

**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**

61st Sitting

2 p.m.

Monday, 24th March, 1975

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government- People's National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

(Absent – on leave)

Senior Minister (8)

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

- *The Hon. S.S. Ramphal , S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Absent)
- *The Hon. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Mobilizations
- *The Hon. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Absent)
- *The Hon. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance
- *The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Work and Housing (Absent – on leave)
- *The Hon. G.A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
- *The Hon. G.B. Kennard , C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture (Absent)
- Minister (6)**
- The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour (Absent)
- The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture
- The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and
Leader of the House
- *The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development
- *Dr. the Hon. O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health (Absent)
- *The Hon. C. V. Mingo
Minster of Home Affairs (Absent)

***Non-elected Ministers**

Ministers of state (9)

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture **(Absent –on leave)**

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

The Hon. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi) **(Absent- on leave)**

The Hon. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister of State, Office of the
Prime Minister

The Hon. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,
Minister of State - Regional
(Essequibo Coast/ West Demerara) **(Absent)**

The Hon. K.B. Bancroft,
Minister of State - Regional
(Mazaruni / Potaro)

*The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection **(Absent)**

*The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of State - Regional
(East Demerara / West Coast Berbice) **(Absent)**

*The Hon. F.U.A . Carmichael,
Minister of State - Regional (North West) **(Absent)**

Parliamentary Secretaries (7)

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing

Mr. C. E. Wrights, J. P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing **(Absent)**

***Non-elected Ministers**

Miss M.M. Ackman,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the
Prime Minister and Government Chief Whip

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

Mr. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co – operative and National Mobilisation

Mr. J.P. Chowritmootoo
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education
and Social Development

Mr. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of
the Prime Minister

Deputy Speaker (1)

Mr. R. C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

Other Members (17)

Mr. J. N. Aaron

Mrs. L. M. Brano

Mr. M. Corrica

Mr. E.H.A. Fowler

Miss J. Gill

Mr. W. Hussain

Miss S. Jaiserrisingh

Mr. K.M.E. Jonas

Mr. M. Nissar

(Absent – on leave)

Dr. L. E. Ramsahoye

Mr. J.G. Ramson

Mrs. P. A. Rayman

Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

(Absent – on leave)

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

Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.

Mr. H.A. Taylor

Mrs. L. E. Willems

Members of the Opposition - Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh, Leader of the Opposition

Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

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

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly - Mr. M.B. Henry AMBIM.

24.3.75

National Assembly

2.15- 2.20 p.m.

2. 15 p.m.

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave To Members

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to Dr. the hon. Member P. A. Reid and to the hon. Member Mr. Duncan for today's sitting, and to the hon. Member Mr, Mohamed Nissar for one month with effect for one month with effect from 22nd March , 1975 .

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Trade (Amendment) Bill 1975. [**The Minister of Trade**]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

CONFIRMATION OF THE PURCHASE TAX (MOTOR CARS)

(AMENDMENT) ORDER 1975 (NO.23)

“Be it resolved that National Assembly in accordance with section 5 A of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Chapter 51:02, confirm the Purchase Tax (Motor Cars) (Amendment) Order 1975 (No.23), which was made on the 1st of March, 1975, and published in the Gazette on the 3rd of March, 1975.” [**The Minister of Finance**]

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hope) : I beg to move the Motion standing in my name, that is, the Motion seeking the confirmation of the Purchase Tax (Motor cars) (Amendment) Order 1975 (No.23).

If I may explain the background to this Motion, when purchase taxes were first imposed on motor cars, the Government had deliberately excluded certain vehicles from purchase taxes. These vehicles were largely motor cars registered as hire cars as well as motor cars registered as goods vehicles. Subsequently, when the Common External Tariff was brought into effect, we had a combination of the tariff as well as a purchase tax on motor cars. Consequently, all vehicles attracted a purchase tax but again motor cars registered as hire cars were exempt from paying the higher level of purchase taxes. In fact, they pay at a lower rate, and that discrimination in favour of hire cars was also applicable to cars registered as goods vehicles.

If they were registered ordinarily as motor cars they would have had to pay 24 ½ per cent on the value of the motor cars. This is a terrific saving. Instead of 24 ½ per cent they pay only 15 per cent.

2.20 p.m.

What did in fact happen was that the number of motor cars registered as “G” went up considerably. Any person with a small business, a little salt goods shop, a little dry goods business – I understand even people with rice factories and people who planted paddy were able to get motor cars registered as “G” on the basis that they were using it in connection with their business. It was definitely a racket and a stop had to be put to it. I do compliment the hon. Minister for having brought this legislation before the House to put a stop to that kind of practice.

It is true, that before this preferential treatment for motor cars registered as “G” there were motor cars which were genuinely registered as “G”. Unfortunately, in this case, they will have to suffer. That is the problem: “Peter pay for Paul and Paul pay for all.” The few genuine cases will now have to suffer. All I can say is that perhaps these people will now have to buy genuine goods vehicles and not use, motor cars for the combined purpose of business and their general household use. But, there was need to bring this legislation before the House: there was need to put a stop to this practice of registering motor cars as “G” in order to evade the higher rate of duty of 24 ½ per cent in

the case of those vehicles of not more than 1600 cc which was, by and large, the category of vehicles which took advantage of this preferential treatment.

