 12th June, 1980, and published in the Gazette on the 14th June, 1980.
- (h) Constitutional Offices (Remuneration of Holders) Order 1980 (No.42), made under section 5 of the Constitutional Offices (Remuneration Of Holders) Act, Chapter 27:11, on 3rd July, 1980, and published in the Gazette on 12th July, 1980.
- (i) Loan Agreement (Balance of Payments Support) between Guyana and the OPEC Fund – Dated May 5, 1980. (Loan No. 182)
- (j) Project Loan and Grant Agreement between Guyana and the United States of America for Agriculture Sector Planning – A.I.D. Project No. 504- 0077: A.I.D. Loan No. 504 – T – 017. Dated March 8, 1980.
- (k) Loan Contract between Guyana and the Inter – American Development Bank (Programme of Food Crop Production and Marketing). Loan No. 583/ST –GY – Resolution DE – 98/79. Dated December 20, 1979.

- (3) Fourth Annual Report and Accounts of Guyana Sugar Corporation Limited for the year 1979. /The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House, on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture./
- (4) Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Public Accounts for the year 1967. /The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee./

REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY
ON DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Inquiry into the Circumstances of the Death of Dr. Walter Rodney

The Leader of the Opposition (Cde. C. Jagan): Mr. Speaker, I wrote to you today indicating to you that I proposed at today's Sitting to move the suspension of the Standing Orders in order to allow me to discuss, and the House to discuss, a definite matter of urgent public importance. I refer to the death of Dr. Walter Rodney which, as you are aware, has been the cause of concern both in Guyana and within and outside of the Caribbean region. There has been a paucity of information on this question and, of course, complete silence on the part of the Government. This has resulted in a great deal of disquiet and organisations have been calling for a public inquiry. The Guyana Human Rights Association, backed by many organisations – responsible, not puppet, organisations which are controlled – has called for a public inquiry by an international body.

The P.P.P. supports this view and we think that on this very important matter there ought to be a top level international Commission of Inquiry composed, say, of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, Human Rights Commission of the O.A.S., CARICOM, the World Council of Churches, and the Caribbean Bar Association. I do not think that anyone can question the legitimacy or the status of these bodies and I hope that you, Mr. Speaker, and the House will agree to the suspension of the Standing Orders so that this matter can be discussed.

There is in Guyana today, as I said already, great concern about this matter because this does not seem to be an isolated event. Today --

2.20 p.m.

The Speaker: I am not going to allow you to go to any other incident. Let us deal with this one. Comrades, the Leader of the Opposition is seeking the permission of the Speaker to ask leave of the Assembly in order to move the Adjournment of the Assembly for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, to wit, an inquiry into the circumstances of the death of Dr. Walter Rodney, by an international Commission drawn from representatives of the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations, the Human Rights Commission of the Organisation of American States, CARICOM, the World Council of Churches and the Caribbean Bar Association.

Although a matter may qualify as definite, urgent, and of public importance, in terms of Standing Order No. 11 (2) this Standing Order must be read in conjunction with Standing Order No. 35 (2). Our Standing Order 35(2) provides that: “Reference shall not be made to any matter which is sub judice, in such a way as might, in the opinion of the Chair prejudice the interest of parties thereto.”

It is therefore without surprise that one finds at page 374 of May’s, a statement to the effect that a Motion of this kind has been refused on the ground that the matter raised was sub judice. Now in applying our Standing Order No. 11, it must be borne in mind that a Motion under it can only be raised in relation to a matter of public importance. Consequently, I proceed on the basis that I am required to consider the application in the light of the publicity, in the light of the publicity known fact that although the Motion speaks only of the death of the late Dr. Walter Rodney, the facts relating to the sad event are inextricably connected in the public mind with a charge which has been brought against his brother, Cde. Donald Rodney, of being in possession of an explosive substance at the time when and the place where Dr. Walter Rodney died.

As I see it then, if this Motion were allowed, any debate on it would unavoidably include reference to matters relating to the charge against Donald Rodney.

The debate would inevitably tend to impair the right of the defendant to a fair hearing. This is a constitutionally guaranteed right and, accordingly I cannot consistently with the existence of that right or with our Standing Orders do otherwise than to refuse the application as I now do.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS - FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read the first time:

Consumption Tax (Amendment) Bill 1980 – Bill No. 7/1980.

/The Minister of Finance./

East Demerara Water Conservancy (Amendment) Bill 1980 – Bill No. 9/1980.

/The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House, on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture./

Mining (Amendment) Bill 1980 – Bill No. 10/1980. /The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources./

Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill 1980 – Bill No. 11/1980.

/The Minister of Home Affairs./

Local Democratic Organs Bill 1980 – Bill No. 12/1980. /The Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives./

Guyana Pandits Council (Incorporation) (Amendment) Bill 1980 – Bill No. 6/1980.

