

THE

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORTS

/Volume 9/

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1982) OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

---

6th Sitting

2 p.m.

Friday, 1982-04-02

---

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (77)

Speaker (1)

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

Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (64)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P.,

Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P.

Vice-President, Works and Transport

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,

Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,

Vice-President, Public Welfare

Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P.,

Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations

Senior Ministers (10)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,

Minister of Higher Education

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.,

Minister of Regional Development

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,

Minister of National Development

\*Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.

Minister of Trade and

Consumer Protection

\*Non-elected Member

\*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.

Minister of Energy and Mines

\*Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,

Attorney General and Minister of Justice

\*Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,

Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent – on leave)

\*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,

Minister of Agriculture

\*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,

Minister of Home Affairs

\*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,

Minister of Education

Ministers (8)

Cde. U. E. Johnson, M.P.,

Minister of Co-operatives

Cde. J. N. Maitland-Singh, M.P.,

Minister, Consumer Protection, in the  
Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,

Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,

Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of  
Economic Planning and Finance

Cde. R. E. Williams, M. P.,

Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry  
of Agriculture

\*Cde. Y. V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,

Minister, in the Office of the Prime Minister

\*Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,

Minister, Office of the President

\*Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M. P.,

Minister, Health, in the Ministry of Public Welfare

\*Non-elected Member

Ministers of State (3)

Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.

Minister of State for Culture, in the  
Ministry of Education, Social Development  
and Culture

Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,

Minister of State for Youth and Sport,  
in the Ministry of National Development

\*Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P.,

Minister of State for Construction, in the  
Ministry of Works and Transport

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,

Parliamentary Secretary, Women's  
Affairs and Housing

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,

Parliamentary Secretary, Education,  
Social Development and Culture

Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,

Parliamentary Secretary, Foreign Affairs

Other Members (23)

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.

Cde. M. Armogan, M.P.

Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.

Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.

Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.

Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P. – (Absent)

Cde. E. B. Davidson, M.P.

Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.

Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.

Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.

\*Non-elected Member

Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.

Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.

Cde. A. McRae, M.P.

Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.

Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.

Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.

Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.

Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.

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

Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.

Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.

Cde. H.B. Walcott-Nascimento, J.P., M.P.,

Government Chief Whip

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

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

Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam)

Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)

Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)

Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

- (i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

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

Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P.,

Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P.

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

Minority Chief Whip

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.

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

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

Cde. I. Basir, M.P.

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

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

(ii) United Force (2)

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

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

OFFICERS

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

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

PRAYERS

1982-04-02

14:00 – 14:05 hrs

14:00 hrs

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Report was laid:

Annual Report of the Guyana Police Force

for the year 1978. [The Minister of Home Affairs]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURES FOR 1982

BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed the debate on the Motion moved by the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1982.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: Your Honour, the Assembly has listened not without interest to the Budget Speech delivered by the Hon. Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance. Also, we have listened to a number of other contributions hopelessly trying to exonerate the Guyana Government, not only to bolster the tottering group in office by shifting the blame of our woes to the alleged world crisis and to other extraneous and irrelevant issues, but some even attempted to lay the blame on the workers, the helpless people, upon whom they now call to adjust the unprecedented catastrophe facing this country. One Hon. Member went on to accuse those of my colleagues who spoke of mismanagement and who sought to put the situation in proper perspective, who criticised the mismanagement of the economy and so on. Well, well!

National Assembly

14:05 hrs

(Cde. Ram Karran continues)

It is not the first time that we have had citizens by registration prattling about patriotism. You remember your honour the ex-member Mr. Bancroft who used to prattle about patriotism and so on. He has probably gone back to Barbados. We do not expect to be lectured about patriotism except to say that patriotism has always been the last refuge of this congress and also to point out Your Honour that courts can turn like worm in any direction we must observe these things.

Let me observe for the ninth time in response to the Vice President for Public Welfare – that his reference to the not a cent more is not only inaccurate but dishonest. Inaccurate in the sense that it was in reference to the refusal of the then Government to make increases to the super scales after and to say that inaccurate in the sense that the then Government increased the key board scales by 24c to unskilled workers but refused to give a penny more and that is what the quotation should be – a penny more to the super scales.

The Senior Ministers like the Chief Works and Hydraulics Engineer and so on and this Government was catering for that class of people and that is why they are in so much of a mess. The P.P.P. at that time in order to give sustainance, support and sympathy to the under paid workers increased the Geba Award by 34c a day, but this Government as we all know has acted upon retrenchment, even in this House, I don't know, I can see so few people I don't know if retrenchment has started here yet. It could. This is where it should start. It was in relation to that – and no amount of distortions by the P.N.C. can save them from the wrath of the people.

We have not come into this chamber, fast becoming a house of horrors to hear lectures from our friends from across the table. There are millions, they go into the four corners and they tell it like it is. All we want to do is to follow that slogan and to tell it as it is and that is what my friend Cde. Narbada Persaud and others who spoke last evening were trying to do. They don't want to hear it as it is. They don't want to hear it as it was. They still want to distort – and that is what all this emotional talk of patriotism as if they are more patriotic than anybody else in this country, registered citizens as they are.

We want to examine this monumental blunder created by the gang who sit opposite. We are certain that they have played the fool too long and are not prepared to examine these things after a lapse of seventeen years. When are they going to examine them in proper prospective, if not herein this chamber. Who would believe that while we are unable to provide food for our children that an Hon. Member will get up in this Assembly and say that the people are

treasonable when they put up the slogan 'no food, no work'. Other tyrants have tried that. I remember one famous name Marie Antoinette, when the people ask for bread she said to give them cake. We all know the fate of Marie Antoinette. There are other tyrants who came beside her. I hope Veronica Antoinette and the rest of them who are tempted to shout such slogans should remember the past. History is not kind to tyrants.

We did not come here to crack jokes, we did not come here to hurl abuse on the opposite benches. We want to examine the situation and that is what my friend sought to do yesterday when the cheap emotional slogans were thrown out.

Yesterday at the Fisheries Department the workers were not allowed to go into their work place in order to retrieve their belongings, their properties, pens, papers, umbrellas and so on. An armed Police stood at the gate and they were handed their letters of retrenchment and even here we don't know some people were dismissed, some were retrenched, some were thanked for their services and so on. Even the Central Government doesn't seem to know what has taken place. The Ministries of Works said your services are no longer required, some other Ministries have said that you are dismissed. With all the agreements that existed between the several unions and the Government Corporations and the Government not one reference is made about your superannuation, your pension, even the measles months' pay that came out on the radio and in the newspaper.

I saw some of these letters, even centrally they don't seem to know what they are doing and my friend seems to joke about it. A report has been going around that a young woman committed suicide. I have not been able to check the accuracy of that, but I know even if the 17,000 of them commit suicide that my friend opposite who have got the notoriety of Jim Jones colony in the North West will not be moved one bit, so long as their pockets are filled, so long as they have bread to eat, so long as they have rice and so long as they have the means. The holocaust at Jonestown provided over by the P.N.C. is nothing new for them to see thousands of people, thousands of workers and their families take cyanide or some suitable material to ease them of the burden and the bad name. What does it matter?

We the four union movements affiliated to the T.U.C. have invited attention to have criticised the P.N.C. for subverting every single institution in this country. Every one of them they have subverted and some of those who rode on the high tide of political patronage yesteryear are themselves now beginning to bellyache very quietly as they see their thick and thin tumbled out of what they regarded as safe positions. That is going to snowball, more and more people will get to recognise and realise the nature of this Government headed by the P.N.C. and in a short time I think that as they ponder upon the large number of people thrown upon the



1982-04-02

14:05 – 14:15 hrs

garbage heap of unemployment in this country that those people will recognise the true nature of those who speak sweet words to them but yet have a deep knife in the people.

The T.U.C. itself a collaborator with the P.N.C. has been forced to adopt a report very critical of the decision to retrench, and I hope that my friend the Hon. Ayatollah – I beg your pardon. I nearly said – [Interruption].

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, yesterday, there were no insinuations and recriminations and abuse. I would ask you to moderate the inferences that can be drawn from many of the things you have been saying. Please let us keep the standard like it was yesterday. Nobody interfered. Nobody heckled and the proceedings went on very smoothly. Now, I am not telling you how you must present your case. Please understand that.

National Assembly

14:15 hrs

Cde. Ram Karran: You seem to have started the heckling, Your Honour. However, I was referring to the bearded, the Hon. Minister of Finance.

The Speaker: If you continue one more time like that I am not going to listen to you. You can walk out because that is what you are accustomed to doing.

Cde. Ram Karran: You don't listen to me. It is all right. You can listen to yourself. What do you mean by that? I was referring to the Hon. Minister, Mr. Sallahuddin. It is a very difficult name to call.

The Speaker: You called him a bearded man.

Cde. Ram Karran: Hasn't he got a beard, sir? I am clean-shaven.

The Speaker: That is not a proper manner of address.

Cde. Ram Karran: All right. I will call him the Hon. Sallahuddin. If I make a mistake and call him the Ayatollah, don't blame me. The Hon. Member appears like an Ayatollah. However, I apologise for that.

I was saying that the four union movement in the T.U.C., in which the Hon. Minister sits as a member of the Executive Committee – he sits here as a Member of this House and as a Minister. I would be glad to see how the Hon. Minister votes when the division is taken on this measure, because he sat on the T.U.C. and agreed with the T.U.C. that there shall be no retrenchment and indeed that if retrenchment was forced upon the T.U.C. by the Government it would be on a certain principle which principle has been rejected by the Government and by the Hon. Minister for Public Welfare.

We talk about the institutions of this country that have been subverted, starting out with this one of which Your Honour was the High Priest. I beg your pardon, sir – the Chairman. The President at the formation of this Constitution – you know, sir, and everyone in this country knows that this Constitution, this new Constitution, about which we have prattled all over the country, is a Constitution that offers the right to work. Where is that right today when thousands are going on the scrap heap of unemployment? Where are those who have been talking about the right to work? We have no right to work; we have no right to pension; we have no right to gratuity; we have no right to anything although we have solemn agreements all over the place. When are these agreements going to be observed?

We have a precedent in this country that any other Government would be ashamed of. It is not the first time that this Government is doing something of which other Governments, or even a Guyana Government, would be ashamed. In 1977, we signed an agreement, after long negotiations that we are going to have a situation where the workers will get \$14 a day based on a three-year period - \$8, \$11 and \$14 – and they reneged from that agreement, allegedly because the people did not perform. Is that what they are saying now?

I heard my friend say that we are not debating this Motion by the Hon. Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, on the Westminster model. We are doing it on another model, a model in which solemn agreements made can be forfeited. We are discussing, for the sake of discussing, and all the solemn promises made – Land to the Tiller, the Right to Work, everyone has the right to work. When we sought to point out that what was being said at that time was mere gibberish, it was alleged that we were unpatriotic and some people now say we are unpatriotic. But that is the reality of the situation that my friends on the opposite side who administer this Government are not prepared to do anything. They cannot do it. They are bankrupt of ideas. That is why they say we are unable to produce.

Why are we unable to produce? Why are the production figures of last year and this year, as far as it seems to me, going to be dwarfed by the production figures of a few years ago? Why is it? How is it we could produce more in 1979 than we can produce in 1981? Can't my friends see that the absence of democracy is one of the main reasons for that? Can't they see that discrimination, rampant discrimination, throughout the country is responsible for that and then they say that people are bordering on the treasonable acts when they say "No food, No Production". It is the absence, the withdrawal, to which all those who sat on that ... of a new Constitution have contributed and they ought to examine themselves to see that the situation is adjusted.

"Not one grain of rice!" So the calypso says. That applies not to Venezuela. That applies here. The Guyanese people cannot get a grain of rice. I don't know if they get the cuirass. Not one grain of rice relates to the production. It does not apply to Venezuela. Of course, we know that the calypsonians cannot sing a calypso critical of the Guyana Government. They would not get on the air waves. They would have to flee. The tolerance that one can see in Trinidad and Jamaica and Barbados where they can make ditties and so on, creative things, cannot apply here. They have to sing a cuirass against the Government but make it mean Venezuela. What we get on the radio as calypsos is "Bruck up their foot", "Lock them up". They must have a regard for policemen. That is the kind of calypso you can get. That is the creation our people are capable of. But I tell you that "not one grain of rice" must be read in the

We all know that when the workers heard, when the T.U.C. heard, when the trade union representing the public servants heard about this thing they began to ask: What about this retrenchment? The politicians who make the policy are reported to have said, “We don’t know. You must ask the Permanent Secretaries. They will tell you.” The Permanent Secretaries! They were looking for more scapegoats. The poor Permanent Secretaries are getting it in the neck. But we all know how the ministerial system works whether it works on the Westminster model or works under the new Constitution in Guyana. The Permanent Secretaries are not supposed to take the blows. I do not know what sort of a Public Welfare Vice President it is who does not know, but the workers are knowing now and they are knowing it with a great deal of pain, which pain is not reflected in the faces of those who sit opposite and who, to my mind, are responsible for the collapse, the total collapse, of the economy, the total collapse of any respect that any decent minded person can have.