At the same time, sir, while going into this matter, I came to the conclusion that perhaps it is necessary to make a request to the hon. Minister to have a codification of the existing legislation made under the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act. We have had a super – abundance of these Orders and it is my considered opinion that if perhaps something happened and the present top administration of the licence Revenue Department were to change, there would be chaos because the legislation is so varied; it is multitudinous. I think it is about time that we have a codification and let us bear in mind that in places like New Amsterdam this legislation is being administered not by expert officers as in Georgetown but by Police Officers who are constantly changing. In the out – districts it is being administered by police officers. So, I put forward to the hon. Minister the suggestion that we perhaps should have a codification of all the existing legislation. The hon. Minister knows that we have had within this year, for example, at least half a dozen Orders made under the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Ordinance – Orders in connection with Purchase Tax and Consumption Tax, Customs Duties. What I say is that the law should not be made in such a way that it is understood only by the experts. The law should be made in such a way that even the ordinary layman could go to his books, to something that is published and understand it.

2.25 p.m.

I read in the papers that within the last few days, even another Order was published under this same Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act.

That seems to deal with the rotary engines but we will talk about that when it comes to Parliament. It is not on the supplementary Order Paper, so we presume it will be dealt with at another Sitting of Parliament. One sees the number of Orders made under this Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act and I appeal for a simple document setting out the existing state of the law.

While I am dealing with abuses under the law [and this is a clear case where there have been abuses under the law] may I mention another area in which I understand there may well be abuse and there may well be a need for some consultation between the hon. Minister of trade and the hon. Minister of Finance in that respect. I speak of the importation of second – hand vehicles.

As I understand it, the importation of new motor vehicles has a quota attached to it. An importer has to have a quota before he brings into the country new vehicles, but in respect of second – hand vehicles, my understanding is that there is no quota. If I am wrong, I am subject to correction and the nation would be very enlightened by a statement from one of the hon. Minister in this respect, but I am told that second – hand vehicles are not subject to quota.

I know that hundreds of second – hand vehicles have been coming into the country within recent times, particularly from Japan. Are they subject to a quota? if they are not, then, why not? The whole rationale for quota was that very much – needed foreign reserves should be conserved. We should conserve it. The purchase of second – hand cars for re – sale in Guyana uses up foreign currency just like the purchase of new cars for re – sale in Guyana, so there should be a quota on second – hand cars coming into Guyana, if this has not yet been done.

The second point I want to make in this respect is that there seems to be some doubt as to whether the ban on cars over 1600 cc does apply to second – hand cars also. We know the Government has announced a ban on cars above 1600cc except the Cadillacs which it imports for the reasons which is given. The Government, of course, will bring in its Cadillacs regardless of all the propaganda about an egalitarian society. it will bring in its Cadillacs but let us deal with the state of the law as far as John Public the small the man is concerned.

No Garage and no person can bring in cars over 1600 cc . What is the position in respect of second – hand cars? Does that ban also apply in respect of second – hand cars? I should like some elucidation on this point. There is some doubt about whether it applies to second – hand cars for re – sale in Guyana.

There is another ancillary point. In respect of these same cars over 1600 cc, would the Hon. Minister say what is the position, I ask this purely so that a statement can be made in this honourable House. Can a Guyanese national who would like to bring back his car, a car that was his from the inception, and which he has used overseas bring in that car if it is over 1600 cc? This is a slightly different position. It is not a car coming into Guyana for re – sale. It is a car coming in as personal property. What is the position in respect of that? We would certainly like some elucidation on that.

Again, I repeat my request, that there should be a codification of the laws so that any ordinary person, the small man about whom we talk so much, would be able to see what is the state of the existing laws particularly in respect of taxes on motor vehicles.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: (replying) I wish to say that I take the point made by the hon. leader of the Opposition with regard to the apparent need for codification, but he would appreciate that the very nature of the legislation – it is all subsidiary legislation – requires changes from time to time. That is why it can be proceeded with in this way, by Order, and there are bound to be a number of these Orders coming from time to time. I agree with the question of codification. I will seek the advice of the law officers and, if it is practicable, it could be done.

On the question of cars over 1600 cc, I think there can be absolutely no misunderstanding or doubt as to what can come and what cannot. Cars over 1600 cc, whether they are new or second – hand, are banned. I do not know where the hon. Member got his doubt from but certainly the officers of the Customs are in no doubt as to what they will permit into the country.

On the question of quota, I am not really qualified to answer the hon. Member's question. I will ask the Minister of trade to do so if he would. On the question of returning Guyanese that if they can prove that the car was acquired by them prior to February, 1974, when then ban was first imposed, the car will be permitted in, Once the car is owned by them and they can prove they owned the prior to the date when we enforced the ban it will be allowed to enter. Any care

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above 1600 cc which they acquired subsequent to the imposition of the ban will not be allowed to enter the country.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think the hon. Minister of Trade will be permitted to speak, you having replied under the Rules. If, however, he wishes to advise you, I will permit you to get up and continue making the explanation.

2.35 p.m.

Mr. Hope: Your honour, I am sorry for exhibiting such lack of knowledge of the fine points relating to the rules but the hon. Minister has just advised me that quotas were previously issued on the basis of persons or firms that have been previously importing cars, which means that the people who are importing second – hand cars, if they were not previous dealers, did not have a quota. This matter has, in fact, come to his attention and he is now looking at the whole question. I assume that they also will be subject to the quota system.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

BILLS – SECOND READING

KURU KURU CO – OPERATIVE COLLEGE BILL

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to provide for the Establishment and administration of the Kuru Kuru Co – operative College and for matters connected Therewith.” [**The Minister of Co – operative and National Mobilisation**]

The Minister of Co-operative and National Mobilisation (Mr. Green): Your Honour, I beg to move that the Kuru Kuru Co – operative College Bill No. 11 of 1975 be now read a Second time.

This Bill seeks to incorporate the College with a Board. Perhaps it may be useful if I say a few words in relation to the College, its concept and then role it is intended to play in the whole development process of our country.