/Cde. Sukhu./

Moravian Mission Council Incorporation (Amendment) Bill 1980 – Bill No. 8/1980.

/Cde. Fowler./

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

CONFIRMATION OF CONSUMPTION TAX (AMENDMENT) ORDER 1980 (NO. 32)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in accordance with section 5 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, confirms the Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order 1980 (No.32), which was made and published in the Gazette on the 6th May, 1980.” /The Minister of Finance/

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Hope): Cde. Speaker, in moving the Motion standing in my name, I wish to explain that the Motion is in fact seeking confirmation of an Order which was made on the 6th May, 1980 to bring into effect certain proposals which were contained in the Budget Speech 1980.

The particular proposal to which this particular order relates, is the proposal to increase the consumption tax on certain commodities by 8 per cent. The Motion before us at the moment seeks to do a number of things, first, to increase the consumption tax chargeable on certain goods by 8 per cent, secondly, to make that tax effective from the 6th May, 1980,

except for cigarettes, on which tax has been made effective from the 8th April, 1980. In the process certain goods have been exempted and these will be the imports, in this particular Order, by the Guyana Mining Enterprise, by the Guyana Sugar Corporation Limited, by the Guyana Electricity Corporation, and the Guyana Liquor Corporation, as well as certain goods for shipbuilding imported by the Guyana National Engineering Corporation. It also seeks to repeal the Order under which motor – cars were not subject to consumption tax but were in fact subject only to purchase tax. The repeal of the particular Consumption Tax (Motor vehicles) Exemption Order – will now make it possible for the 8 per cent consumption tax to be applied to motor- cars, in addition to the purchase tax that is normally payable.

As I said, Cde. Speaker, the Motion seeks to bring into effect proposals made in the Budget Speech and I therefore urge the House to agree that the order may now be confirmed.

2.30 p.m.

Motion proposed.

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Speaker, it is not without significance that this Bill, which has been published some time ago, is being debated in this House only today. In the House this afternoon, the Minister of Finance alluded to the Order which was published on the 6th May. The Bill was published on the 10th May.

Today, 5th August, the debate on this Bill is taking place.

The Minister said that the Bill merely sought to bring into effect certain proposals contained in the Budget Speech for 1980, the Budget Speech which was presented to this House on the 8th day of April, 1980. In the Budget Speech at page 42 it is stated and I quote:

“With effect from 14th April, 1980, there will be an 8 per cent ad valorem consumption tax on all imports into Guyana”

and I stress the word “import” –

“whether or not they are subject to import duty.”

When the Budget Speech was presented, one got the impression that this 8 per cent tax was applicable only to imports, as was stated here. Now, Cde. Speaker, I think it is unfair, if not dishonest, for the Budget Speech proposal to state

that the 8 per cent consumption tax would be applicable to all imports when today we have learnt that the 8 per cent tax is not only applicable to imports. The Order stated that clauses 2, 3, 3(i) 3(ii) 3(iii) and clause 4 were made effective since the 6th May, 1980. Clause 3 (iv) became effective since the 8th April, 1980.

The Bill, however, is being debated in this House today and the Government could have only done such a thing because of the stolen majority that it enjoys in this House with a view to have the Bill passed. In other parts of the world such a thing would not have happened because the question of the Bill not being passed would have been there but because of the built – in stolen majority that the Government has, it decided to enforce the Bill and to make certain parts of the Bill effective since April 1980 when the debate and the passing and approval of the Bill only take place today, the 5th day of August, 1980.

It means one out of the two things. It is either a deliberate attempt to fool the people by stating in the Budget Speech that the additional 8 per cent tax would be applicable only to duty, or it is a case where the master planners themselves did not think about the implication of a second 8 per cent, that is, 8 per cent as far as manufactured goods are concerned. Maybe this is one of the reasons why the Bill has been delayed and only comes to the House almost four months after the proposal was made.

If I go back to page 41 of the Budget Speech, it is stated here that:

“Basically, consumption taxes will be adjusted upwards and Corporation mark-ups will be revised downwards. The overall effect will be to bring down the prices of many categories of commonly used goods, remove extraordinary fluctuations in these prices and ensure that any movements in these prices are related to movements in cost and are justifiable.”

We have been reading a lot of publicity in the newspapers and hearing over the Government- controlled radio stations as regards the reduction of prices on certain categories of goods. I want to challenge the Minister of Finance today to point out on how many categories of goods there has actually been a reduction in the mark – up. I ask the Minister to state whether it is not true that the 60 per cent applicable long before the Budget proposal has now been increased in some cases to 75 per cent. May I ask the Minister further whether the 100 per cent mark – up, whether the 200 per cent mark – up and in extreme cases the 300 per cent mark – up on certain categories of goods being sold in the Universal Building of Guyana Stores are still not being imposed.