I listen to the radio sometimes, and we are told by the supporters of the Government that the things that are produced here are not the substitutes, that the things we bring from abroad are the substitutes and therefore you must fill your stomachs with ground provision; you must eat rice; you must eat mung and you must eat urid. These are not substitutes. These are the real things. But when you examine the situation – I am not talking about price. When you go into the markets you will find that those commodities are not available. And the markets are the only places where ground provisions are sold.

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: They are not available to the community. When you go to Guyana Stores urid is not available, neither is mung available, whether it is a substitute or has the food value. Rice is not available. As I said just now, not a grain of rice is available. One does not mind, but one must examine if this Government is capable of producing, of giving the incentive and directive and the environment in which people can produce these things before they decide to put the ban on peas, milk and oil. I wonder if the Minister or the Vice-President will at a later stage get up and tell us what the substitute for milk is. I know they say you must go to breast feeding but all of us cannot partake of that. There must be some substitute for milk.

I want to draw to the attention of this House and to tell the pretty Minister of Consumer Protection – I hope that she does not need some protection herself – the discrimination that takes place at Enterprise.

National Assembly

14:25 hrs

[Cde. Ram Karran continues]

Cde. Ram Karran: I wish to draw the attention of the pretty minister – what they call her? [Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection]. I do hope she does not need some protection herself [Laughter] – to the discrimination that takes place at Enterprise where there are about one dozen shops. Yesterday in the distribution of rice, two shops were given rice. My friends do not want to talk about the past, they do not even want to talk about it as it is, but this is how it is. The information which I have is very accurate and I am at the stage where I am going to appeal to the pretty minister, or appeal to anybody to say that discrimination must stop. If it does not stop it is going to get worse.

Sir, I just want to draw attention to the fact that in Cuba, which is allegedly an ally of the P.N.C. Government, friend of the P.N.C. Government, how they treat their workers at this time when allegedly the price of sugar is falling according to their slogans, that the sugar workers are going to get more pay. It is an article in the Sugar World on page 12. ‘Wage increases for Sugar Industry’, and it goes on to say – I do not want to read the whole thing, but to point out that in the Caribbean and other areas where people take their business seriously, efforts are made to satisfy the needs of the people who have to produce. These are the most important people. They are more important than Ministers and even Vice-Presidents and even Presidents and Speakers. Those are the people who produce and unless we pay some attention to them we cannot move any further.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran one minute more.

Cde. Ram Karran: Let me tell my friends that if they are not prepared to change and to change quickly, time will over come them and the tolerance and patience and the understanding or whatever the workers have had for them is going to change and the workers are going to bundle them out as unceremoniously as other tyrants have been bundled out. The time is short. It is up to you.

[Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Naraine.

The Vice-President, Works and Transport (Cde. Naraine): Cde. Speaker, I believe for many years to come, the arguments taking place in this Assembly will continue as to why at this

particular point of time, and as it appears, Guyana and the rest of the world are going through this very serious economic crisis. A crisis where it has become necessary to take measures which are not pleasant, measures which involve the retrenchment of workers and involving the closing of many industries. It is a period when one has to seek solutions, not necessarily in world terms because the world may be suffering from a common disease, in our own individual environment. We have in our own country to seek solutions to our particular problems, looking at the peculiar and circumstances facing us. I think, Cde. Speaker, the important thing which has come out of the budget presented in this Assembly by the Cde. Vice-President of Economic, Planning and Finance, is the truthful presentation which he has made; a presentation which did not seek to hide any of the issues that will be facing the nation, a presentation that was not fearful of criticisms which will come from the Minority Parties in the Assembly or from other people in the country, whether they be members of opposition groups or other organisations or within our own ranks. We anticipate that people will talk, but I think that when we are under going circumstances as they are now, we must allow people to talk. We must allow people to talk, we must allow them to express their view, we must allow them in their own way to analyse their peculiar circumstances, and we must encourage them to come forward with points of view that will assist us all to clear up the economic situation which we are facing. We feel that by putting the truth to the nation, it is the least we can do.

The researchers and the politicians and many others will for a long time be analysing all the various circumstances, all the deeds-good, and evil-done sometimes by our own people, making our foreign exchange what it is today. All of these will come out in the wash in due course. I feel and it is the feeling of the Government and party – the People's National Congress – that as we have done in the past we must meet out to the people and discuss circumstances be there a time of rejoicing or be there a time of looking together at our difficulties. Any government, and I would say not only people who are presently in government but I think any honest politician, must have people at heart because if you call yourself a politician and you do not have people at heart then I think you are in the wrong job. We may adopt difficult courses, we may adopt difficult techniques in arriving at solutions to what may be considered as problems prevailing, we may be asking for certain sacrifices to be taken and certain measures to be taken, but I do not think any leader whether he is on the Government's side or on the other side, would wish to be part of a political system whereby the people, the masses, have to suffer in any way. We hope that the circumstances facing us today will not be of any long duration. However, because although it had become necessary for certain people to be removed from certain positions, certain jobs, steps have already been taken and we have been seeing advertisements appearing in the papers whereby more and more job opportunities are going to be available in other fields, in other types of activities and so those who may be put out of a job now will find some alternative employment. I think it is equally important also, Cde. Speaker, to draw

1982-04-02

14:25 – 14:35 hrs

attention that there are circumstances being created whereby many people who have a trade and who can do something for themselves may be able to be self-employed, may be able to do work within their own community whereby they can earn a living. Today we have got the financial machinery and other facilities which will be made available so that people can rehabilitate themselves. They can come back into employment or the production field and they will be able to contribute towards the welfare of themselves and the country.

1982-04-02

14:35 – 14:45 hrs

National Assembly

14:35 hrs

(Cde. S. Narine continues)

Cde. Speaker, to give the impression that things have always been bad is to make us all look like little fools, here and outside. Things have not been always bad. The standard and quality of life in this country have improved tremendously. Whether you are old or young, but certainly those who are a little older will remember the type of road that existed in this country. Out of a programme of construction and reconstruction of new roads we have better road facilities to travel on. In the hinterland we have seen new roads constructed where our miners and foresters can now go by road to Puruni. You can go by road to Mabura Hill where a large forestry complex is being established. We have seen in the hinterland more airstrips constructed whereby comrades living in the hinterland can get facilities to transport inputs and food stuff in and out of those areas. Bartica was at one time accessible by water and later on by air. Today Bartica is accessible by land transport as well. We have seen the Parika/Adventure steamer. From a little steamer, there used to be one small steamer once a day and today we have two large steamers operating there. In the past we had one passenger/cargo vessel that went to North West District. Today we have a passenger vessel - a brand new one and we also have a brand new cargo vessel operating in that area. The same applies to the Berbice river. Those steamers cater not only for dry cargo but for refrigerated cargo as well as liquid cargo. So things have improved.

Things have improved in the cultural field. We have the best National Cultural Centre in the Caribbean and people, not only locally but even Comrades from outside, are very proud that we have been able to achieve the construction of a building like that. In this way we are able to promote cultural activities. We have a Sports Hall when we did not have one before. We have been able to transform cow pastures and swamps into beautiful National Parks whereby our people can go for relaxation and education and recreation. We have many multilateral schools constructed. We have many primary schools constructed. There has been all round improvement in life in this country. Therefore if today we are going through some kind of problem, economic or otherwise, we should not look at this as Doomsday. We should look at this with faith and courage that we will overcome. We will proceed as we have been proceeding in the past two decades in the development and reconstruction of our country.

We must be seized with the seriousness of the situation. This is where I agree, not necessarily with the content of what is being put by the Minority Group, but in terms of the seriousness of the situation. We must be seized with the seriousness of the situation. We are not going to solve the situation facing our country by trying to disillusion the people that there is nothing to look forward to and things are going from bad to worse, that we are going down never



to come up when in fact this Party, the People's National Congress, the Government that has been leading for so many years have led this country forward not downward. [Applause]

Cde. Speaker, I think if the Minority Party hopes to assist in this serious situation, if they as a political group have the people at heart, then rather than trying to get the people to behave in what may be described as disorderly, not an orderly manner, not with courage, not with determination to recover, not with the spirit of self reliance in terms of helping themselves to come out of the difficult times then they will not be doing the job for which they have identified themselves. I have said, Cde. Speaker, that over the years the People's National Congress Government has added to the national assets of this country enormously. While we are going through a period of shortage of foreign currency, foreign exchange and maybe even shortage of local funds so that we can take on new large projects we have to place emphasis tremendously on preservation and maintenance and make optimum use of the assets which we possess. What I mean, Cde. Speaker, is that we must whether they are equipment, whether they are human resources, whether they are natural resources, whether they are financial resource we must put these resources to use whereby they will give us the greatest benefit and use for the development of the entire nation. Bearing this in mind I think the Budget has pointed out that there will be the need for re-organisation of money, ministries and corporations.

The Ministry of Works and Transport has been undertaking this kind of re-organisation whereby we can manage the assets available to the Ministry for better use. Of course there are projects which are being constructed at this time but emphasis is being given to maintenance and preservation and putting to optimum use these facilities that are available. In this way the Ministry which at the beginning of 1981 comprised of 15 divisions will be consolidated into 5 divisions by the end of 1982. For instance the Survey Division of that Ministry will now be consolidated with the Survey Divisions in the Ministry of Agriculture, Land and Hydraulics. So that all surveys will now be under one Ministry in one department. The Ministry of Works has four companies which will be doing work by contract. Now, Cde. Chairman, in the past we had officers and workers who were paid to be in the Ministry and to do work principally for the Ministry and sometimes for other departments. Whether there were jobs to be done or not they continued getting paid just the same. Obviously when we are going through times like this kind of situation cannot be allowed to persist. Therefore the Companies will be doing work not only for the Ministry but also they will be seeking work where work is available. They will have to be competitive. Work will not be given to them on a platter. Therefore, they have to bid for work. They have to be efficient and they have to have a greater level of accountability because they are registered under the private Companies Act although they are owned by the State. They have to be cost conscious. They have to, pay their own way. No longer will money be voted in

1982-04-02

14:35 – 14:45 hrs

the Estimates for persons whether they execute work or not. Unless they can keep their Company in existence by being efficient then they will find themselves in great difficulties.

We have heard the Cde. Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, talking about the subsidy to Transport and Harbours Department. It is proposed this year to reduce it substantially to a point where it may not be necessary for the Government to vote money to subsidise that department. What is happening is that the harbour dues which normally went to the Treasury will now be available to the Transport and Harbours Department.

National Assembly

14:45 hrs

(Cde. S. Naraine continues)

This may be over a million dollars. So in looking at it, as in the past the Government voted about \$6½ million, now the Transport and Harbours would, have to make up roughly about \$5½ million out of greater efficiency by generating with the new ships and the other ships they have and by generating more business by seeking markets not only in Guyana but in the Caribbean. We have three ships running the Caribbean route. They can transport rice, fertiliser and other things needed in the Caribbean and coming from the Caribbean. They must be able to earn more for themselves and in doing so they must be able to reduce this subsidy.

Obviously, Cde. Speaker, as this subsidy is eliminated that money that normally went to pay for the difference between earning and spending of the Transport and Harbours, will be available for other types of development in the country. This is why I say that we on this side are very optimistic that these days, that may look lean now, will not continue for any length of time. But this optimism and this determination and this effort to overcome and succeed can find some difficulties if we do not get all the political, all the trade union and all the other forces to move forward with that same kind of spirit and determination, to overcome and to succeed, to explore and to seek out new avenues based on savings that we will get from places like the subsidy that was given in the past to Transport and Harbours Department to undertake new enterprises whereby our people will get additional employment.