In February, 1970, Guyana was proclaimed a Republic and in an effort to emphasise the importance we placed on co – operativism, we adopted the style of “Co – operative Republic.” This was a deliberate attempt by the Party, the leader and the people to emphasise and to state in clear and unambiguous terms that the practice of co –operative principles will be emphasised and will eventually dominate the social period, many of us still see the co-operative as only an economic exercise similar to the sort of social welfare exercises we had before independence. If this were so, there would be no need to call ourselves the Co –operative Republic and to emphasise the training and the effort which we are putting at the level of Government and Party, within and without the formal school system, on this question of co –operatives.

In 1970, the Leader of the People’s National Congress and prime Minister of this country observed that if we succeeded in mobilising the people intellectually, emotionally, physically and financially, it must follow that the co – operative sector which they control should - and my emphasis is “must” – become the dominant sector.

The Co –operative College is intended to be the centre of a process of massive education and training to mobilise our people intellectually and emotionally. It is, in other words, essentially an educational institution fashioned to prepare our many leader and citizens for the challenges which we must now face.

Of course, the College is one of several agencies which the Government is promoting in an effort to cope with the legacies of our past, a legacy of brainwashing, a legacy of poverty, a legacy which nearly robbed our people of their self – confidence and a legacy which some people fail to take cognisance of even in 1975. The operations of the College must, therefore, first of all be seen as part of our whole educational programme; it must be seen as part of our educational system and, perhaps, the more appropriate Minister to deal with this Bill ought to have been the Minister responsible for Education.

The educational systems in different countries vary substantially. They must, because every State is different and in every country the people identify different goals and different objectives. However, I suspect that there is one aspect of education with which even the Leader of the Opposition would agree. There is one aspect that seems to be universally consistent, that is, that one generation must pass on to the other generation its experience and information so that the children can assume leadership in time; so that the young people can develop and improve the quality of life of that particular country.

In the East and in the West, education is used to reinforce the structure and belief of those particular societies. Some people do not like to use the word “education”; they prefer to use what they consider a bad word – brainwashing. My hon. Friend used the word “indoctrination” but I prefer to use the generic term and, perhaps, the more appropriate one education. Education is used to prepare our young citizen for service to their country. Indeed, if the programme of education and information fails to enforce the values and aspirations of those people, then the State is about to collapse.

Education provided by the British colonial Government, therefore, had a purpose. Any thinker who suggests that the British education did not have a purpose is missing the whole argument. Education provided by our ex – master had a particular purpose. It was fashioned to prepare us for the service to the colony of British Guiana. It was geared to serve Her Gracious or His Gracious Majesty. Education provided by Her gracious Majesty’s Government was prepared to produce – and, in fact, that education produced – values and attitudes based on the needs of the colonial master and not on the needs of the people who made up the colony. This is why the system produced an abundance of white collar, or shirt collar, skills. It was convenient, it was necessary to provide the junior officials and the minor administrators for Her Majesty’s imperial Government.

This observation, as I told my hon. Friend at a pleasant function where we met last night, must not be taken as a criticism of the many noble Guyanese who works in and came out of the system. Nor am I suggesting, as I told him and as he agreed, that all the values passed down out of this system are even and that some of these values ought not to be retained.

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What it meant, for certain, was that the educational system adopted by the British was modelled on the British system using their experience and, perhaps of great importance, it took into account their needs. Naturally, the system, as I said, emphasised certain skills. The programme emphasised the arts in our primary and secondary schools and even in the university. English Literature, for example, was considered more important than carpentry, masonry or mechanical skills. Knowledge of British Constitution and whether Charles 1 preceded James 111; knowledge of British Constitution and the Order of the Kings and Queens of England was considered more important in our schools than agriculture. Law – and I raise this with great fear – was considered more important than engineering.

There is a story told by the Leader of the Party of a famous son of Guyana, Edgar Mortimer Duke , who wanted to study engineering but he was asking by the Colonial Administrators at the time “What are you going to do with that degree when you return to British Guiana?” he did law.

As I said, I make this example about law with great fear because the Leader of my Party is a Lawyer; the leader of this House is a lawyer; you, sir, are a lawyer; the comrade who site on my right is a lawyer; the comrade who sits on my left is a lawyer; the Leader of the Opposition is a lawyer and the leader of my own household is a lawyer. **[Laughter]** But, I hope that all those leader, including you, sir, will accept in good faith the point I wish to make. In fact, it came home very clear to me that even if you examine the lawyers we have today – and my honourable good friend Brindley Pollard is here – Croal Street is teeming with lawyers but we are short of competent draughtsmen because the system produced lawyers.

I looked yesterday at the *Official Gazette* and looking through the list of professional persons who have complied with the provisions of Act 17 – and I saw that the Speaker has complied with those provisions - I noticed that we have something like 102 lawyers who have already complied with those provisions as against 12 engineers, 3 architects, 1 veterinary surgeon. I am just dealing with this list which I only observed last night in the *Official Gazette*. It tells us a story.

Secondly, sir, this system, of which we all are a part, laid great store upon the individual. The system therefore fostered the individualistic tendency of men as against his instinct to co – operate. It produced the society we have all seen where the possession of individual wealth was the major and, in some cases, the only criterion for social merit and worth. This is what the society produced. This led to a system where, particularly in the economic field, a few strong and ruthless individuals dominated and controlled the lives of the majority of our people.

But, this was an agreement with the assumption of the capitalist systems. This opposed the natural co-operative practices of our own people who made up the then colony of British Guiana, the Amerindians, who practised a refined form of co-operativism before the introduction of the British imperialist systems sided, in some cases by the Church; the Africans who, left alone, practised, within their stride, the concept of hunting for the group co –operatively; our Indian brothers who, even on the estates where they punished to exit under the white whiplash, functioned in terms of the family co-operative systems.