It is clear that the last reduction we heard of was the reduction of the mark – up on the Caloi bicycles, but the trickery of the whole matter is this: Bicycles were not imported into the country for a long time. It was the first time that we got bicycles from Brazil and a very very high mark – up was put on them. May I ask the Minister to say how much per cent mark – up was put on those bicycles. It is because of the very high mark – up that the Government had now decided to reduce the price. Really it is the mark – up that it has reduced. The Government had put on a very high mark – up and now on the second shipment it has reduced the mark – up and yet the radio and newspaper have carried it as if the Government was reducing the price in agreement with the Budget proposal. I say this is dishonest.

This is what has been going on and the members of the Government continue to fool the people.

The 8 per cent additional consumption tax, according to the Budget Speech, will give the Government an additional \$15 million. It is stated in the Speech:

“The increased excise and the consumption taxes are expected to yield a net \$15 million when allowance is made for the reductions in the surpluses of the Corporations as they reduce their prices.”

What is stated here is that after the allowances are made for the reductions in the prices the Government is going to net \$15 million. May I ask: where will the \$15 million come from? Obviously from the taxpayers. Obviously from the workers. So, taking into account the Budget proposal which states that the mark – up on a number of categories of goods will be reduced, again I want to say that it is unfair for the nation to be told one thing when in effect another thing is being done.

Now, because of the restriction of imports into this country, the Customs Department obviously has been receiving less and less revenue. But the Government knowing the financial mass into which it has plunged this country, will have to get money. It has to collect taxes; it has to run the country and this is one way in bridging the gap in over coming the deficit in the Customs Department by imposing this additional 8 per cent consumption tax, obviously the \$15 million will help to boost up the revenue of the Country.

I have here with me a copy of a booklet put out by the Government: “What the Budget Means to you”. This book is printed with carefully selected excerpts from the Budget Speech to water down the Guyanese people, Guyanese people who have become fed up with this Government, frustrated and dissatisfied because of the rotten policies of this Government, because of the corruption, because of the discrimination and because of bad planning and management. Here we find only those things which may appear to be in the interest of, or to be advantages to, the worker. The other things which are disadvantageous, for example, the consumption tax are briefly stated but the trickery of it is not exposed.

“What the Budget Means to you”. This is what it states but half of what is here is just intended to fool the people and the truth and the hardships are not really told to the Guyanese people. A big noise and magnificent publicity of the crumbs offered by the masters to the servants are put into this booklet. Nothing is said about the additional burdens placed by the masters on the backs of the servants. This is hidden in a deliberate attempt to disguise the hardship of the workers, the producers of wealth in this country.

2.40 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, we know only too well the economic situation of this country but I think the Government will have to come to realize that there is a vicious circle a circle about which I have already spoken in this House, and if the Government continues to put additional burdens on the backs of the working people of this country, the very people on whom it is calling for increased production and productivity, then obviously the workers are not going to produce more in order to take us out.

Cde. Speaker, on a small business card like this, which I am sure you have too, consumption tax of 15 per cent used to be charged on it. That went to the Customs Department. This has now gone to 23 per cent. Letterheads, Cde. Speaker, which I am sure you also use, now bears an increase from 5 per cent to 13 per cent. We know only too well how these things will affect the working man. What about invitations, Cde. Speaker? A man gives his daughter in marriage. There was a 15 per cent tax on envelope style invitations with the word “Om” on it. Hindu invitations or any invitation for that matter. Now, that poor man will have to pay 23 per cent tax to government. But, I want to go back to the double tax, the reason for which I charge the Government with being dishonest. Paper comes into this country, from which invitations will be printed, and there right away the duty is paid on the C.I.F. value. Consumption tax is applied on that C.I.F. value plus duty, now 8 per cent more. When paper goes to the G.N.T.C. and a printer goes to buy it, he has to pay a charge relative to that additional 8 per cent. When he prints his business card and when he now goes to sell it to the customer that will carry 8 per cent additional tax. That does not mean it is 16 per cent because the second 8 per cent is 8 per cent more on duty paid, consumption tax paid, profit margin for G.N.T.C. with charges for handling, labour cost to produce the cards, mark – up for profit on this, plus the 8 per cent, so the second 8 per cent is far more.

Cde. Speaker, they did not tell the people that in the beginning. The Planning Secretariat itself was in confusion. They sent a letter to the Customs Department. They had to withdraw it. They themselves are in disarray like the whole Government. They do not know what they are doing so when it was stated here that there will be 8 per cent ad valorem consumption tax on all imports to Guyana, the nation thought that was the end.

What about the garment industry? The garment industry also now has to pay this 8 per cent tax. As I said this is only a business card, but every one of us will have to wear shirts, everyone's wife and sister will have to wear dresses and each and every piece of their dresses and underwear is now subject to a double consumption tax and I am not going to say double 8 per cent because double 8 per cent will be wrong. More than 16 per cent.