In this country there is a lot of machinery all over the place, machinery which has been lying idle because of spare parts problems and foreign exchange problems. We in this year will again have to use our resourcefulness. We have to encourage our operators and mechanics to make sure that our equipment is well looked after, well operated, whereby there is no wastage of fuel and other things needed for the operation of this equipment.

But more than this, many workshops are going up – there is one at Coldingen, there is a private workshop being put up by the Jardine brothers on the East Coast, there is another one... going up, at Beterverwagting. Guynec is expanding their foundry and you have heard what the Vice-President of Economic Planning and Finance mentioned in this Budget presentation that more economic means will be found for the warehousing of spare parts and the distribution of spare parts in the country. So we would have to use wisely these resources which we have. Where in the past we used to throw parts in the dust bin or in the scrap heap, we have to use the facilities available to us whereby many parts can be re-built and re-used. This will give tremendous saving in foreign exchange and that foreign exchange can be utilised for other forms of expansion and development.

This does not mean, of course, that we will not be doing developmental projects. The Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance mentioned the sum that will still be going in development and developmental projects. Of course, we will continue work and finish the East Bank Berbice road whereby many acres of land which were inaccessible can benefit from proper road transportation. Already they are being put into use and this will happen in an increasing manner. With this access the produce can reach the market, so this road would be a tremendous boost to the development of that area. With the development of those many acres of land, employment opportunities or opportunities for one to earn a living and to produce will also be given birth. While we are doing this, many of the projects that have been held up for want of funds or different reasons, like the customs building, will be continuing. If you pass there now you will see action and that building is going ahead. There are other projects like that, incomplete projects, and this year we will be spending funds to finish those projects so that we will not have the capital lying idle. Also, finishing those projects like the Customs building, we will be giving up rented premises which can then be put to other uses. We will also be giving to the Customs Department the kind of facilities they need for the very important work which they are doing.

In telecommunication, we may not be going this year for international dialing; we will just be looking at the many problems that exist in terms of complaints of phones not working properly. The lines are old and need replacing, we will be putting emphasis on this. We will be using the opportunity for training personnel because in many places there is a big turnover of staff, a turnover of people going to other jobs or people moving out of the country in many cases.

The Speaker: Five minutes more.

Cde. Naraine: So we will be trying to improve on the quality of service that presently exist. The new telephone exchange expansion has capacity for several thousand more connections but these will need much additional capital input before we can give those new telephones to customers. We hope to do this in due course but in the meanwhile we will concentrate in giving a better service to those persons, i.e. the present customers, who have telephones.

There is a study on export/imports of the country related to the feasibility study of a deep water harbour. This would be of tremendous advantage to this country, particularly, if we were successful in the exploration taking place in the finding of oil either off-shore or in the Rupununi area. It is not too early to do something like this because from the time you work out how a deep water harbour can be constructed and as long as you can raise the funds to do it, it will take probably three years for construction. So we have to look at these things early.

We have our hydro meteorological service which is very relevant to agriculture hydro-power expansion and air communication and I think many people will agree that this service has been giving a tremendous amount of assistance and guidance to agriculturists in planning their work. It has also given assistance to construction work. So there are many things that will be going on at the present time to clear up economic difficulties.

There are many more things that can be done, things that do not necessarily involve heavy capital expenditure. There are many of our facilities on which capital expenditure has been invested and they are not used to the optimum. We propose later this year to improve on our bus transport. I would be the first one to agree that the bus transport service is not working in the way it should. But as we can get more spares, as we can replace spares and as we can get some additional buses, we hope some time after the middle of this year to improve that service so that people can get to their workplaces and other places not only on time but with a pleasant outlook for the rest of the day.

And so, Cde. Speaker, we on this side do not look at this like Doomsday or days of gloom. We accept that. We have great difficulties to face. Face them we will and succeed we must. [Applause]

National Assembly

14:55 hrs

Cde. Janet Jagan, M.P.: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to deal with some of the social problems arising out of this austere 1982 budget. Many social problems have developed as a result of the poor planning, the mis-management, the high prices, the shortages, the corruption, the extravagance and the exploitation which have heightened and intensified in the last few years.

One of the greatest social problems is housing. Mrs. Bend-Kirton-Holder who spoke yesterday must be complimented for making a heroic effort to make something out of nothing in relation to the subject housing, but I believe that in spite of our being on two different sides of the house both of us as women agree that our people deserve to live under better conditions. Housing conditions in Guyana are atrocious to use a mild word. It is one of the major problems of the people of this country and the Government is doing very little to relieve the situation. It is not possible to find a low rental apartment in Georgetown and the environs in the vicinity of \$120 or \$100 or below. I know because many of my colleagues have been looking for such apartments and they do not exist: with an average income of about \$400 a month which is relatively high a worker cannot afford to pay so much for rent.

So what are the plans of this Government for 1982? Examining them dispassionately it is very little. 312 self help houses, 61 rental apartments, 25 hire purchase houses, 200 houses in Ruimveldt and they told us that 24 houses were completed in Ruimveldt and some lawns here and there which are beyond the resources of the working people. When we come right down to the nitty gritty details of total income, how much for food, how much for clothing, how much for medical, how much for electricity and so on there isn't enough money left in the worker's income to pay out the high repayments required for housing loans and so few workers can meet these repayments. I discussed this matter with many workers. It is impossible! The percentage of expenditure of the current and capital budget allocated for housing is the astronomically small figure of .46%. Not even a half of a percent! .46 of one percent of the expenditure of the total capital and current is that figure and this is what the Vice-President who introduced the budget calls "housing priority". It is nonsense! It can hardly be a priority if they are barely allocating anything to the subject. The plans enunciated in the budget statement are nothing, they cannot relieve the situation.

Obviously the Government is aware of the housing needs because in the 1972-1976 development plan, it had promised 65,000 housing units during a five year period or an average of about 13,000 a year. We all know what happened to those projections. Not even 7,000 new units were produced in the five year period and I include private housing which created more than the Government housing. The result is what we have now in Guyana. We have the slums of Georgetown, in Albouystown, Tiger Bay, Werk-en-Rust, Kitty. We have the slums of New

Amsterdam and Linden and the rural slums. Who spoke yesterday about the clearance of the Hope Estate slums and gave credit to the P.N.C.? What a short memory come people have! We brought the motion many years ago in this Assembly for the removal of the slums at Hope Estate and for the building of new houses.

This was one of the very few motions put by the P.P.P. that ever came to the floor of this House. It was approved but not a blessed thing was done until very recently. We brought it to the attention of this Government and they would do nothing. I remember after it was passed by this House and nothing happened, I remember lead a delegation to Minister Naraine who is a Vice President now and they said yes they will go ahead. Nothing was never done and all those people lived in the most horrible conditions all these years.

We see squatting in the sugar estates because the workers need homes. I don't see anything in the budget about homes in the sugar estates. We have seen workers brutally evicted by officials of this regime. They have been thrown out and had their houses smashed to the ground, they were also beaten with sticks by Police and officials. The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund was created many years ago out of the struggle and the blood of workers. Money is taken from the export of sugar to put in the fund and it was this fund from the workers' blood and from the political guidance of our party that was used for houses for sugar workers'. This whole apparatus for housing has been ruined, destroyed and hands have gone into it and removed the money that was for the sugar workers. From an amount of \$799,196 spent in 1970 for sugar estate housing and that wasn't much, by 1979 it dropped to \$207,808. From 352 houses built for sugar workers in 1970 it has been reduced now to 44 houses for the year 1979.

Is it any wonder that workers have to squat because of the over crowding? Over crowding is a major problem of all workers and specially those who now have to keep their relatives, because where are the unemployed going to live. How will they pay their rents? Yesterday all the notices for dismissal went out. Let me compliment the Government on its most efficient operation in many years. It passed the budget here on Friday and by yesterday the dismissal notices had gone out, very fast.

Over crowding will be on the increase because the 6,000 workers and their families, will have no place to live, some of them will leave the country, some of them might find jobs. But I guarantee at least a few thousand will have to park on their relatives because they would not be able to pay for rent. In order to survive they will have to rely on their families for sustenance.

1982-04-02

15:05 – 15:15 hrs

National Assembly

15:05 hrs

(Cde. J. Jagan continues)

Surely the Government has made no provision to help those who are now unemployed. They receive April's pay to live on and that is it! This Government has not even given a thought to any form of unemployment relief. I spoke to one of the dismissed workers the other day. He had worked in a Ministry. He was employed there for 20 years and he gets one month's pay for April, 1982. He has a wife and five children and he supports his father. I went into some details. He had an income of \$340 from this government, not a very princely sum but at least he was surviving. He pays \$60 a month as rent. He does not know how he is going to pay the rent and he does not know how he is going to buy his food. He does not know anything. I said: "Didn't your employers speak to you about redeployment?" He said that no one said anything to him. They just gave him the letter and that was it. How will he pay for his electricity? What will he do?

I sat here yesterday and I listened to all the bad talk about the socialist states suffering equally from crises like the crisis that is going on in this country. This I know: In the socialist states workers pay somewhere between three to six percent of their income on housing and this includes water, electricity and gas. Food is heavily subsidised and they do not have to pay shocking fees to doctors to get attention. Our workers pay as much as 30 to 70 percent of their income on rent and now electricity is so high that in many instances it accounts for one-sixth of the total income.

I spoke to a worker the other day who visited a doctor. The doctor charged him \$50 for some pills and an injection. He did not even examine the patient. Of course, he gave the wrong diagnosis and the patient had to seek further attention. Such is the plight of the poor in Guyana who are told fairy tales about the free medical service but don't get a free service. They have to pay specialist fees, surgical fees, just to see a doctor. Drugs remain in short supply and they draw exorbitant prices at the drug stores. All of us know this. Sometimes you pay fifty cents for a phensic. What can we expect as regards health when this Government spends 4.6 percent of the total budget, both capital and current, on health? And yet the members of the Government say they are giving these things priority!

The world Military and Social Expenditure publication, publishes statistics for the four most developed countries of Caricom. It pointed out that Guyana spends the least on education and health per capita and the most on the military. Let me give the figures in U.S. dollars per



capita. Barbados spends \$4 per person on military, \$158 on education, \$70 on health. Guyana spends \$10 on military per capita, \$46 on education and \$15 on health. Jamaica spends \$9 on military, \$79 on education and \$34 on health. Trinidad and Tobago spends \$11 on the military, \$140 on education and \$63 on health. So, of the four most developed countries in the Caricom, we spend the least on health and education and the most on the military. That tells an awful lot.

As a result of lowering living standards and growing poverty, malnutrition is going up. The Pan American Health Organisation, P.A.H.O., reported that Guyana has the largest incidence of child malnutrition in the English-Speaking Caribbean. I was listening to the last speaker. He said that the people's standard of living has improved. What I am saying is that the people's standard of living is dropping and dropping rapidly. We know that old age pensioners are suffering. How do you think they can live on \$45 a month? Even if they spent one dollar a day on food, that would leave them \$15 for rent, for electricity, for clothing and what not.

We know – and anyone here can tell me, particularly the women – no one can live in Guyana on a dollar a day for food. It is physically impossible! So what do they do? They rely on their relatives. But the relatives they are relying on are low income people on the whole, because the rich people do not take in their relatives. The richer they get the less interested they are in their poor relatives. I have never seen any rich people, or people who are well off, taking their relatives in their homes but the poor man is the most generous man. When his father, his mother, his uncle, his brother, his cousin, need some place to sleep, they all crowd in on him even if he only has two rooms. These are things that contribute to the lowering standard of living, because if you have a family of six, for example, living on an income of, say, \$380 a month, maybe just making it, and then the mother and father of one parent, or, maybe, both mothers and fathers, cannot exist, the family has to take them in or has to shell out money to assist them. Poor people are very kind that way. I have learnt that. Therefore, by bringing in more people, with all this retrenchment, it means the children in the family are getting less than what they need. They are not getting the milk, the eggs that they need. How can you give every member of the family an egg if you have ten people to feed? That amounts to 10 eggs a day or 10 eggs every three or four days, or 10 eggs once a week. Eggs, as everyone knows, are very expensive.