It was all part of a nearly successful effort to change the ways of our people and to force us to accept our colonial status and make us an efficient appendage of the imperial power.

Since political independence, and thanks to the People’s National Congress, we have been introducing modifications to our educational system in an effort to cope with the needs of the new nation. This year, in particular, we witnessed increased activity in this particular area of national development.

The education we seek to provide must not only be concerned with providing the technical and professional skills but must and this is very important – be concerned with correcting attitudes and with helping to mobilise our people so that by working together co –operatively we pool our human and natural resources for the use and to the best advantage of the people of Guyana.

Our people, sir, must now recapture the spirit of co –operativism and organise our businesses, our villages and communities and our political parties based on the principles of co –operative socialism so that equality of opportunity will be realised and maintained.

Our training programmes at Kuru Kuru Co –operative College and, indeed, other institutions are intended to emphasise co –operative endeavour as against individual advancement, introducing the creed of equality and the responsibility to offer service to the nation which goes with our special skill, experience and training.

The first function of the Board Identified in Clause 4 (1) is: -

- a) providing at the College educational facilities and courses in co –operative education and management techniques and such other course of study as the Board may approve.”

Like National Service, like national development, the operation of the Board and College is regarded by Government as part of our over – all national educational programme and thus the College will strengthen relationships between the Ministries of Education and National Development.

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It is not possible, nor do I consider it appropriate for me, at this stage, to enumerate the variety of courses which will be offered but they will all be with the main purpose of helping our citizens to examine our own history, analyse our present position and prepare them for the challenges of the future. May I emphasise, out of this clause, the fact that importance will be given to training in sound management techniques.

Section 4 (1)(b) of this Bill provides that the College, through the Board, shall grant certificates, diplomas and other distinctions in connection with courses provided at the college. Member of the Board, to whom I am most grateful, gave this matter some deep and serious consideration. We considered whether then College should issue diplomas or certificates or whether we should issue any document at all.

In the past, and even now, aspects of our educational system tended to emphasise the winning of certificates for too much. The results have been that many of our young people go

through life with the sole objective of obtaining certificates and degrees, very often with little concern that their training be put to the use of society. We have seen, in this poor country, many of our brilliant minds spend years merely to get a Ph.D. This, in itself, is a good thing but we have seen, in a developing and a poor country like Guyana, some of our young people pursue Ph.D.s in completely irrelevant subject.

There was one young friend of mine who hails from a rural area. To get his Ph. D. he tried to study the reaction of the Irish child in a Scottish community. Now how is that going to help the development of this country? He spent four years analysing the effects of an Irish child in a Scottish community. How will that help him contribute to the development of this programme? [Mr. Singh: “He didn’t have to pick that; he could have chosen something else.”] But there are worse example: Oh, I apologise, I forget the Speaker’s Irish connection, or it is Scottish?

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, I am sure you have not realised what you have said because if you made that statement outside, I may have a good cause of action against you. [Laughter]

Mr. Green: Sir, I apologise for anything I may have said that is out of order. But if I get back to the point, this is so because we have tended to offer reward and promotional activities to people whose best area of competence in their ability to pass examinations. We have seen in the Public Service people not eating, taking lessons, doing all sort of things to get five G.C.E. subjects in order to get a job. We have seen, in the system, that many of these young men and women are incapable of running our administrative system. We have seen, because of this certificate consciousness, many of our young women scrambling to get typing certificate and you, sir, and many of my colleague Minister would know that many of them present a certificate to you and sometimes when put to the task – even though my friend criticises the point that it is the language we use – their English is unacceptable and their typing deplorable, but they have certificate.

The students aim was for a certificate, because the social structure has, in the past, allowed this. He may very well have a desire to serve the country but his idea if service was directly related to the position and the monetary benefits which his certificate or degree is

expected to confer upon him or her. Mr. Speaker, during International Women's Year, I understand that we are supposed to say "her or him" and I am prepared to obey those instructions. In other words, we have, in the past, rewarded people capable of passing examinations but who may not possess the correct attitude, may have little concern for people and indeed, may not even be able to perform on the job. For these reasons what is of real importance is not so much the certificates that are granted but what goes into the courses.

Emphasis at the College will be placed on the application of knowledge and skills in actual work situations. The certificate or diploma we will offer will be the result of very serious and comprehensive evaluation. It will testify to the participant's practical competence and social attitudes and not merely what she or he can write. In addition, we have decided to award certificates because we recognise their value as a means of self – assessment and as a means of motivation.

We need too, a system where the outside world and members of our community, and particularly employers will regard and see the College as a serious institution and therefore see a certificate or diploma which we offer in qualitative terms and as an indication of a high level of achievement.

The co –operative movement has been the subject of the most merciless criticism from many quarters in our society. The College and the Party must, therefore, effectively if we wish to ensure success and to provide a movement which will bring about the changes we desire for a better society. After all, the co –operative sector has been identified as the one which must eventually be the dominant sector. We therefore need to plan intelligently and boldly if these proposals are to be reality.

At this point it will be useful to note that in our plans for the college we see it not in competition with any other institution or agency but complementary to the whole range of educational and training institutions. The College is set up to support the whole educational thrust and already has a working arrangement with several institutions: The Guyana School of Agriculture, the Police, the G.D.F, Adult Education, National Development, Ministry of

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Information, Guybau, Public Service Ministry, Ministry of Agriculture , T.U.C., Ministry of Education, University of Guyana and of particular importance, the Party.

3.05 p.m.

May I deal with the question of sincerity and the need for new thinking. I can do no better than to quote the words of the Comrade Leader and Prime Minister when he said: “Some of us while accepting co –operativism intellectually still need a re – orientation, a de – brainwashing to accept at a practical level the material and spiritual advantage of the new system.” This was at Congress in April 1972.