Cde. Speaker, we hear big propaganda, as is customary, about free school uniforms. How free? It is costing the Government \$4 million when they are taking from the sweat of the workers, \$15 million in consumption tax and \$3 million in customs and excise taxes. It is not a shame to fool the people by printing in the Chronicle and putting it over the air, "free uniforms for school". Who will pay for it? The Government receives money to pay for it. Maybe if there was no additional taxation this year that would have justified the word "free". When you hope to spend \$4 million on uniforms and you are dragging it out from sweat and blood of the workers – an additional \$8 million in taxation during the year 1980, can you justify that uniforms have been free? But, no, the Government hopes they can continue to fool the people all the time.

I just want to refer to one example in relation to the Government's proposals, that is, in relation to income tax relief, and to relate it to consumption tax to show additional burden. Let us take the Government's minimum wage which now has been moved from \$11.00 to \$11.65; \$11.65 is \$63.52 weekly giving a monthly salary of \$275.00. But I want to remove from that minimum to take an average earning of \$350.00 in their favour.

A man works for \$350.00. It is a family of five, husband, wife and three children; they live at Enmore, he works at Stockfeeds, for example, or G.P.C., some where down the line. After his old allowance, he would have had to pay no taxes on \$350.00 per month. On the new allowance, he saves \$32.94 yearly, which is equal to \$2.75 per month. That is what is saved from this new proposal and that this Government has been flourishing all over the country, all over the radio, all over the place. How many of us work for \$350.00? A family of five will save only \$2.75 and this is all he has to get on this proposal this Government has been talking about. Cde. Speaker, let us assume the worker at G.P.C. is entitled to a 5 per cent increase for this year on his \$350 per month. This will mean he will receive \$17.50, plus \$2.75 in his income tax - \$20.25. Transportation on the other hand has been increased by 2 cents per mile. He lives at Enmore and reaches down there, 20 miles, at a penny a mile. That would be 40 cents per trip, 40 cents to 80 cents per return trip. Working days in the month average 25 days. Transportation alone will cost him \$20 per month. How much he gets from the Government's new proposals which are being boosted up here - \$20.25. He saves, but on transportation alone living at Enmore, working in town, he has to pay \$20 per month.

5.8.80

2.40 – 2.50 p.m.

What about cigarettes, if he smokes? What about aerated drinks? Prices have gone up. What about flour that his wife has to make the roti with? All these things have gone up in price. When one takes all these prices that have gone up and those that are going up day after day in this country, where are those proposals they are talking about? What the Budget means to you. What the budget means to the small man is more burdens, nothing to boast about. Yet the members of the Government because they control the publicity media in this country, the newspapers and radio stations, go every now and then and get hand – picked people to go boost things up. They get the hand – picked people to go and write when the columnists and reporters do not do it. This is how the story goes.

2.50 p.m.

The effects of the additional 8 per cent consumption tax, for example – we know that formerly some imports from CARICOM countries were exempted; certain items, raw materials, coming in from CARICOM countries for the manufacturers here were exempted. Now all goods, whether they come from CARICOM countries or whether they come from non – CARICOM countries have to pay the 8 per cent consumption tax except for exemption Order that the Minister has now made. All have to pay. And, Cde. Speaker, you know very well what that means. It also involves the question of foreign exchange. The manufacturers who export their goods into the Caribbean market and elsewhere, they do that because their prices have to be competitive in order that they can earn foreign exchange for this bankrupt Government. The bankrupt Government has completely closed its eyes to that fact, namely, that these people would bring in foreign exchange. I do not speak here for big business but the cost of the goods that I have to buy, manufactured by these manufacturers, also will go up and in that sense it affects me, it affects the small man and it affects the working man in this country. Therefore, I speak about it.

As I said, it is not just 16 per cent because the second 8 per cent is 8 per cent on a higher value than the 8 per cent on the first one. The consumers will be, and have already been, called upon to pay more for imported finished goods. Big splash in the newspapers: Store Prices have gone down: I walked the streets from Main Street and Water Street to find out where the prices have gone down only to be told that that was a hoax by the people who sell in those places. Shameless! They tell the people. Splash it in the newspapers. I went myself to Guyana Stores only to be told that that was what is going on.

The 8 per cent is not only to assist this Government to come out of the mess that it has put this country into but also to take care of the extra people sent by the Minister from the House of Israel to go to Guyana Stores. Ten of them are there right now sitting down doing nothing. Nothing at all they sit down and do but they are sent by a special Minister there and then they sit down there.

From the House of Israel, Cde. Speaker.

The 8 per cent consumption tax is also to take care of mismanagement, to take care of the large – scale thefts that are going on in these corporations and I speak of G.N.T.C. and Guyana Stores. Those two I am speaking about.

I move to the last point and that is as far as the exemption goes. The Government may be taking into consideration the main export commodities of this country – sugar and bauxite – and had decided to move the amendment to exempt imports for these two corporations. May I ask the Minister: Has he closed his one eye to the rice industry? Why? Is rice not also one of the main export commodities of Guyana? Are the rice farmers not also entitled to duty – free items? Why? Because they are not people supporting the Government. That is why the Government is not exempting them. Then they are talking about production and productivity. Yet they exempt GUYMINE and exempt the sugar corporation and do not exempt rice. Do they not want increased production in the rice industry? The cock – eyed ness of this Government is reflected in every single move that it makes.