Old folk need special arrangements for them to obtain their food, when items are in short supply. They cannot stand up in queues. I have spoken to many old people and they have asked me to come to this House and ask the P.N.C. Government to solve the problem because the P.N.C. created it. They say that they cannot stand for hours in the sun and would the P.N.C. work out some distribution system for old folk.

I have talked to many old people. They have to go to the Post Offices to collect their pensions. Some of the Post Offices are demanding that they bring two witnesses to verify who they are before they can uplift their money. Also, when they go to uplift their pensions the Post Offices are frequently poorly administered and there is not enough money. I spoke to an old man who had to go to a Post Office four times to uplift his monthly paltry pension of \$45. So the old folk are asking if this system of payment cannot be improved because it is very hard on them.

The last speaker spoke of our improved living standards. Is that true? Where have we got? Everyone here knows that I came from the United States. I came here 39 years ago. I lived on the third floor of an apartment house and I used to get running water in the toilet, in the shower and in the sink. Now I have to use a bucket and cup over the past four years because I do not know what running water from a shower looks like. I don't see it except when I go abroad. That is the improved standard of living.

I can speak for myself but that is not enough because we know, for one thing, that buckets are very expensive. We know people who live in the country have to get a series of buckets. As soon as their children come from school they have to send them to fetch water. I do not know about all the improvements in the standard of living. I see the people's standard of living going down, down, down. Can a household buy a new stove? Can a household buy a new frying pan? Can it buy even mosquito nets? Members know that mosquito nets cost upwards of \$80 each. Every child should sleep under a mosquito net but how can a family buy the netting out of the restricted incomes and frozen wages which are now the order of the day. So the standard of living is falling.

We once had running water. We once had electricity. I need not tell you because I presume, unless you live in special areas, you know. It may be that members on that side of the House do not suffer from electricity blackouts but I do. I have to work in a very hot room without any electricity and very dark. For the last month or two there is no electricity for about a six-hour day and when I go home there have been blackout and the refrigerator has melted down. That is the high standard of living that we are all enjoying!

National Assembly15:15 hrs

(Cde. J. Jagan continues)

We go to the stores and the things we would like to buy, we cannot buy. Can a worker buy a frying pan? Can he buy six plates? He can't afford it. It would take such a hunk out of his monthly salary that he would have to do without food. So the higher prices for essentials and the freezing of wages, and the retrenchment of thousands of workers create harsh conditions for living. War – then what existed? And this is a very important point, because it is one thing for people to enjoy a particular standard of living and then to cut down that standard of living. This is one of the reasons Guyanese are very angry today with how the P.N.C. has handled the economy, because they cannot live as the once lived before. I am not talking about going to hotels and dancing and discos and all that. I am talking about straight living where you can't buy sheets. A sheet for a bed is as much as \$60. A pillow case could be \$20 or \$25. How can you keep a house going? And I would say this: If it were not for the fact that Guyanese have generous relatives overseas, many of our Guyanese would be in rags and barefooted today because they can't buy the shoes, and they can't buy the clothes. The people of Guyana are being assisted to a great deal by the relatives who have left and who are assisting, in many cases supporting them in the country.

While the wages are frozen, everything goes up. The retrenched worker I spoke to yesterday told me he earned an income of \$360 a month. He pays a rent of \$60, he pays electricity of \$50. That is no joke. Fifty dollars out of an income of \$360, and also having to feed himself and his wife and five children. Electricity fees are now exorbitant. We are paying water rates. Our transportation has gone up. Fuels for the stoves whether it is kerosene or gas is hard to get and high-priced. It is a hassle for people to live. You have to go out and spend the half-day looking for kerosene. You spend about three days looking for gas. You have to spend hours trying to find a parcel of soap powder or soap flakes. I am a housewife, I know. You have to go about ten different places and ask: Do you have salt today? No, none today. Well, forget about rice. Forget about flour. Forget about margarine. Forget about those things. But you can't even get soap flakes. You have to hustle all over the city if you want to buy a pound of salt. That is what life is. People have to spend their time on those things and they are worn out and frustrated. Look at our transportation system. It has been ruined. The Government admitted that they made a mistake. But what is the point of admitting that they have made a mistake? That is not self-criticism. They are just trying to pretend, we are telling all as it is and that is it, but they are not trying to correct. Self criticism means to correct what you did wrong. They are not correcting anything. They scrapped the railway now we are in trouble. We can't maintain the buses. They have no proper maintenance system. They can't get parts. Then the buses are

all pulled off the road when the P.N.C. has a function and they have to rent a crowd. We have to say that they are renting a crowd because that is all they are doing, to try to prove that they have a lot of support. If they did not provide the buses for the people and take them off the roads, they would not get anyone at their functions. They know it as everyone else knows it. But people punish. I have seen hundreds of people stranded on the roads while the transportation system has been shifted to the National Park or whatever it is they are renting a crowd for.

In this Budget statement not one word was said, not even a word was uttered about the problems of the Amerindian population of Guyana. The oppressed Amerindian population which is pushed right to the bottom of the social and economic scales. They are not second class citizens, they are third class citizens. Has the regime ever examined the startling poverty facing the Amerindians of Guyana. I do not think so. But we have, we know that there are many who live on cassava and salt, that is when they can get the salt. They do not even send medicated salt to the hinterland, to the interior to stave off malaria, and that is why there is now an increase in the incidence of malaria. We know too, that there are various reasons why Amerindians react or the reaction is very rapid when they become ill. When disease hit them they die rapidly and one of the various reasons is –

The Speaker: Five minutes more.

Cde. J. Jagan: because their nutrition is so poor, they have no money. The Government does not help them. The Government has no system of supporting their industries. They have to buy goods, they come by air and are sold at exorbitant prices in the shops, that is if they have the money to buy them. There is no support to bring them goods on a subsidise basis by air to the city so that they can compete and they can be sold. There is nothing done to help them – forget about medical – there is nothing much there. They are hardly given any assistance, but there is no plan that I have heard of to improve the economic status of the Amerindian people. They are the most under-privileged discriminated and persecuted people in this country. The social ills resulting from unemployment and poverty and lack of recreational facilities lead to increase crime, a growing exodus of our population, malnutrition, and great dissatisfaction and frustration of the youths and people of Guyana. Mr. Chandi Singh said that we are on a stormy sea in a leaking boat, and we should all hang on together to bring this ship to port. But who made the leaks? To get the people to bail out the water and man the sail and get the ship safely to port you need a new captain. One that can unite – not disunite the people. One that can, inspire the people to work together for the common good of the nation and one who can chart the passage to port intelligently and cleverly. In this vital task the PNC has failed. We need a new captain and crew and this the People's Progressive Party can provide. We have the ability, we have the confidence of the working people. We proved that not once but twice. [Applause]

The Minister, Health, in the Ministry of Public Welfare (Cde. Van-West Charles): Cde. Speaker, we meet at a time when the entire world is in economic turmoil and as stated by the Cde. Vice President in his Speech, Guyana has its economic difficulties. The pathogenesis of our economic problem has been traced in the Vice President's speech and thus is clearly spelt out. The necessary therapeutic approach which must be employed. Thus in the field of nutrition we feel that any country that is about to strive to ensure an adequate nutritional status for its people must at best ensure that gastronomic independence, must be a hall mark in its developmental strides. We in Guyana have seen attempts by the reactionary elements on the other side to fashion our taste, our cultural attitudes and thus attempting to make our people dependent mentally on imported food items. Cde. Speaker, my parliamentary colleagues on the other side of the Assembly have sought to confuse our people but have failed as they mentioned when they spoke of split peas, a legume which is not produced in Guyana and then, we observed another member of the Minority calling on the Government for an anti-imperialist stand on which our track record is well known. There seems to be, Cde. Speaker, some amount of ideological schizophrenia on the part of the Minority. In our world today self reliance is the name of the game.

1982-04-02

15:25 – 15:35 hrs

National Assembly

15:25 hrs

(Cde. Van West Charles)

The World Health Organisation in 1978 on looking at the international situation adumbrated the primary health care programme as part of the survival for developing countries such as Guyana. Thus, Cde. Speaker, we have embarked on a programme of involving our communities in health care systems. If I may digress for a minute, the previous speaker has demonstrated an improvement and I would like to complement my colleague, Cde. Corrica who is responsible for culture and this dramatic upsurge in our society. It has been an exercise in theatrics. Cde. Ramkarran also mentioned about our lack of concern for the workers and he referred to the sugar world when he mentioned what Cuba has been doing for the sugar workers. I have lived in Cuba and we know that every society is different. There is an increase in wages in terms for sugar workers in Cuba but at the same time we witnessed that citizens have to pay for nursery education. We see in Guyana the outpatients care. Drugs are provided free whereas they are not provided free. But you sought to confuse. You are dishonest.

The Speaker: You cannot say that.

Cde. Van West Charles: I apologise. We have embarked on involving our community in our health delivery system by the introduction of our ... programme providing and encouraging our women to use what is good for their children and that is their breast. Despite economic difficulties over the past year we have seen a considerable improvement in our health situation in Guyana especially in relation to the doctor population. On the Essequibo Coast, for example we have seen an increase in the number of doctors. We have seen an increase in the number of specialists in our country. For example, in the area of neurology, orthopaedics, urology. Our main referral hospital, that is the Georgetown Hospital has established an efficient 24 hour service in an Accident and Emergency department with back up facilities of X-ray and laboratory.

Last year we declared the International year of the Disabled during which we witnessed efforts being made to ensure that the disabled take their rightful place in our society. As a result of Government's continued interest a Director of Rehabilitation has already been appointed and suitable accommodation for the disabled is being sought at the present moment. Cde. Speaker, this decade has been declared the decade for water and sanitation. To this end the Government has intensified its efforts to ensure that restaurants, liquor restaurants and eating houses have improved sanitation facilities. This, Cde. Speaker, is being done by direct cooperation between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health. Notwithstanding the efforts of our officers

we are collaborating with a social and religious organisation is an effort to advocate our communities. Cde. Speaker, within another two weeks we shall witness the commencement of the cleaning and dredging of our Sussex Street canal. This investment is ample proof of Government's commitment to preventative aspects of health.

In an effort to improve the water supplies system the Guyana Water Authority has placed log books in health centres throughout the length and breadth of Guyana. This move is an attempt to ensure that breakages are attended to immediately. In any system such as ours the human resources are important and thus we have to ensure they are utilised efficiently. To this end we have therefore recognised five levels of care within the health system. Level 1 represents the care provided at health posts in a community by a part-time community health worker. A community health worker is a person selected by the community to undergo a period of training for three months and is provided with a limited number of drugs on completion of training. The service provided at this level include the promotion of proper nutrition, the promotion of basic sanitation, maternal and child care, health education and treatment of common diseases. Level 1 services are provided only at the hinterland because of geographical situation. Level 2, a higher and more comprehensive level of care is provided at a health centre by better trained and more skilled staff and will include one of the following: health officers, health visitor, medex, midwife, nursing assistant, public health inspector, visiting dentist and dental auxillary class. Level 3 is care provided at district hospitals with a medical officer in charge whenever appropriate. The district hospitals will form the apex of medical care in that particular district with a group of satellite health centres relating and referring patients to it. These three levels of care constitute for us a primary health care programme in Guyana. Level four specifies care provided at regional hospitals providing staff and facilities for major specialities, that of medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology and paediatrics. Level five is the care provided at a central facilities providing services of specialists such as ...

One of the advantages is that patients can be referred from one to another through the level system. In this respect, Cde. Speaker, now patients should not be sent at a high level, for example the regional level without being sent and referred from a lower level. I have mentioned, Cde. Speaker, the Primary Health Care Training Programme. Primary health care is care to the community providing promotive, curative, preventative rehabilitative services accordingly. Since these services reflect and evolve the economic and social conditions of the country and community. They will vary from country and community and will include at least the promotion of proper nutrition adequate supply of safe water, basic sanitation, maternal child care including family planning, immunization against diseases, education concerning preliminary health problems and methods of preventing and controlling them. Cde. Speaker, in Guyana we have already started with the adoption of our primary health care programme as can be seen in our 1982 Budget.