Clause 4(1) (d) states that the College will be “conceptualising co-operative education for the advancement of co –operative education in collaboration with the Ministry responsible for education, the Ministry responsible for co –operative societies and educational institutions.” It is at the college that we teach our people, for example, that the Rochdale pioneers were not the first co –operators, for the free slaves who purchase Victoria practised a pure form of co-operativism at a historical period before the Rochdale pioneers. It is at the college that we have already started to explode the many myths and beliefs that have burdened us for so long; it is at the college that we explain the difference of our approach to co –operativism as opposed to the old teaching coming from systems where the co-operative was never intended to surface and to survive as the dominant sector.

By constant discussion, led by the Kuru Kuru Co –operative College, we will help our young people, our young nation, to grasp the importance and meaning of our socialist principles. At this point of our history this is of special importance, in fact it is urgent, for we hear so many people misusing and abusing the word “socialism”. Even some of our friends committed to the advancement of the individual, attempt deceit. We must learn that no matter how the present proponents of free untrammelled enterprise and capitalism try to disguise their system by being so –called “liberals”, we cannot forget that it was this system of capitalism which monopolised the wealth for the few for so long. It was this system of capitalism which supported slavery and brought with it misery, oppression, and degradation of the majority of our people. When I say

slavery I also include the system of indenture ship because, as we have observed in other places, it is just another form of slavery.

For us in the Co-operative Republic, co-operative socialism and the practice of co – operativism will not be restricted to a system of economics but must be a system of ethics. We are not talking about a few consumer shops and a few co –operative farms: we are talking about a refreshing new way of life.

Finally, the best of our efforts will not depend on only changing the relationships but will depend heavily upon how much we can help to change the minds of men and women. Our co – operative socialism cannot reach its full development until all women and men are prepared to absorb themselves fully into the community of their comrades and until we are moved by incentive to serve our community, our country. Until this stage is reached, we need to continue our efforts and any educational institution rated today must therefore ensure that the courses and programmes avoid the prejudices of the past.

The college staff will bear this in mind; it will bear in mind the principles of self – reliance, social equality, and economic control by the small man: it will bear in mind co – operativism as the basis for producing students capable of a massive mobilization effort.

In other words, the Board, the Principal and staff of this institution see themselves as an important agency for change, the sort of change which I admit cannot happen overnight. Indeed, sometimes the change tends to be slow for those who are aging, and to the young, perhaps who can become impatient, but because of this slow growth sometimes it is all the more reason for pursuing the objectives of our ideological position as actively and resolutely as we can and all the more reason for promoting every institution which fosters its development. We on this side of the House feel confident that the College will do this.

There is just one small point. To make recruitment of certain trained personnel easy – because that is a problem today, a problem which the College already has - clause 9 (2) makes special provision for any teacher or other public officer transferred or seconded for service at the

college to have his or her services considered unbroken for the purposes of computing his pension and other benefits.

Mr. Speaker, permit me if I take this opportunity to pay tribute publicly and give credit to the many co –operators who helped to construct the college just two years ago. May I thank also and pay credit to the first principal and the staff, may I pay public credit to the first Minister responsible for co –operatives, who is absent today, whose untiring efforts made the college a reality

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May I, also sir, at the risk of being accused of discriminating, pay special credit and say thanks to those members of the Board, particularly the Chairman, who worked very hard under difficult conditions. The present Board consists of some of our finest minds, for example, people like Jacob Bynoe and Gordon Muller. As I said, I will be guilty of discrimination merely to call a few names. But may I publicly say thanks to them on behalf of the Ministry and, indeed, on behalf of the Government of their unselfish contribution to the realisation of our objective.

I wish to commend this Bill to the House and ask the support of both sides of this House as we join hands in a triumphant march along the road lit by the People’s National Congress; Knowledge, self – reliance and to co –operative socialism.

Question proposed.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to provide for the establishment of a Board of Governors for the Kuru Kuru Co –operative College and to deal with the administration thereof. It is a very simple and straight – forward Bill and we are very pleased to give it our wholehearted support. We had a very long dissertation on education, law and various things from the hon. Minister and I crave your indulgence to carry on the lecture for a few minutes longer as we seem to be indoctrinating, brainwashing and educating each other.

The hon. Minister said one generation must pass on to the other generation its experience or words to that effect. Often in this House we waste a great deal of time lamenting our past. Our

colonial master and the terrible time we had, instead of getting on with the job and what we have to do. Surely, in the past, we had some good and bad experiences. The hon. Minister must admit that there was some good in the past. Sometimes we passed on the bad but we have got to take the bad with the good and not waste the time of this House bemoaning the fact of what happened in the past.

Past generations had a long history to study about which king came before which king and which queen succeeded which queen. But each generation and period of time has its own set of values, its own ideals that were passed on to that generation. I think all of us here were in the colony of British Guiana. I am not advocating our living in the past but I am just stating a fact. When we were there, we were naturally taught what pertained to that time in our period of history, life and existence. We have gone on from being small children to being grown up and we have become a nation. If I might be allowed to quote from the Scriptures, I think it was St. Paul who said, “When I was a child I thought as a child,” and he said that when he grew up he put away all childish things. This is what we must do in Guyana. The values of the past, those that are good and applicable to us, we keep and use because they are worthwhile.

I have a very nice book named “Living in Co-operation,” Book No. 1 the Hand book of the Co-operatives. There are some very nice tunes on it, some of the old songs we learnt at school. But I notice on the last page the song “Brothers in Co-operation”. Do you know, sir, that in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana the children are singing it to the tune of “Men of Harlech” thus taking something out of our past? The tune is nice, the words fit the tune and they are using it. That is the process of education. You take what is good, what is applicable. We found it necessary to take “Men of Harlech” or “All through the Night” if you know it by that name I think there is even a hymn with the same tune. Actually, they even have “Save your many dollars” to the tune of “Let me call you Sweetheart”. I think that is an American one so it is not part of our past. It is all part of our living. Let us grow up.