My main contention this afternoon is that the 8 per cent consumption tax will continue to raise the cost of living in this country; it will continue to rise. It has been increasing rapidly. The 8 per cent additional consumption tax that the Government has now imposed will obviously increase the cost of living more and more. And while the cost of living is going higher and higher wages remain frozen in Guyana. The value of the dollar has been decreasing day after day. Your dollar cannot buy you what it bought you last year but the Government is not concerned with the workers of this country. The members of the Government are only concerned with themselves and the elite which they have built. The consumption tax will increase the cost of living of the man in the street, of the workers, of the population as a whole. Large sections of the population cannot afford to live with what they are earning today. I want to inform the House that we are going to oppose the 8 per cent consumption tax. [Applause. (Opposition)]

The Speaker: Cde. Hope.

Cde. Hope: (replying) Cde. Speaker, the speaker who just gave us a lecture on what he thought was good financial policy made one point first of all that there is a difference between the proposals in the Budget Speech and what actually was drafted in the Order in the sense that the Budget Speech was speaking essentially of an 8 per cent consumption tax on imported commodities whereas the Order also affects locally produced commodities.

First of all, I wish to say that a Budget Speech outline policy. It can never be a draft of a law. When you come to draft the law, then you get into all the details. Clearly, there must be something wrong in the fact that if you import a particular article you collect 8 per cent extra on it but if it is made locally that same article does not attract the same tax. Particularly where the goods are not price – controlled, who will get the advantage of that difference? Nobody is going to sell the same commodity or a similar commodity in quality and so on for a different price merely because you import it for less than you can produce it locally. Clearly, it seems to me, when you are dealing with the same commodity you have to apply the same tax across the board. In fact, it has always been the case – it is nothing new – that the application of the consumption tax goes both to imports as well as to locally manufactured goods in the same way. So this is nothing new in the present Order and if the Budget Speech did not particularly mention that, I think, of course, that was something which we all understood – that the same consumption tax which applies to imported goods also normally applies to similar goods of local manufacture.

Secondly, Cde. Persaud speaks about a Bill. What we are debating is not a Bill: it is an Order and there is nothing sinister in the fact that the Order is now being debated. Under the present provisions there is no time limit between the signing of an Order and the debate of that Order to seek confirmation from Parliament. In any case I think the time between the Order and now is exactly three months and not five months as mentioned. So there is nothing sinister in the fact that the Order is now being debated although it came into effect on the 5th of May.

The other issue related to the mark – up. In the Budget Speech the Government did make the proposal that on a wide range of items there would be reduction and there have been reductions in the mark - up. For this reason, a number of the public corporations have found that their surpluses will fall this year. At the same time it would be childish to believe that simply because the government undertook to reduce the mark – up that prices of those goods would remain static all the time when it is generally known that with practically every shipment prices go up.

/Cde. Frank Hope continues/

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What the Government undertook, Cde. Speaker, if one reads the Budget with any amount of care, was to reduce the mark – up. That does not necessarily mean that the prices are going to be lower from then on and forever. The mark – up has been reduced, the selling prices were reduced to the extent that a number of public corporations, as I said before have in fact returned or will be returning lower surpluses this year. Cde. Narbada Persaud was saying that when you impose a tax within the country, there are some groups which should pay the tax and there are some groups which ought not to pay the tax. We are all workers, and if the Government imposes the tax, the tax must by definition fall on the workers.

We do not have the capitalist class here in the large sectors that we had in the past where one could say we would tax the big companies so that the tax on the public would be less and the workers will not pay. The situation has changed. Most of the major enterprises are publicly owned. Taxes may fall on those public entities and they will, in fact, end up in the same way under the control of the Government. By definition, once you impose a consumption tax it must be the people who pay and these people are and must be the workers, so there is nothing sinister, there is nothing wrong in the fact that workers have to pay a tax which is imposed by the Government. What is important, Cde. Speaker, is how that revenue is used, and I think even Cde. Persaud could not deny that the use by the Government of the revenue collected by the Government has been for the people's advantage.

Clearly, if you provide a free service by free education, the people of the country must pay. There is no indistinguishable entity which is subject to the people which is going to provide that money unless you are going to ask some other country to pay for your education. It must be the people who pay but what is important is that the tax enables a sort of re-distribution of the burden. In other words, all persons within the country, all citizens enjoy the service of free education irrespective of the number of children in a particular family. One does not look at the stage to find out how much tax that particular family pays. There is however, another family, another worker who does not have any children or a small number of children who will not benefit from that service in the same way but is paying a higher level of tax. What we have got there is a re-distribution of resources in the country in favour of those people who need it as distinct from those who do not have need or can afford it some how and that essentially is one of the functions of taxation and how you spend the tax money.