National Assembly

15:35 hrs

(Cde. Van West Charles continues)

Let us look at the situation as is. We know that the crisis is real, but despite the economic situation and despite the utterings of the Minority group, the Government has been able to construct a number of health centres throughout the length and breadth of Guyana. Especially to note, within the North West Region, coming on stream later this year and early next year are the hospitals at Charity, Kumaka. We have witnessed the opening of the Moruca Health Centre. These are facts. This year we will witness the opening of the Mibucuri hospital in the Black Bush area. I ask you, Cde. Speaker, had not the P.N.C. existed, had it not maintained its vanguard position, would Guyana have been able to boast of the achievements throughout the length and breath of Guyana, the achievements which could only have been had as a result of the vanguard position taken by the People's National Congress and Government? [Applause] Achievements are not won by puppets.

We have heard in the Vice President's speech of the Aishalton Hospital Complex. You know of Aishalton. Cde. Speaker, throughout the length and breath of Guyana our record is real proof, read proof of our commitment to our people to development along the socialist line. Our achievements can be easily palpated.

As other speakers have said, the Budget is one which has clearly outlined the pathogenesis and therapeutics that are necessary. Our Party and Government have demonstrated its sanity, its maturity in this economic crisis. Had we lost our sanity and our maturity, the budget would have been rified of taxation but this Budget, as I mentioned, has demonstrated the vanguard role of the People's National Congress and in truth the Budget is a vanguard Budget.

The cost of drugs throughout the world has been rising. In an attempt to ensure that we have an adequate number of drugs we have been looking at our improved procurement policies and notwithstanding, as seen in our Estimates, a decrease over last year we shall have an adequate number of drugs for the expanded referral health care system which is being implemented in Guyana at the moment. Any normal infant possesses a reflex for defence. Defence by a nation is a vital characteristic of nationhood. Thus, the Ministry of Health sees its important role in the defence of the Venezuela administration. Health is a part of defence. We are prepared to ensure that all forms of pathology, be it medical or political, be removed and thus maintaining the integrity of our land. For us, Cde. Speaker, every health worker is a health educator, every citizen is a soldier. With this economic crisis, with a leader like Burnham, with the People's National Congress, we shall overcome.

The Speaker: Cde. Mc Rae.



Cde. Mc Rae: Cde. Speaker, permit me firstly to express my gratitude at the honour of being able to rise in this Assembly on this occasion to support the 1982 Budget as presented in this National Assembly on the 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1982 by Cde. H. D. Hoyte, Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance. It is a task well done, with the usual excellence of a master. This Budget will be noted for its simplicity, clarity and honesty of presentation.

There comes a time in the affairs of men and nations when it is necessary to pause in our pursuits to examine our situation and ourselves, not the impediments and their causative factors, then identify those programmes, schemes and activities, the doing things, that are needed for the progressive continuance of our just pursuits. The Budget has done these things.

Again, when in moulding our destiny we find ourselves in undesirable circumstances, it is a truism that we ourselves must have at some time or other made some contribution to that situation consciously or unconsciously, either by commission or by omission. The Budget has made it clear that we Guyanese as a people must divest ourselves of the fashions and tastes that are inimical to our own development and that the retrieving of our economic position rests in our hands. It has exposed, by putting in simple language for all to understand, the harsh realities of the global environment in which we live, a harshness that has caused the atmosphere of the world to be wrent asunder with the wail of woe from those of the developed world who have lost their jobs through cutbacks in production, which cutbacks have produced a crippling effect on the rest of the world and moreso on poor developing countries like Guyana. Our foreign exchange earning capabilities have been gravely affected by reduced demands and low prices for our goods.

Bauxite and its derived products which are prime foreign exchange earners have been sorely hit. The demand for calcine on the world market has been reduced from 85 percent to 57 percent. Added to this our product, though technically will serve better, is being undersold by \$50 U.S. per ton. There have been cutbacks in aluminum products. Whole plants have been closed down. In steel production where our bauxite derivatives are used in furnaces, there have also been cutbacks. The purchasing of aluminium metals for several manufacturing concerns have dropped drastically. Cde. Speaker, you know while our sales of our goods keep going down and down, the prices of the goods and services we buy keep going up, and up, and up.

1982-04-02

15:45 – 15:55 hrs

National Assembly

15:45 hrs

(Cde. Mc Rae continues)

Cde. Speaker, what a dilemma! But how else could you proceed? Who fix the prices for what we sell? Who fix the prices for what we buy? And yet we have people still wondering at the deficit. If they are still wondering let them approach the P.N.C. for the answer. These are some of the harsh realities of the world in which we live. No matter all the pious preachings and moralising, that is the way the economic war is waged and war it is Cde. Speaker, an all embracing war with no quarter asked and none will be given.

The bauxite industry has this once in ten years not performed as expected for reasons that are understandable but not desirable. It is not within its best interest nor among its ambitions for this state of affairs to be repetitious. It is a nationally owned industry with all that implies. It is an industry that draws its inspiration from the enlightenment flowing from the P.N.C. party and government. It is therefore inherent in that industry, the quality that does not give in or yield to any internally or externally. We will not sit by and mope nor cry on our beer. Things are being done and still more things are to be done to regain our former elevated position of trust and high performance. To extricate ourselves from this undesirable position we will have to work. Not merely hard work, we will have to work with knowledge the kind of knowledge that arms the worker with truth. Truth that enamours, thus enabling the worker to efficiently and effectively combat and nullify the devils' doings of disruption and destruction.

What with supposedly Guyanese citizens going around on the pretext of workers interest, urging workers to stop production and at a time like this for purposes that are foolhardy; to confuse and use workers in an attempt to stop measures that are in the best interest of worker development. Cde. Speaker, is that not a devilish act of commission to confuse workers, distract their productive energies to wasteful dangerous activities. Yes Cde. Speaker, positively so, I humbly submit it is that and more. We will work with knowledge and truth for with knowledge and truth we will gain honesty, we will bring honesty into the work scene, not just legal honesty Cde. Speaker, but moral honesty. Honesty of purpose, honesty of endeavour and out of these prides of accomplishment, accomplishment of task on time must now be a prime concern of the whole work force. Hence we must work with knowledge, not only technical knowledge but knowledge that strengthens the worker to effectively and completely resist the wicked efforts of the pretentious. Knowledge will lead to truth which will bring in honesty.

Cde. Speaker, the budget has been honest and straight forward. One such instance of honesty is recorded on page 24 of the booklet 'Budget 1982' and with your permission may I quote beginning at the top "With a knowledge of these facts, we cannot therefore, in the

circumstances, tolerate any complacency in the operations of the industry. Its very existence is at stake. It should now be clear to all that strikes, irregularities and all such negative activities which can impair the efficiency of Guymine's operations are luxuries that we just cannot afford" and further on it says "all workers involved in the industry must understand that their job security and their general self-interest demand of them on inflexible commitment to a high quality of performance. Low production, lack of cost-consciousness, casualness and general inefficiency are the surest ways to destroy the capacity of the industry to maintain its work force at present levels or, indeed, to sustain its operations at all."

Cde. Speaker, the P.N.C. is a party of the people. It is a party that given due regard to people and respects their indigenous wisdom. This party consults with the people directly. It discusses problems and issues with the objective of maintaining and developing a human relationship so necessary for a working partnership and for unity. This budget again displays the kind of trust and faith that Government has placed in the Guyanese people. It indicates the involvement of the grass roots people and the application of their know-how to on the situations so that together Guyana can regain economic buoyancy and forward economic progress. Thank you Cde. Speaker.

The Speaker: It is now four o' clock, we will take the suspension until four thirty.

1982-04-02

16:30 – 16:40 hrs

National Assembly

16:30 hrs

On resumption –

The Speaker: Cde. Basir.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Speaker, as I listened to this Budget Speech delivered by the Cde. Minister, Cde. Desmond Hoyte, I thought that the 1982 Budget speech was a case of political compromise. From all indications and from what has been said in this Speech it is a question of when and how. Cde. Hoyte's revelation in the Budget Speech is very, very clear and his projection, which is not realistic, is still to be understood. Senior Ministers are saying that the bell with toll and that we are on the brink of economic bankruptcy that the nation is in the red. These are all indication that the economic policy has failed and if the economic policy has virtually failed, then it naturally follows that the Government and the P.N.C. should not procrastinate. The members of the Government should not hesitate to make up their minds. To delay to consider what they should do – if I use a medical terminology – then rigor mortis might set in. So while there is a grace period, I think they should act very quickly on what my colleagues have said from this side of the House and on the advice which has been given to them.

The Budget Speech has again repeated the call for production. I, too, would like to repeat what has been said in this House, namely, that the call for production would be no call unless there is a specific plan and precise objective and a total participation of the working people. This I have said over and over in this House and this has not been adhered to unto this day.

On page 37 of the Budget Speech some points have been mentioned about the possibility of the Tapakuma Project. I would like to inform this House quite clearly that Phase I of the Tapakuma Project will not fulfill the expectations of the Essequibo people, nor will it help the Guyana economy as a whole.

Phase I of the Tapakuma Project is an infrastructural work where the old Tapakuma Project was changed from a gravity drainage scheme to another scheme that will be operated by pump. I may tell you that, in spite of all this big noise about the amount of land that will be available, we might have just 3,200 hectares which are virtually occupied already. The land which can be considered somewhat occupied has been cultivated in some way or the other and even then the drainage system in this particular area is not properly done. I am not an engineer but any layman can see that the pump and the canals, the kokers, are not properly constructed. I will come back to this House and the members will agree with me that that project will not satisfy the wishes of the Essequibo people and fulfill the expectations of this Budget speech. My

parliamentary colleague, Cde. Caldeira, knows very well about that area and can give more information about it if he is honest to tell you.

What about Phase II of the Tapakuma Project? The Members of this Assembly and the nation have been regaled with the news that Phase II of the Tapakuma Project will give the Guyanese farmers a tremendous amount of land. This is not so. I have a complete geographical picture of that area and I can tell you that there will be a tremendous reduction of agricultural land in that area. Over 6,000 hectares have been omitted and many farmers who own over two to three hundred acres of land have been completely left out of that project. When Phase II of the Tapakuma Project is completely left out of that project. When Phase II of the Tapakuma Project is completed you will have a small amount of land suitable for rice and nothing else. Incidentally, rice has been cultivated there for many years and that is the area between Pomona and Good Hope or perhaps Middlesex and Huist T'dieren where the Minister of Justice, Cde. Shahabuddeen, grew up.

It is really ridiculous, because, if our Comrades in the House and the nation believe that on the completion of Phase II of the Tapakuma Project land will be available, this is not so. I will come back to this House and I will be able to stand up to what I am saying. This is a reality. Even the areas which the Dutch were using for cotton and sugar in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century have not yet been reclaimed. I want to say that it is ridiculous and it is bad engineering technique. Ninety percent of the Essequibo farmers do not have any farm land other than what they are using for the production of rice.

Let us take a look at the old Tapakuma Project. I am saying these things because all these factors are based on production. The Comrades on that side of the House are accusing us of not being involved in production and of telling them what to produce. They will have to come off that high rostrum and come down to the grassroots, and think seriously, otherwise we will always continue like this. I am not a prophet but I don't see any increase in production. We are anticipating things here. Incidentally, I am a farmer and I am engaged in production also.

The old Tapakuma Project had 33,000 acres of rice land. In spite of all the calls for production, this production, this project has been run down. Eighty percent of all the drainage and irrigation canals are blocked up. Right in front of the premises owned by Cde. Jairam, the Member of Parliament, one of the main canals is blocked up. He can also support me in what I am saying. How do they expect the rice farmer to produce? The pumping station has four water pumps. Two of the main engines have not been working for two years. Last year September, when the water should have been 38:90 to supply the rice farmers, it was 58:20. As a result over 1500 acres of land could not obtain water from September until the latter part of December. The

Tapakuma Project now depends on rain and sunshine and not the pump with which it was intended to work.

It is ridiculous when members of the government ask about production and all these things which have to do with production are being neglected for some reason or the other. I can tell them that there is not only the Tapakuma Project: there are arable lands available, adjoining the Tapakuma Project. Over 15,000 acres of land. I recall that one gentleman, a man by the name of T.E. Earl, went to the Essequibo coast to lecture and in his lecture he said, “Don’t worry with the engineers and their certificates. When they come here with their certificates and their papers and their surveys, they must invite the people and consult the people. After consultation with the people you can implement their drafted programmes.” This the members of the Government have failed to do and therefore Phase I of the Tapakuma Project and Phase II, which is being done by Taylor Woodrow, will not fulfil the expectations of the Guyanese people, including the Essequibo farmers. What is projected in this Budget Speech will not be met.