People confuse themselves about whose skin is a lighter shade of brown from the other, or whose collar is white or who wears a tie. That is the sort of nonsense we have. It is a waste of time. Let us accept these as part of our past. For example, the Minister of Education had a very

excellent article in the Guyana Graphic editorial entitled “The Use of English Language”. All this we know. So let us stop harping in the past as it is an awful waste of time and miserable to hear the same comments day after day.

We had a long story, too, about the slaves and the indentured labour, Men being what they are, the grass was always greener on the other side of the fence. The same thing happens with immigrants. I am a Guyanese born. Just as we have immigrants here, people who came as immigrants, so we have people leaving Guyana and going to England, Canada and where have you and people leaving Canada and going to Australia. We have somebody leaving the United States and going to New Zealand. That is the way life goes on. People are leaving because the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. It is not something peculiar to Guyanese. We go on and on instead of getting on with the process of living and getting on with building our own nation.

There was another point the Minister made. He said that co-ops must be the dominant sector. We have made this point over and over again. We support this Bill, we support Co – operatives, but Co –operative alone cannot build the economy of Guyana. We must have the co – operatives, the private sector and the public sector, all three, working hand in hand in co – operation to build our nation. That would be co –operation.

The Minister also went on to tell us about the first co –operative people not being the Rochdale co-operators who formed a group together. What is a co –operative? It is a group of people getting together voluntarily to work together for their own benefit. That is what the co-operative is, pure and simple. I agreed with him when he says that the Rochdale pioneers were not the first to start co –operatives in 1844. But the Rochdale principles in co –operativism are the principles that the world is using. It was not the first, but the principles are used.

I believe that our co =operative societies are founded on the same principles. I am not quoting from any colonial book. I am quoting from this book, “Living in Co –operation”. I did have, I must admit, a British book that I was going to quote from about co –operatives but I thought it would be better for me to use this one here and I will read from page 4. It states:

“The spirit of co-operation that was practised by man in very early times (when many countries, which were to become great, were just coming into being) has continued throughout history. In India, people used the co-operative approach to improve their communities at various times in their history. In England, Robert Owen, a very rich man who had once been a poor worker, encouraged workers and poor people to form co-operative societies, and in the year 1844, twenty-eight workers in the town of **Rochdale** started a co-operative store. These twenty-eight people drew up a set of **Rules** by which they intended to run their co-operative society store. These rules became the CODE or PRINCIPLES OF THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT all over the world, and some of them are used up to the present time”.

This was put out by the Ministry of Education.

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I venture to say there were others before the Africans and the Indians. I will go right back to the early Christians. I think the Minister understands that when I say “early Christians” I mean the ones that were there in the times of Christ – I am not talking about the Christians who came to Guyana – But they also practised a form of co-operativism. They were not the kind of people we have today masquerading as communists and socialists. They practised a sort of community living.

So this co-operative business, as the Minister said, is nothing new. It is as old as time itself. It is as old as history. But the important aspect of the co-operative, whether in Guyana, China or where have you, is the spirit in which it is administered, how it works and how you go about it, as the hon. Minister rightly said.

Since we are dotting our i’s crossing our t’s and spelling things out, I would appreciate if the hon. Minister would tell us what system of co-operative we follow in Guyana. Is it the British system or the Swedish system. Or are we doing our own thing? I am subject to correction

but I do not think that anybody has ever said what system we have. Those are just a few of the points that we would like to have clarified.

Now, Sir, to revert to the Bill. The hon. Minister read out Clause 4. He magnified and built up (1) which deal with the functions of the Board: the educational system; the granting of certificates and so on; the promoting of co-operative education and the conceptualising of co-operative education, all of which was very interesting and informative. I am very pleased that he laid stress on the question of management techniques. Too often in the past co –operatives have been formed by people - and I am dealing with the genuine ones, not with those people who, because they have party cards and belong to the People’s National Congress, can get a loan from Guyana National Co –operative Bank. They barrow and could not care five cents whether they repay the loan or whether the co –operative failed or not. They do not care if they plant the tomatoes and cabbages ways up in the hills, as has been done in the Rupununi, without any access road to get them out and a large quantity are left in the area and rot. Because they had party cards they took advantage of the position and were granted a loan.

We have never been told in this House how many co –operatives there are. Nobody has ever had the guts to tell us how many have failed. Some have failed genuinely. People fail, I agree, and there are failures due to genuine reasons. I am dealing with those who serve the co –operative. They have the will to do it: they are willing to work. They are genuine but they do not have the knowhow.

I said that the Co-operative College would be able to deal with the genuine cases, people who have failed through lack of knowhow; through lack of marketing ability and marketing techniques. That is the reason why the Co – operative College is a good thing and we support it. We support the idea and the idea behind the giving of diplomas and the system which the hon. Minister enunciated.

A piece of paper saying that you have passed five subjects in G.C.E. or that you have a Ph.D. does not mean you are the type of person who is suited to the job at all. It takes more than a piece of paper to get a person to be efficient in his work. All that has been taken into consideration by Co –operative College and this is something of which we approve.

Diplomas and certificates are essential. You must have some means of setting a standard. It is quite all right if you do not want to take Ph.D. The Minister spoke of someone who studied the reaction of an Irish child in a Scottish community for her Ph. D. Some complicated story which is not relevant to us.