It is not a question of the fact that the people as a whole have paid. The people as a whole must pay; Guyanese as a whole must pay for the services which Guyanese as a whole receive but different groups of Guyanese will pay more for the services than they have enjoyed it and different groups of Guyanese will enjoy more from that service than they have paid for it. And that is really the purpose.

Cde. Speaker, I think, also, we need to clarify a fact that Cde. Persaud made heavy weather of. The tax in the Budget Speech did say that as a result of the increase in the consumption tax on one hand and the reduction in the mark – up on the other hand, there is likely to be a net of \$15 million of tax to be collected, which is true, but Cde. Speaker, against that \$15 million one needs to put the amount of allowances which have been made available to the people either in the form of income tax allowances or in the form of salary increases which were granted. It is no point picking one example and saying: Well look, there is a man working, living in Enmore and working at Ruimveldt and what he is going to pay. What of the man who is living at Enmore and working at Enmore? What of the man who is living at Ruimveldt and working at Ruimveldt? And, therefore, it does not make a principle, it does not make an argument merely to select or to manufacture a particularly hard case and call that the principle. That is what the Comrade has done.

With respect to the exemption, I think again Cde. Persaud is completely wrong, he has misled himself, as is usual, to assume that nothing has been done for the rice industry. The rice industry has always, until now, enjoyed a special position with regard to the prices it pays for its imports. It is now perhaps that we have said that the sugar industry or the bauxite industry will not pay the 8 per cent on its imports. But take the bag which is used in industry. The industry never pays the full price of the bags it uses. Take the price of fertilizer; the industry never pays the full price of the fertilizer. Take the fact of spare parts; similar; the industry does not pay the full price of spare parts. Take the question of what it costs the Rice Board to plough a farmer's land and what the farmer pays for that service. There we find another big question.

The facts are Cde. Speaker, that the rice industry has traditionally, until now, enjoyed a situation of advantageous prices for its inputs and, therefore, it is completely wrong to assume that because in this particular case the 8 per cent exemption does not apply to the industry is an indication of the Government's lack of interest or the Government's desire to penalise, as he said, because it does not have the vote. That is an assumption. Its supporters are not in the industry. Why?

Clearly, Cde. Speaker, there is in fact an inflation within the country and that is the last point I would like to make. There is inflation but I think all of us know, particularly Cde. Persaud who said he is in the import business – I think he has connections with Gimpex – that with every import, with every shipment the C.I.F., that is, the landed cost of the article, goes up. That is basically the kind of inflation that we are suffering today. Most of the inflation has been import generated and there is no country in the world today that can insulate itself against inflation. Once prices go up with the import, there is no way that you can avoid that except pass those imported prices on to the consumers. That is what brings about inflation and I want to end on that note.

Cde. Speaker, if Guyana is in fact in an inflationary situation, prices are rising, Guyana alone is not in that situation. It is a world – wide phenomenon and in some countries the inflation rate is as high as 150 per cent. In Guyana we have been fortunate so far because

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of very realistic pricing policies, very carefully designed purchasing policies, to restrict the inflation rate to under 20 per cent, nearer 15 per cent, whereas in other countries, the inflation rate can be 150 per cent and more and I think we need to remember that.

3.10 p.m.

Questions put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

CONFIRMATION OF CONSUMPTION TAX (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) ORDER 1980 (NO.38)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in accordance with section 5 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, confirms the Consumption Tax (Amendment) (No.2) Order 1980 (No.38), which was made on 12th June, 1980, and published in the Gazette on 14th June, 1980.”/The Minister of Finance./

Cde. Hope: Cde. Speaker, in presenting the Order No. 2 of 1980 for confirmation, I wish merely to explain that the purpose of this particular Order is to reduce the number of entities which have been exempted in the Order we have just confirmed by taking away the exemption from Guyana Liquor Corporation as well as from Guyana National Engineering Corporation in so far as shipbuilding goods are concerned. I therefore ask that this Order be confirmed.

Motion proposed.

The Speaker: Cde. Minister, I take it that you are also moving the amendment to this Order which was also published.

Cde. Hope: Cde. Speaker, I would like the House to take note of the Amendment.

Amendment –

That the following be inserted after the words, “14th June, 1980” at the end of the Motion:

“, subject to the following amendments –

- (a) substitution of the words ‘Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order* 1980’ for the words ‘Consumption Tax Order*’ in the first line in clause 1 of the order; and
- (b) substitution of the words ‘*No. 32 of 1980’ for the foot – note.”,

put, and agreed to.