What about production? I am inviting Members of this House to go now to Anna Regina and they will see over 100 tractors and trailers lined up at the G.R.B. They have been there for seven to eight days. Every trailer has three persons working on it. Therefore over 600 people are wasting time there because the mill has not been serviced, because the dryers are not working and silos are not functioning.

Incidentally, it is not only this Government that is being embarrassed. I am being embarrassed because I am being paid by this Parliament and the farmers are asking me: “What are you doing?” It is a shame and a disgrace! A few weeks ago when the management of that mill bought over 76 trailers of paddy, that is, approximately 14,000 bags of paddy, and kept it in the compound for seven to eight days, that paddy was purchased as A Grade and when it was subdivided for the various buying centres it was used as substandard.

1982-04-02

16:40 – 16:50 hrs

National Assembly

16:40 hrs

(Cde. Basir continues)

What sort of production do you want? Why don't you come to us and let us give you advise? We have all the details and facts which we can tell you about in the interest of Guyana. Cde. Speaker, not only the driers are faulty, but I can go on making a list of the problems and I am only dealing with that area, because time is limited.

Four plant breeding stations in those two regions have been closed down for several years. If you do not have plant breeding stations, how do you expect the farmers will get plants and planting materials to plant and to produce? Come and see! I am inviting you. Do not stay in this Assembly and imagine that production will increase and keep a lot of fancy noise and what is not. Comrades –

The Speaker: Three minutes more Cde. Basir.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Speaker, what about agriculture services? We do not have Agricultural Officers in the Moruca, in the Charity and in the key areas where production is. How do you expect us to produce under these conditions?

The Cde. Minister was speaking about transport, because transport is complementary to agriculture, and fortunately, he mentioned two boats which were constructed by the People's Progressive Party when they were in Government with limited powers. They were the Malali and the Makouria. But right now we have the "Kurupukari" sailing across here. It can sink anytime, because a pump has to be working continuously to dry this hull. This Malali does not have a stage and gates. A tractor ran overboard last week. The Kurupukari does not have a Radder. They are building a stelling at Charity. That stelling could have built four wharves in the Essequibo river. Cde. Speaker, I do not understand how these people are not thinking what they are doing? What about the Glory hallelujah that sank in the Baboon hole area, between Berebisibali and Moreshie. Eight persons lost their lives, the Minister should be held responsible.

The Speaker: Now, comrade, they are having an inquiry into that.

Cde. Basir: What about Sir Pat? Five persons died or they were drowned in 1972 because they don't have navigation lights. They do not have proper control of the system here.

The Speaker: One minute more.

Cde. Basir: Roads, this is a very important matter. Roads are very important. Let us look at Noitgedacht where Cde. Cora Singh is living. That is an important area. If you do not have interest in the roads, how do you expect us to produce? Cde. Speaker, many things can happen, not only the bus and what not. I can say that Cde. Hubert Jack once said that the winners should not take all. I want to end up by saying that the thieves should not have taken all.  
[Applause]

Cde. Jones: Cde. Speaker, since the introduction of the Local Democratic system formulated by the people for the people themselves, Guyana has made and is continuing to make rapid strides for the development of its people from the regional level to the People's Co-operative. It is not by accident that enshrined in the People's Constitution are the duties of the Local Democratic Organs.

Article 74 of the Constitution states:

“It shall be the primary duty of Local Democratic Organs to ensure in accordance with law the efficient management and development of their areas and to provide leadership by example.”

“Local democratic organs shall organise popular co-operation in respect of the political, economic, cultural and social life of their areas and shall co-operate with the social organisations of the working people.”

“It shall be the duty of the local democratic organs to maintain and protect public property, improve working and living conditions, promote the social and cultural life of the people, raise the level of civic consciousness, preserve law and order, consolidate socialist legality and safeguard the rights of citizens.”

Admittedly, Cde. Speaker, Guyana is presently going through a difficult period, but I am confident that the people of this country will rise to this challenge and free themselves and this nation from what seems to be a crisis. Had it not been for the wisdom and foresight of our astute leader, this dear land of Guyana would have found itself in a worse shape like many other countries in this unjust world. Guyana is faced with an economic crisis but we of this side of this honourable Assembly are confident that with self reliance and self sufficiency which are so necessary in these times, Guyana will and must survive.

Indeed, Cde. Speaker, the 1982 Budget is a Budget of resilience, and we as Guyanese have the ability to recoup that which we have lost. Our people are already mobilised for their active involvement towards the development of not only their communities, but the nation as a



whole. Since the establishment of the Regional democratic system, the hinterland regions have been able, not only to be less dependent upon food imports to the region, but to be self reliant. We have been able to feed ourselves and to export to the city and other regions, large quantities of food. For example, ground vegetables, vegetables, beef, citrus, peanuts, corn, coffee, black eye peas, cassava bread, palm oil, and presently a large scale collection of animal fat is going on in the Rupununi region which will assist in alleviating the edible oil shortage. And I wish to note, Cde. Speaker, that no one group of people are involved in this exercise, but I can assure you and this Honourable Assembly that even the Amerindians, our Amerindians brothers and sisters, are involved in the rapid development throughout the hinterland region. I would like this Honourable Assembly to note that in Region 1 we have already geared ourselves to replace the much talked about split peas by the urid which is presently being reaped. This high protein legume is being cultivated this year on a 25 acre plot in the Marakai area. In this area, also, Cde. Speaker, some 272 acres of corn is presently being reaped together with 19 acres of black eye peas, 13 acres of pumpkins and 10 acres of peanuts, and it is envisaged that by the end of this year some 927 acres of corn, black eye peas, urid, mung, ground provisions and peanuts will be reaped yielding approximately \$589,996.

1982-04-02

16:50 – 17:00 hrs

National Assembly

16:50 hrs

(Cde. K. N. Jones continues)

In another hinterland area, Cde. Speaker, and specifically in the Rupununi region, Region No. 9, they have targeted themselves this year to produce some 490 acres of peanuts and may I hasten to say that come April 17, just two weeks off, a fruit preservation unit will be established at Lethem. This unit will specialise in the production of preserved fruits, salted beef and pork and the production of cheese. Apart from the large scale food production in the hinterland region we are also involved in the production of leather and leather craft, nibbi and wood craft, precious and semi-precious stones and lumber, just to name a few.

While the Regional Democratic System is still in the embryonic stage we have been able to improve our standard of living in the hinterland regions and since we have been extending invitations to this side of the House or to members of this House to visit certain areas may I also at this junction invite my colleagues on the opposite side of this House to visit the Matthews Ridge area and see for themselves the improvement of sanitary facilities. Gone are the days when a certain Minister of Health had passed in Matthews Ridge area certain toilet facilities described as latrines built in the homes. I wish to inform this House that since the People's National Congress has taken office we have since replaced such insatinary facilities by improving on that type of facility which was recommended by the then Minister of Health.

Many of our hinterland airstrips are being upgraded thus making transportation by air easier. Two new vessels have been put to ply the Georgetown/Morawhanna/Kumaka route. The M.V. Komaka, which enables passengers to travel not only in style but also in comfort and the M.V. Acquero, a sophisticated cargo vessel with freezing facilities. Although there has been improvement generally we have had some setbacks. For example we have not been able to fully utilise the cassava mill at Port Kaituma; our farmers have not been paid promptly by G.M.C.; our communication link with the rest of Guyana, for example, Direct distance dialing has not been at its maximum. But I wish to assure this honourable House that the Regional Development Councils which were elected by the people themselves to manage their own affairs will not leave any stone unturned. We are determined to ensure that the small man becomes a real man. Is this not the confidence that the people of this country have, not only in the Regional Democratic System but in the vanguard party, the People's National Congress? While we in the north-western part of Guyana are trying desperately to assist in moulding and fashioning a better place for us to live in we are being molested by our closest and covetous neighbour Venezuela who has been violating our air space and our territorial integrity time and time again.

Their military personnel have been having conversation with our Amerindian brothers living along our borders trying to gather intelligence from them. May I hasten to inform this House that despite their military manoeuvres and activities in the area contiguous to the border we shall not be removed, notwithstanding their sophisticated weaponry and military might. We the people of the hinterland region, more particularly Region No. 1 Barima/Waini, are prepared to defend this beautiful and of ours to the last man. I am sure that all of us know the story of David and Goliath.

The Speaker: Two minutes more, Cde. Jones.

Cde. Jones: Some Guyanese are still asking if this threat is real. But I wish to remind them of the Cde. Leader's address in this very House on Friday, January 22, when he said and I quote:

“This is not the time for any Guyanese to ask whether the Venezuela threat is real. This is the time, it is submitted when this House, this country, this nation must prepare energetically but soberly to respond decisively to this threat whether it takes the form of military and/or economic aggression.”

Some Guyanese, too, Cde. Speaker, are of the opinion that if there is to be a confrontation only members of the People's National Congress will have to be involved. But may I hasten to remind them if they have forgotten that during a war no one wastes time to find out which Party each individual belongs to. If that is necessary then such information could always be had after the war. Our people in the hinterland are already mobilised to respond decisively to this threat. Our people are mobilised to guard against any invasion. Our people say with one voice ‘this is your land, this is my land, this is our land and we will defend and keep our land at all costs.

Finally, Cde. Speaker, it is against this background that I support this Budget of resilience so ably presented by the Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance and feverently hope that all Guyana will turn with all our strength to the task before us.

National Assembly

17:00 hrs

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Cde. Shahabuddeen): Cde. Speaker, this Assembly has heard many a great debate before. But I am confident that it will be recognised that it has not often had the privilege of listening to a contribution as courageous, as penetrating and as searching as the analysis presented by the Cde. Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance of the character and seriousness of our present situation.

If, as I consider, the issue presented in his opening statement is one of national survival, then I would wish to give some support to those elements of the analysis which invited attention to the external facets of the problem. For the inter-connection between the internal and the external aspects is crucial to an accurate appreciation of the total situation and of the sequence of measures now needing to be taken to preserve the integrity of this nation.

Certainly, I think that my good friend, Minister of Foreign Affairs Cde. Jackson, would have wished to say something on the subject today. Regrettably he is at this very time engaged elsewhere in prosecuting policies of direct relevance to the grave issues under debate. It is in these circumstances that, holding his brief, I venture within my allotted time of thirty minutes to speak briefly on the role of his Ministry in the total strategy now needing to be deployed.

On the economic front, the Ministry is involved at a number of levels. First, in foreign trade. Second, in economic co-operation with states and organisations. Third, in continuing action for the establishment of a new international economic order. And, fourth, in fostering economic co-operation among developing countries.

In the ordinary way, it should have been convenient and possibly useful to elaborate on these and other areas of activity in the economic realm. If I do not do so now, it is not because the importance of these aspects is not fully recognised, but only because it appears to me that a more efficient use of the limited time at my disposal suggests that I direct attention to those other activities of the Ministry which, though non-economic in primary character, do have an important bearing on the basic issues under discussion today.

In this respect, it is indeed the case that, as the Cde. Vice President explained, the economic and security dimensions of our problems are inextricably intertwined. The cardinal responsibility of the government remains the preservation of the territorial integrity of the State. This is accordingly the imperative consideration guiding and influencing the political aspects of our external strategy.

At the general level, the policy of the Government is directed to ensuring that the International environment is as agreeable as practicable to the survival of the State. Within this perspective we continue to support initiatives for reducing levels of tension and armaments, for the elimination of conflict and the consolidation of world peace.

A common pattern of expansionist hostility envelops in a serpentine embrace both Guyana and our sister Caricom partner Belize. We are aware also of a certain sense of insecurity developing within the Caribbean in reaction to intersecting lines of extra-regional power play within the area. Mercenary adventurism has added its own dark dimension.

Against this background, the time does appear to be opportune for our region to review our common historic continuum. Matters of mutual concern are the subject of discussion at a meeting of Commonwealth Caribbean Foreign Ministers now in progress in newly independent Belize and attended by Cde. Jackson. This is but one of a series of happenings pointing to the possibility of a long awaited regional summit being held within the near future. We continue our established policy of giving support everywhere to the fulfillment and vindication of the principle of self-determination, with its concomitant requirement for the rooting out of exploitation and oppression wherever they exist. Our stand on Namibia and on Southern Africa in general is well known throughout the world.