We want to know what is going to be relevant in our Guyanese society here in 1975. As a matter of fact in 1976 our students will no longer take G.C.E. examinations set by the Board in the United Kingdom. Everybody knows that is coming to an end and the Regional Board will function for that purpose.

I am sorry the hon. Minister of Education is not here. I would like her to find out what is happening because 1976 is not all that far away. If we are setting the examination for the G.E.C. and if the Regional Board is not ready for the 1976 examination, the children who should go in the Sixth Form of a school in September this year, to start the two year period would not be able to take the examination in two year's time because there will be no examination

The Regional Board, as far as I understand, is not ready yet. It is nowhere near ready with its programme and requirements for 1976. So that is something that has to do done. This does not apply to the Co-operative College. They are going to do their own thing and issue their own certificates.

As we see it, Kuru Kuru College is the answer to what is needed for the spirit of co-operativism in Guyana. What we would like to recommend for the consideration of the hon. Minister is that if any group of people begin to form a co-operative and apply for a loan to help them with that co-operative, at least one member of that group should be compelled to attend a course of studies at Kuru Kuru College. They should have at least one member able to show the others, train the others and help the others. This will certainly help because, as I said earlier on, too many genuine co-operatives have failed because they did not have the necessary technique and know-how. So we would recommend for consideration that this be done.

Dealing with the composition of the Board of Governors, naturally, we do not know who they will be. The number of persons will be between 8 and 14, I would like to recommend to the

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hon. Minister the well - known principle of workers participation in management which is advocated in other sectors of the community, that at least three members of the staff be appointed to the Board. They will have inside knowledge of the working of the College. It is very much in keeping with the principle of worker participation in management. We would also like to urge the hon. Minister that the Board of Governors of the College be appointed on their ability to help and to assist the College with their know – how and that they be people who would be versed in co –operativism and in different fields of education. Also the appointees of the Board should not be political appointees so that problems like the problems we have with the Board of Governors at the University of Guyana would not arise.

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Sir, that is about all that we have to say on this very simple and straight forward Bill.

There is one point I have just remember and that is clause 12 on page 6 which deals with the accounts and audit. It reads as follows:

“The Board shall keep proper accounts and other records in respect of its operations and such an accounts shall be audited annually by an auditor appointed by the Board with approved of the Minister.”

As we have recommended before, and as we will continue to recommend – when public money is being used we must be very careful; one can do what he likes with his own money but with public funds one can never be too careful. We feel, as we have said before, that this money should be audited by the Director of Audit and we give that suggestion to the hon. Minister for his consideration seeing that public funds are involved.

I am just tempted to read a very short paragraph about the co –operative movement in Britain which is applicable because it deals with developing countries. As I say, we can learn something from other people not only because they are part of our past. I wish to quote from the Co operative Overseas Policy, the recommendations of the Advisory Commission which was commissioned in 1964:

“In developing countries of the world, co –operative action is an important means of mobilising local initiative in self – help and providing through the creation of share capital and the accumulation of services for marketing and other operations, a way of building up capital growth from local resources which is so essential for development.”

In conclusion, may I say that we hope that the College will be a means of teaching what true co–operativism is really all about and that co –operatives together with the private and public sector in our country, provide employment for our people and build the economy of our nation. On behalf of the Opposition, I wish to give our support to this Bill.

Mr. Green (replying): Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate, first of all, the Opposition for putting forward their female advocate and secondly, for supporting the Bill. But, I just want some observations in terms of what the hon. Member said.

First of all, she quoted from Co –operative Overseas Policy. May I just repeat very quickly, in Guyana our approach to the co –operative movement is different and, in fact unique? I said in the other system it was designed as a social welfare organisation and we never intended to be the dominant sector. For us, it must be promoted to be the dominant sector. We do not see it in merely economic terms; it is a way of life. It is a new relationship we are talking about; a new synthesis of men and society where we have a new approach to one another.

I suspected that the Opposition would have raised this question of training in co–operatives. The suggestion that each member of the co –operative must be trained at Kuru Kuru College is taken but in anticipation of the observation which I suspected the Opposition would make, I did some research this morning. My hon. Friend who has just returned from Europe tells me that the economic crisis in the capitalist countries are such that there is absolute confusion and chaos. The capitalist system in fact has failed and will continue to fail because there is no involvement of people.

The hon. Member talks about the United Kingdom. In 1972 – and this is taken from **The Economist** – 4,246 companies went bankrupt; in 1973, 3,805. If one were to work it out, each of

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these companies would average something like a million pound so we are talking about five million pounds going down the drain. But, because of our brainwashing, we make a big fuss when a small co-operative folds up or has difficulties. And let us remember, 24 per cent of the companies in Holland, another capitalist state, went bankrupt; 3,155 in 1974 went bankrupt, an increase of 24 per cent. The figures are there to read. If we read the **Financial Times**, **Times Magazine** and all the other western-oriented magazines printed in the West, we would see the absolute chaos. Let us stop making a big fuss about a few co-operative which have failed.

The suggestion that the Opposition will support the Co-operative College is most fascinating and gratifying. One final word though: the People's National Congress is not talking about worker participation. The intention of the Government is for worker control, a different thing. Worker participation is a capitalist mechanism to have a few member on a Board. In future we hope that when the co-operative movement takes half of this country we will not talk about worker participation but we will talk about workers control.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second Time.

Assembly in Committee.

3.45 p.m.

Clause 1 to 11 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 12

Mr. Singh: I should like to reiterate the observation and, indeed, the request for consideration made by my hon. Colleague Mrs. DaSilva in respect of clause 12, that the accounts be audited by the Director of Audit. We are aware of our Limitations in number on this side of the House so we put it forward for favourable consideration by the hon. Minister rather than by substantive Amendment.