Motion, as amended –

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in accordance with section 5 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, confirms the Consumption Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 1980 (No. 38), which was made on 12th June, 1980, and published in the Gazette on 14th June, 1980, subject to the following amendments –

- (a) substitution of the words ‘Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order* 1980’ for the words ‘Consumption Tax Order*’ in the first line in clause 1 of the order; and
- (b) substitution of the words ‘*No. 32 of 1980’ for the foot – note.”,

put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.INCREASE IN OLD AGE PENSIONS

“Whereas section 8(1) and (2) of the Old Age Pensions Act, Chapter 36:03, provides as follows:

‘8. (1) The amount of pension payable to any person under and in accordance with this Act shall be –

- (a) in the case of a person ordinarily resident in Georgetown, twelve dollars per month;
- (b) in the case of a person ordinarily resident elsewhere in Guyana than in Georgetown, ten dollars per month.

- (2) The National Assembly may, from time to time, by resolution (which shall be published in the Gazette), vary the amounts and any residential qualification prescribed by subsection (1) with effect from the date of the resolution or such earlier or later date as is specified in that behalf in the resolution.’;

And whereas provision was made in the Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1974 for an increase of the amount of pension to fifteen per month payable under section 8 (1) (a) and to thirteen dollars per month payable under section 8 (1) (b) of the Act with effect from 1st September, 1974;

And whereas provision was made in the Estimate of Expenditure for the year 1976 for an increase of the amount of pension to fifteen dollars per month payable under section (8) (1) (b) of the Act with effect from 1st January, 1976;

And whereas provision was made in the Estimates of Expenditure for 1980 for an increase of the amount of pension to thirty dollars per month payable under paragraphs (a) and (b) of section 8 (1) of the Act with effect from 1st January, 1980:

Be it resolved that this National Assembly in accordance with section 8(2) of the Act approve that the amounts prescribed in section 8(1) be varied as follows:-

- (i) from twelve dollars and ten dollars per month as prescribed by paragraphs (a) and (b) respectively of section 8 (1) of the Act to fifteen dollars and thirteen dollars per month respectively with effect from 1st September, 1974;
- (ii) from thirteen dollars per month payable under section 8 (1) (b) of the Act to fifteen dollars per month with effect from 1st January, 1976; and
- (iii) from fifteen dollars per month payable under paragraphs (a) and (b) of section 8 (1) of the Act to thirty dollars per month, with effect from 1st January, 1980.” /The Minister of Health, Housing and Labour./

The Minister of Health, Housing and Labour (Cde. Green): Cde. Speaker, I wish to move the Motion standing in my name dealing with the increase in old age pensions. This is a matter which I hope will not evoke many problems or disputations. We have increased old age pensions from 1st September 1974. Again, on the 1st January 1976, and, consistent with the directions that emanated from the 1980 Budget, from the 1st January of this year. However, the law, as I understand it, was not amended to reflect these increases although the Parliament gave approval by way of approving the Budget for these increases which are at the moment a reality and the beneficiaries are already in receipt of the respective increases.

The Motion therefore seeks to amend the law in accordance with section 8 (2) of the Old Age Pensions Act, Chapter 36:03.

As I said earlier, this is a simple matter. It was first published on the 28th July this year and it is simply to give the necessary Parliamentary and legal cover for increasing the old age pensions.

Motion proposed.

Cde. J. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, I would wish to say a few words on this Motion that is before the House. I do not think there is anyone here who can doubt the fact that it is a virtual impossibility for any human being in this country to live on an income of \$30 a month. It is impossible. From this side of the House for many years we have been urging the Government instead of going on its wild- spending sprees to take some care and attention of our old folk. I don't think that the Government has done more than to give our old folk the high – sounding title of “Senior Citizens”, but I don't think we can call them “Senior Citizens” because citizens are supposed to enjoy rights and there is no right to enjoy if you have to live on \$30 a month. It is

meaningless. The closest country in the Caribbean, Trinidad, is paying its old age pensioners a far greater amount. I want to bring to the attention of this House some of the serious problems encountered by our old folk. One of them is that the old age pension has a restriction going back to the days of colonialism, that is, the means test. The means test is obsolete. It is a restriction that creates a most peculiar circumstance. It is part of the whole system of colonialism, of people being dependent.

Under the existing ceiling figure of the means test, a person seeking old age pension cannot have income exceeding \$50 a month. So if we take the maximum income an old person can earn of \$50 a month and we add this to \$30 a month, they are now getting, we will get an amount of \$80 a month on which to live. Maybe 15 or 20 years ago a person might have been able to exist on \$80 a month but not today. I remember that in the 40's and 50's a lot of old people used to rent rooms at \$5 or \$6 a month. Those days are gone forever. There is no such thing as a rental room at \$5 or \$6. I would be very surprised to find that any old person could rent a place in which to live for the \$30 a month he is getting. It is just impossible. With the housing situation in Georgetown and the rural areas, it is just impossible. The number of rental premises every single month gets less and less. There are fewer and fewer places to rent and the proportion of low rental is practically removed now. Who can get an apartment for \$30 or \$40 or \$50 a month? They do not exist any more. The minute it exists the owner will reconstruct or change it around and get a higher rental. So our old people are stuck.