Moving nearer home, our concern for oppression in countries within the hemisphere is equally well known. So too is our position on the right of countries to pursue internal political and developmental strategies of their own choosing. The tragedy of El Salvador continues to evoke our deepest concern. It remains our hope that the travails of that tortured land may yet be settled in accordance with the true wishes of the people themselves, expressed without distortion from external forces.

The situation in Nicaragua has likewise been the subject of concern. It remains our belief that the correct course for resolving any controversies must lie through established processes of dialogue and that, in this case as in others, a climate of fear is counter-productive to the promotion of that regime of peace and tranquility so badly needed for the coherent and systematic advancement of the welfare of the people of the hemisphere and of that part of it in particular. These are the considerations governing the stand taken by Guyana in the course of current debates at the United Nations on the question of Nicaragua.

In relation to our own security problems, we continue to seek support from international opinion, working through a number of modalities – bilateral, multilateral, sub-regional, regional and global. Within the region we of course look first to Caricom. The support received from our

1982-04-02

17:00 – 17:10 hrs

sister countries has been ungrudging. Perhaps it could not be otherwise, given our common origins, history and culture. But we do feel an obligation going beyond mere courtesy to keep our partners informed on an on-going basis of developments touching our security. This has been a primary task of the Ministry.

The United Nations, with all its imperfections, continues to be the central global forum for the promotion of our foreign policy. The active and positive role we have played in that institution since independence and the universal recognition which it has brought us have now been crowned for a second time in six years with a seat in the Security Council. Our unanimous choice by the Latin American and Caribbean regional group needs to be placed on record in this Assembly.

1982-04-02

17:10 – 17:20 hrs

National Assembly

17:10 hrs

(Cde. Dr. Shahabuddeen continues)

Evidencing a similar recognition is our re-election as vice President of the Council of Namibia – a fitting tribute it may be thought to our unyielding commitment to the struggle for freedom and independence by the people of Southern Africa.

We have for many years now served as a leading member of the Co-ordinating Bureau of the Non Aligned Movement which as the House knows, continues to be a major vehicle for the prosecution of vital elements of our foreign policy. We have also been playing an equally constructive role in important commonwealth councils. To this aspect I shall need to return a little later. Cde. Speaker, the quality of our contribution in the international arena has been marked in these and a number of other ways. There was for example, our participation in the twenty three nations Canoma Summit last October, and only two months ago we were one of thirty-three developing states invited to and participating in the Informal Consultations on International Economic Co-operation and development which were held in New Delhi. Cde. Speaker, relations with other hemispheric states have been developing over the past years. In many cases initial diplomatic exchanges have been concretised by the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements. Our exclusion from the organisation of American States through a certain manipulated institutional device has happily not operated to bar us from membership of several other regional bodies of importance.

The development of friendly relations with our three neighbours has always, as the Assembly knows, been a matter of highest priority for the Government. In the case of Brazil and Suriname – trade, technical and cultural co-operation is being co-ordinated through mixed commissions established for the purpose. A Brazilian line of credit has facilitated importation of urgently needed consumer goods and capital equipment required for our development programme. Brazil has also rendered invaluable assistance in our search for oil in the Rupununi, and there is, I am glad to say reasonable expectation of a further deepening of economic co-operation through the early establishment of a road link in the Lethem area.

We were glad Cde. Speaker, to support the far sighted initiative taken by Brazil for the conclusion of the Treaty for Amazonic Co-operation of which we are a founding member. We have been equally happy to support her efforts to promote the realisation of the enlightened objectives of this great idea. Under the aegis of the treaty, programmes of co-operation are being developed at both bilateral and multilateral levels for the protection of the environment and the rational utilisation of the resources of the region. We see that process Cde. Speaker, as indeed we see the framework of the treaty itself as constituting an invaluable reinforcement for the

climate of peace so especially needed for the systematic development and advancement of the economic interest of all the peoples within the region.

Cde. Speaker, an unfortunate legacy notwithstanding reasonably constructive relations has been pursued with Suriname within the ambit of the Chaguaramas Accord of 1970 and of the Barbados Understanding of 1979. Growing awareness on both sides of the fact that our peoples share a common historical experience and common cultural and other origins will, it is our hope, result in the ultimate development of a proper perspective within which we can search for a friendly and satisfactory settlement of difficulties not of our own creation. We are confident that mutual recognition of our natural affinities and interest will in the last analysis always prevail over extraneous manipulation to ensure that such problems as we have are retained and resolved within the joint managerial capacity of our two countries.

We do believe that Venezuela's claim of our territory is lamentably misconceived. It does in our view, amount to an attempt to recolonise thousands of people who have already exercised the now universally recognised right of colonial peoples to self determination. Only last year in his well received address to the General Assembly of the United Nations our Prime Minister had occasion to dramatise the absurdity of the claim by noting that its effective assertion would make him and thousands of others like him aliens in the land of their birth.

We do not Cde. Speaker, suppose that international opinion will allow so scandalous a reversal of the operation of a principle consecrated in the most urgent language of innumerable decisions of every relevant international assembly. Certainly, we do not think that the third world will silently countenance so rude a deprivation of a people's birth right by a people of a different kind, of a different culture, of a different language, of different mores and of a different political philosophy.

We believe Cde. Speaker, however that notwithstanding those marked differences there is a residual community of interest which wise statesmanship can build upon to foster understanding and co-operation, to strengthen friendship and promote relations to a point where the boundary ceases to be divisive but instead becomes a meeting place for consolidating common interest and common concerns. But Cde. Speaker, it would be a dangerous self deception for us to assume that the course ahead is as free of difficulty as is desirable for the advancement of the pressing tasks of development needing to be pursued. Aerial and territorial encroachments as mentioned by the Cde. Vice President coupled with threatening assertions from reputable agencies in Venezuela together with her decision to acquire arms of a size and sophistication extending beyond legitimate self defensive purposes to give cause for concern. There are indeed ominous signs of a return to the uneasy days of the forcible seizure of our half



1982-04-02

17:10 – 17:20 hrs

of Ankoko Island of the Leone cartographic incursion into our legitimate off shores waters of manifold attempts at subversion of legal citizens and repeated acts of economic aggression.

Last November Cde. Speaker, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a declaration on the Inadmissibility of Interventions and Interference in the International Affairs of States. The declaration was for years promoted and sponsored by Guyana and fellow members of the Non-Aligned Movement. It was ultimately passed by an overwhelming majority of the Assembly. Every developing country but one supported it. The lone exception was our western neighbour Venezuela. The portents are troubling. Unfortunately the response of the International community has been reassuring, so in particular was the reaction of conference of commonwealth Heads of Government held in Melbourne last October. Representing the unanimous view of the conference the communiqué stated flatly as follows:

National Assembly

17:20 hrs

(Cde. Shahabuddeen continues)

“Heads of Governments expressed their deep concern at the threat to the territorial integrity of Guyana arising from the resuscitation by Venezuela of a claim to more than two-thirds of the territory of Guyana and the steps taken by Venezuela in pursuit of the claim. Noting that the existing boundary was laid down by an international arbitral award in 1899 and accepted by all concerned as a final settlement, they expressed support for Guyana and called for the peaceful settlement of the controversy in accordance with established procedures and with full respect for the sanctity of treaties.”

About the strength of our case we entertain no doubt. Our concern is, however, lest the very strength of our case should result in irrational experimentations and hysterical reactions which, though they will never be suffered either by the international community or by our own armed forces to end in an alienation of our birth right, may prove damaging to the development of sensible and friendly relations between our two countries. We do feel that it could profitably be the concern of those in authority in Venezuela, as it has always been our concern here, to promote and to advance such relations with a view to securing the real welfare of our two peoples. By contrast, we consider it unrewarding to stir up and exacerbate sterile controversies over an issue which the vast majority of right-thinking members of the international community would readily recognise as fully, finally and perfectly settled by the Arbitral Award of 1899.

We had hoped that there might have been willingness across the way to exploit as far as possible the renewable potential inhering in the Protocol of Port-of-Spain for the development of good relations between us. Regrettably, it is now sad history that volatile and unpredictable forces in Venezuela have precipitated a decision by that country to terminate the Protocol with effect from June this year. What is to happen is for consideration. We are, however, prepared to approach the situation, which would then develop, in a spirit of friendship, respect and understanding. We would like to think that there would be a matching response, but, should there be none, what then is our case?

I do not see in what was said by the Cde. Vice President any limp assumption that we are bound to survive come what may. Nations and peoples have disappeared before our time. Some are in danger of doing so even before our eyes. In the savage tumble of events set in motion by the military, political and economic disequilibrium of today's world, a small emergent society may be thought but a slight thing, apt to be blown away with the gentlest puff of wind. And that this should happen is perhaps understandable if a country fails to prove its worth. A nation which has not proved its worth is but an assemblage of disparate individuals uncertain of its

integrity and ever doubtful of its purposes. And yet no nation, aware of its worth, backs away from occasion to test its mettle in the crucible of history.

I believe that the combination of conditions which define our present state does present a challenge to our resolve to win through as people. I believe that the collective consciousness of wrongs jointly suffered in times past and of hopes shared in common for the future will forge that patriotism necessary to prevail. For I also consider that, whatever may be the technical measures needing to be deployed, the question fundamentally is indeed one of patriotism. Do we have the will to preserve the independent state attained after centuries of slavery, indentureship, exploitation and oppression? If, as I am confident, we do, then the course ahead is clear. However we may differ over details and tactics, we are, as patriots, surely agreed that the nation must survive, and that every necessary step must in consequence be taken to ensure it does. To its share in this noble task the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana stands unremittingly committed. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Felix.

Cde. Felix: Cde. Speaker, please allow me the privilege of complimenting my senior colleague and good friend, the Vice President of Economic Planning and Finance, for his courageous and analytical presentation of the state of the economy and a Budget of hope and cautious optimism.

In his opening remarks, he rightly referred to the early convulsions of the old international economic order which has now developed into a full scale economic disaster engulfing the whole world like a plague sparing neither rich nations nor poor, East nor West, the haves not the have-nots alike. The global economic scene which is now displayed is that of the world tottering towards the gloom and depression of 1929 vintage. We will all remember that the economic dislocations commenced with the situation known the world over as “the oil crisis”, a situation which has spread rapidly like a rampaging forest fire engulfing the economies of every nation on this planet, adversely affecting all permanently and destroying many completely.

The destruction wrought on the economies of nations of diverse ideological complexions by this single sinister phenomenon underscores man’s absolute need upon energy for survival and his dependence, in the main, on hydro carbon fuels to supply that energy. There is hardly any other essential except perhaps those which are freely endowed which can possibly dislocate the equilibrium of man’s existence than does energy. It is this realisation of the importance of

1982-04-02

17:20 – 17:30 hrs

energy to our survival which perhaps prompted our comrade Leader and President to nominate the year 1981 as the Year of Energy and catalyse the commencement of a conscious awareness of its importance to economic growth, prompting the introduction of needed measures for national accountability within the sector.

National Assembly17:30 hrs

(Cde. Felix continues)

The blue print for the survival of this nation delivered by our Cde. Leader and President in this honourable Assembly on January 22, 1982, made reference to the establishment of the energy Authority and intimated that measures were already taken and in trained to ensure that energy, both in terms of and derived from hydro carbons, is efficiently used. This fact is now further highlighted and formerly catalogued in the Budget Presentation of the Cde. Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, indicating that a 10 percent reduction in the importation and use of hydro carbons is a main pillar of the Budget structure. As a pre-requisite for the decision on a 10 percent reduction, Cde. Speaker, preliminary investigation and statistical analysis based on the available data confirmed that it is a wastage of fuel across the entire spectrum of activities concerned with the supplying of goods and services very much in excess of 10 per cent. To achieve a minimum recovery of at least 10 percent of this wasted energy, a programme of energy conservation was put in place with the specific aim of controlling and monitoring the importation and use of hydro carbons fuel.