The rationale for this is that the Board, by and large, will be utilising funds provided by Parliament. The Government of the country has at its disposal a Director of Audit whose post is

enshrined in the Constitution. He has special privileges and prerogatives; he is protected by the Constitution. Such a person, it has always been felt, should be in a privileged position when auditing funds which are public funds. The Director of Audit is empowered to audit the accounts of the Co –operative Republic of Guyana. He is good enough to do the audit of the accounts of Guyana; he is certainly good enough to do the audit of the Kuru Kuru Co –operative College. If we have an institution or organisation, then by all means let us make use of the Director of Audit in this respect.

It may be that the co –operative college would be saving money by having the Director of Audit audit the accounts of the College, I am of the opinion that this would be the case. He has the staff, he has the facilities, he has the wherewithal at his disposal to do the audit, so I very strongly recommend to the hon. Minister that he approves of an Amendment to the legislation so that we take out the words “an auditor appointed by the Board with the approval of the Minister” and insert therefore, “the Director of Audit.” That would certainly make sure that the audit is done by the Director of Audit. I take the point that the Board as it is here can appoint the Director of Audit. I should like to make it mandatory that the Board has to appoint the Director of Audit to do the audit.

Mr. Green: We raised this question with the members and Chairman of the present Board. We appreciate the sentiments expressed by the hon. Leader of the Opposition. The provision as it is has this advantage, it does not exclude the achievement of the objective as stated by my hon. Friend but it leaves the Board flexible, in cases where the Director of Audit may be under pressure to seek a speedy audit. We do not support this Amendment by the hon. Member although we appreciate his point.

Clause 12 as printed agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill

Clause 13

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, clause 13 (1) provides that the Board shall as soon as practicable after the end of each financial year, cause to be prepared a report on its activities during the end of each financial year, and as soon as practicable after the accounts have been

audited, the report, together with the accounts and the report of the Director of Audit, shall be submitted to the Minister. Clause 13(2) says that the Minister shall cause a copy of the report together with the statement of accounts and the report of the auditor to be laid before the National Assembly.

I am casting no aspersions on the integrity of any Minister who may be responsible, but I feel that we must per suppose that the Board would be a responsible Board; nevertheless, the Board is charge with the responsibility, as soon as practicable after the accounts have been audited – the words, “as soon as practicable” have been put in - of sending the Report to the Minister. I feel that it would not be wrong for it to be made obligatory that the Minister shall also, as soon as practicable, submit a copy of the report to the National Assembly.

We know that Ministers are busy people; they are normally preoccupied with so many things. The matter of submitting a copy of the report to the National Assembly would normally be done by civil servants and we know what the problems are. That is why we would like to see in the legislation some limiting words whereby the report would have to come to this honourable House within some period of time, I would have liked to put in a definite period of time, for example, within two weeks of three weeks, but I am of the view that that would be unacceptable to the Government so I take the words which are used in respect of the Board in section 13 (1). They have to do it as soon as practicable.

The Board is also presupposed to be responsible Board, The Minister is presupposed to be a responsible person, but let us put in the same words, “as soon as practicable.” What I propose is that words, “as soon as practicable after submission to him “be inserted before the word, “the”, in section 13 (2). Let us put in the words, “as soon as practicable after submission to him”. before, “the”, and it will be a common “t” for “the”. The Minister shall cause a copy of the report together with a statement of accounts and the report to the auditor to be laid before the National Assembly. I repeat, let us have an insertion of the words, “as soon as practicable after submission to him” before the word “the” in section 13 (2).

Amendment proposed.

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Mr. Green: We have no objection to the principle of the Amendment and in fact we accept it but I am advised by learned counsel that to put the words after “the Minister” is more relevant. This is not my feeling, but we have been so advised.

The Chairman: Can you, hon. and learned Leader of the Opposition, re – phrase the Amendment?

Mr. Singh: I would propose that after the words the “Minister shall”. there be inserted the words, “as soon as practicable after the submission to him of the aforesaid reports and statement of accounts”; so it will now read: “The Minister shall as soon as practicable after the submission to him of the aforesaid report and statement of accounts, cause a copy therefore to be laid before the National Assembly.”

Amendment put, and agreed to.

3.55 p.m.

Clause 13, as amended, agreed to and ordered to stand – part of the Bill.

Clause 14 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 15.

Mr. Green: I beg to insert the words “Consumption of Tax” after the words “Customs Duty” in Clause 15.

Amendment that

The words ‘Consumption of Tax the words “Customs Duty”.

put, and agreed to.

Clause 15, as amended, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 16, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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Assembly resumed.

Bill reported with amendments, read the Third time and passed.

CLADTIDINGS ASSEMBLY GUYANA MISSION (INCORPORATION)

BILL 1975

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to incorporate the Glad tidings Assembly Guyana Mission (Incorporation) Act 1975.” [Mr. Van Sluytman]

Mr. Van Sluytman: Mr. Speaker, a few months ago I recommended to the Assembly a Petition from the President and Secretary of the Glad tidings Assembly Guyana Mission seeking to have introduced in the Assembly a Private Bill to incorporate the Church in Guyana. The Assembly had granted leave for the promoters to proceed and, as required by our standing Orders, the Bill was published in three issues of the Official Gazette and of the newspapers. The Bill which is now before the Assembly merely seeks to incorporate the Church in Guyana. I, therefore, now move that it be read a Second time and commend it to the Assembly.

Mrs. Willems seconded.

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without amendment read the Third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop):
Your Honour, may I inform this House that the Order Paper for the next Sitting to be held on Thursday, 3rd April, 1975 has been circulated. I wish accordingly to move the adjournment of this Assembly to that date, 3rd April, 1975.

Adjourned accordingly at 4.05 p.m.