It is also a reflection of the sociological changes that are taking place in our community. With urbanisation – and in the last few years there has been a fantastic flock of people from the rural and interior areas to the city, and as we get greater urbanisation we get greater problems for old people because the family system weakens under most urbanisation. The family structure in Guyana is weakening and fewer and fewer sons and daughters are willing now to take on the responsibility of caring their mothers and fathers and grandparents and that is leaving many old people out on a limb all alone. That is why when you walk down the streets of Georgetown you see more and more old people begging.

What is the Government doing? Giving charity? We want people to live and to exist not just to be living from hand to month, to be begging, to be constantly moving from one premise to another, which many people do. Many old people are on the move. They stay at this person and then they get fed up with them after a while and they move to someone else. They are not getting proper nourishment, they are not getting proper clothing; they are not getting proper medical care and so altogether for a great many of our older people life is hell in Guyana and this is one of the reasons why the \$30 a month is meaningless.

Also I want to bring to the attention of this House that even the measly \$30 a month that started this year, is hard to get. In the interior and riverain areas mainly there are some areas where a person has to wait three months to get his monthly pension. This exists because of inefficiency and poor administration. Amerindians in particular are suffering because of the irregularity and the inefficiency of the payments.

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Another factor which I wish to bring to the attention of this House is the fact that there are many persons who cannot even get the measly pension that exists. Many people put in applications and many of the applications are not properly processed. There are all sorts of rackets going on for a person to be able to get his pension. Many who deserve old age pensions are not receiving any and so we find that the means test stipulates that a worker, an old man or

old woman, cannot earn more than \$50 a month, and, as I said earlier, it is part and parcel of the whole system of colonialism. If a man or woman can earn \$60 or \$70 or even \$100 a month, why should that person be prevented from receiving old age pension?

If we are to maintain the means test, which I think is old hat, I would say put the ceiling at \$300 or \$200. But what is the point of preventing an old person who wants to earn, who might have the ability to earn more? You are preventing him, you are making him dependent, you are making him say: well, I can't earn more than \$50 so let me sit back and do nothing so I can collect my \$30. That is nonsense; it does not encourage people.

I know of many cases where the investigator went to a person's living quarters, sometimes that person might have a yard, he was growing some bora and pepper and a few things, and the investigator went and ascertained how much income that poor person was getting from the little plants and things he had and once it came to over \$50 a month the application was not allowed. That is nonsense and it is not giving persons the initiative to go ahead and earn. If you want to put the ceiling for those who are beyond the necessity of having old age pensions, okay, but have a figure that does not cut into initiative. The main thing comes back to how can old people live on \$15 to \$30 a month, when we find our minimum wage for three unskilled workers in the Public Service and nationalised industries is about \$275 a month. Roughly speaking, that would mean a man and his wife and his two to three children are expected to live on \$275 a month and we know that this is a very hard task in view of rising rents, rising cost of living, rising cost of our social services.

I may mention in this House that although the Government boasts of its free medical services, the Minister of Health knows as well as I know that there is no free medical service. The fact is that patients in our public institutions have to buy their medicines. Out-patients have to buy their medicines. Most of the doctors have to be propelled into activity, have to be given money. Old people cannot do that, old people get stuck, if anywhere at the Palms and I think the question of conditions of the Palms has been raised here many times. Many times I have raised it, the poor conditions, the drab living and horrible life for those old people at the Palms. But with all the changes that have been taking place in the twentieth century society, the selfishness arising among many people, and the lack of feeling for old folks and helpless people attitudes which have developed to some extent in various parts of the world, we find that more attention and more help have to be given to old people. I would suggest that \$30 a month is not enough and that the Government must consider finding resources so that we can have a positive increase in old age pensions. There ought to be a complete analysis and examination of the means test leading to either the removal of the means test or putting the ceiling at the least at \$200 per month.

Cde.Green (replying): Cde. Speaker, I observed that this was a simple Motion and I will not be drawn into another Budget Debate. We are aware of the difficulties of citizens not only in Guyana, but all over the world. The question of a means test, I really do not understand how some people argue. I do not see what is colonial about a means test, but some people use

words for the sake of putting words together in this honourable House. We have administratively, Cde. Speaker, attempted to ease the burden on our senior citizens in a number of ways and even though the law specifies a specific ceiling, the officers have been instructed to execute, and I very well believe in the majority of cases do execute their tasks along with the Board that reviews many of the cases, in a way that will not impose additional hardships on our citizens. But our senior citizens can only be recipients of assistance consistent with what the economy can afford at this moment in our development. We, in fact, Cde. Speaker, encourage our senior citizens to help themselves and as I noted, there are a number of other areas in which we are at the moment seeking to assist senior people. This Motion is simply to regularise something which is already updated on.

Question, put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved. “That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.”

/The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House./

Adjourned accordingly at 3.27 p.m.