Cde. Speaker, it is important to note that hydro carbon fuels imports for the year 1974 was 8 percent of our exports. It was 15 percent in 1975, 18 percent in 1976, 28 percent in 1979, 38 percent in 1980 and 40 percent last year. This continuous upper trend, Cde. Speaker, is based on a volume which remain roughly constant all around \$4 million barrels of oil equivalent. With this kind of background, Cde. Speaker, it should not be difficult to appreciate the difficulties which this country has come to, since 40 percent of the amount that we have accrued from our exports goes into the purchasing of one.

Our Hydro Carbon fuel used by the sector shows that agriculture requires 5 percent; mining, 44 percent; industry, 6 percent; services, 3 percent; transportation, 20 percent; electricity, 16 percent; residential, 5 percent. From these figures Cde. Speaker, our major users of hydro carbon fuel are, therefore, GUYMINE, Guyana Electricity Corporation, Guyana Transport Services Limited, Guyana fisheries, The Guyana Rice Board and the Guyana Sugar Corporation in that order. Using 1980 as the base year, Cde. Speaker, it was discovered that in almost each of the sectors there was an increase in quantum in almost every category of hydro carbon fuel in 1981, and this coupled with corresponding increases in the cost of these fuels, created an escalation in the national fuel bill. To give this house an indication of these statistics, we will show here that in 1981, aviation fuel in volume was 33 percent greater, 55 percent costlier, and 16 percent higher in unit cost than 1980. Gasolene was 5 percent greater in volume, 21 percent greater in cost and 15 percent greater in unit price. Kerosene was 19 percent greater

in volume, 25 percent greater in cost and 4 percent greater in unit price. Diesel fuel was reduced in quantum by 3 percent but in cost it increased by 12 percent and in unit cost by 15 percent.

Bunker C also was reduced in quantum by 4 percent, but in value it was increased by 26 percent and in unit cost by 30 percent. L. P. G. or cooking gas was increased by 15 percent and the total cost by 17 percent over 1980 and in unit cost 2 percent. And, of course, there is one fuel, sethane 47 which is used exclusively by the Guyana Electricity Corporation and, of course, my colleague did tell you that there are some problems and this fuel was reduced in volume by 37 percent, and the value by 29 percent, but the unit cost was 29 percent over the 1981 value.

Cde. Speaker, perhaps we ought to also tell this house something about the two major users of the fuel that we buy. Guymine imported last year, 7 percent less Bunker C than it imported the year before, but that cost 21 percent greater than the year before. Guymine used 1 percent more diesel fuel last year which cost 17 percent more than it cost the year before. The Guyana electricity Corporation bought 21 percent more Bunker C fuel in 1981 than in 1980 at a value which was 48 percent greater than in 1981 with a unit price which was 23 percent greater than 1981. With these statistical figures, Cde. Speaker, it is easy to see the reason that this country is suffering from the economic duress which we face and to compound this unfavourable condition, Cde. Speaker, the production level as reported in 1981 do not reflect to a satisfactory degree, the relationship between energy used and production obtained when both these imports applied to the economic equation, are weighted suitably.

The energy conservation programme is soliciting the instillation of proper arrangements within the Public Sector to treat energy as a separate cost centre with its own monitoring mechanisms. Concomitantly, the analytical characteristic of the Cde. Vice President's presentation suggests that there must be an accountability for energy, and indeed all inputs required in the many economic activities involved in the provision of goods and services.

The Speaker: Three minutes more, Cde. Felix.

Cde. Felix: This means, Cde. Speaker, within this period covered by this imaginative Budget, this nation will have as an important piece of information for planning and projection, the energy requirement per bag, per ton, per acre or per unit of production of goods and services.

Cde. Speaker, it is important to note that our hydro carbon fuel imports for the year 1972 was 8 percent of our exports and it has escalated tremendously over the period of a few years. Now, the Government's position is, Cde. Speaker, that everyone can participate in an energy conservation programme, and they have invited the nation to participate in this programme, and

1982-04-02

17:30 – 17:40 hrs

if we are to save one-third of 1 percent daily of the energy we use, or we used, in every activity, we will be making that contribution which would ensure that this country saves about \$42 million in foreign reserves and at the same time saving ourselves the cost of energy. Cde. Speaker, I have great pleasure, and with a sense of pride and commitment to support the Budget which was presented by my friend and colleague the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance. [Applause]

1982-04-02

17:40 – 17:50 hrs

National Assembly

17:40 hrs

(Cde. Belgrave)

Thank you, Cde. Speaker. Before I make my contribution to this Debate I would like, first of all, to quote a parable so that during my contribution the members of this House will gloss over it. It goes like:

“Na dig hole fo yo mattie or you gon fall in um”

You hear what I tell you, you hear what I say. “Na dig hole for yo mattie or yo gon fall in um”. In making this parable I must, firstly on behalf of the working class like myself totally reject this Budget presented to the House on Monday. It is anti-working class, virtually important. The contents of the Budget automatically drive very hard attack, viciously, upon the working class people in this country who have been toiling day after day in factories and in fields making a valuable contribution to the economy of this country. That seems to be one of the most important things or lesson that ought to be learnt in this debate. We are attempting to castigate some tax to brutalise the masses, the same facilities which we will have to use to develop the economy of this country. It is made clear in the Speech that because the economy did not perform, because there is not a rise in production, because there is no greater productivity the workers cannot get a cent more. The P.P.P. challenged, Dr. Jagan challenged several years ago, they say for saying not a cent more. The Budget in itself indicated it. The Vice President in ... saying to the workers ‘not a cent more’.

After seventeen years, all types of contribution made by Ministers and their secretaries, now Prime Minister, then Prime Minister. All those contributions led to one thing – for seventeen years this country has been carried right down to economic ruin. The last time I spoke on the Budget I warned this government that the country is suffering from what I called economic cancer. That disease is eating continuously at the country’s finances and if members on the opposite side can remember I ended up with the thought that workers no longer will go on strikes, no longer can you lock them out or replace them by some other group, but the workers are going to fight back in the way that they learnt to fight back and the way they learnt to fight back is to resist this regime. Workers in long lines. Production and productivity are necessary. Milk to be found, food to be found and all kinds of talk from the Minister of Consumer Protection. Plenty here, plenty there. Only everybody know that the plenty here and there is in the Ministries and the Ministers. The workers, therefore, have got to go from one part of this country. People come from long distances on the East Coast, West Coast, from Linden in search of food leaving jobs which they are called upon to do to lift this country out of economic ruin, but I warned you. In many of our working class associations, I warned you. You cannot say that



I did not tell you so. The Budget in itself did not demonstrate to the workers that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. It talks about hope and aspirations and when the hope or aspiration is examined it is hopelessly hopeless. So they are back to square one with the hopeless ideas and projection.

I got into this Assembly in 1976 when my Party decided to resume our fight for the working class. I went through a mini budget immediately I entered this Assembly, green as I was to this area. But I matured from another area in which the Government had dominance. This would be my fifth year in full debate and a part which would be nearly six years and in all those years and this is the realistic end of life. We have been hearing from Ministers and Government spokesmen how glorious the future looks, things have never been so good and prospects have never looked so bright. F.C.H. – Feed, House and Clothe. But we end up with a format and this format was projected many years by the Leader of the P.N.C. E.L.; S.L.; W.H. - Eat less; sleep less; work harder. F.C.H disappeared. This Budget tells us of the drop in importation, no foreign exchange. We cannot buy. Eat less. The agriculturalist told us. Some scientist in the last Budget Speech also tells us about the big agricultural drive. Plenty vegetables. Look at fish in galore. Two plantains for two dollars. If you have got a family of seven and you want to be modest and you want to eat plantain and you want to be modest and eat plantains that is seven dollars you will start with. Plenty of agricultural produce. It has manifested itself today in problems. Great problems, depression for the working class people and they are called upon still to produce more. Greater production increase productivity.

Comrades, I am impressed by your talk yesterday about F.A.O. F.A.O. has been calling upon Government by the year 2065 that the world agricultural output will reduce and bla-bla. But he failed to recognise one important ingredient in that booklet that all the nations of the world are called upon to produce more for the benefit of the world's people. We in this country are saying to the F.A.O. we will produce more for you to buy but you do not worry to produce what you have is not good for us.

1982-04-02

17:50 – 18:00 hrs

National Assembly

17:50 hrs

(Cde. Belgrave continues)

You must eat from us but we must not eat from you because we are self-reliant. Comrades, you have to look at things in their true perspective. You cannot be here talking about your involvement in the world, your anti-imperialist position, your involvement in nations of the world and you are telling other people to forget you. Let us think about us. Self-preservation has got us in the situation we are in. Self-reliance is different to what you talk about. You are greedy to yourself. You are like wolves in sheep's clothing.

In those debates in the past we heard about aggressive water. A young lady spoke to me before I came to Parliament this afternoon. She is from South and she begged me hard to make this water point "I have not bathed for three days." One of the reasons why I am not going to work today is because I am afraid it will embarrass me." We hear about all the wells, the dams, the creeks and the rivers. That is a manifestation of bad planning. To date you cannot give the people that important ingredient which you have been talking about for a number of years.

We heard about all the agricultural produce, how work is guaranteed. This Budget has taken a new turn. The Agriculture Minister is talking about plenty of seeds. The Minister of Energy told us about lots of stones. The Minister of Fisheries told us about fish in galore. I have to be cautious about how I speak, Cde. Speaker, I would not want you to think obscene of me. But this is the new trend in the Assembly, that there are plenty of seeds and people must now plant. People were not planting all these years?

What was the rice output in the past? What was the sugar output under capitalist control? What was the bauxite output? There were viable industries. There were industries that were producing, not optimum but maximum. You destroyed all of them. That is where the parable comes in. You have attacked forces of the P.P.P. saying that the P.P.P. is a rice Government. Supporters of the P.P.P. are mainly rice producers. So you took away the organisation that aided the rice industry which was in the hands of the rice producers and you brought all the boys, party men, the boys who would work in your favour and closed the movement. Today, after seventeen years, the rice industry has not increased.

Capitalist had owned the sugar industry. You are telling us a world of nonsense. You do not know about sugar producing, you are producing a little bit of sugar. Cuba is not crying about sugar prices because Cuba has democratised her system and she has involved herself with a position in the world by which assistance is given. You want to tie yourself with imperialism and at the same time expect the imperialists are going to be nice to you when the E.E.C. is

1982-04-02

17:50 – 18:00 hrs

placing all the emphasis upon its control in its relation with all the European Communities and are increasing their purchase of best sugar. You are telling them to forget your brothers and sisters in the European Community and come and be nice to Guyanese people. You have tied yourself.

Cde. Speaker, this brings me to an important point which this government would have to realise. Cde. Feroze Mohamed touched on it yesterday, the paramountcy of the Party, political and racial discrimination. This has been eating out the roots of this Government and destroying any ability to perform because they have got to find jobs for the boys.

I was impressed in 1964 by a statement made by the Minister of Labour then, my very good friend Claude. Whilst running through some old papers I picked up a little discourse that the time has arrived when consideration should be given to the political aspect of recruitment. Apart from the growing discontent among supporters of the government who were denied employment in preference to members of the Opposition on account of a better orthodox system of recruitment, and the persistence on the part of some officers to ignore the present Government's policy of providing employment for supporters of the P.P.P., there was need to ensure, as a measure of security, that employment should be given to supporters of the Government when vacancies are to be filled. So there it is, you are now subverting the direct system that is responsible for recruitment of work; Police Service Commission, the Public Service Commission, Teachers' Service Commission, Employment Exchange and now it is infiltrated into Corporations and Companies in which the Government has got its control and links. You eventually ended up with a top-heavy bureaucracy in some areas. There was no proper system of employment. The party card was the passport to a job. So out of this there migrated into these various work places persons without the know-how, the technique, the ability, some dunderheads nevertheless, but persons who paid respect and homage to the party in power. I would like to say that those persons who migrated into these work places were given higher positions than persons who have been working within these various areas for a very long time. Out of this frustration people either went abroad, or they left the various services, etc. Today you are reaping the results of that because they are the ..., bloodsuckers in this country.

I can remember in April 1973, voicing the general concern of political appointees in Local Government affairs, a certain woman, Olga Burnett, Chairman of the Farm Local Authority protested about putting the conduct of village business into the hands of unscrupulous, irresponsible, self-seeking persons because they commonly shelter under the shade of party membership. So the genuine worker was pushed out of his work position and those who are loyal to the party were placed into those various work places. Today you are reaping. That is the result because they are the ones who are much lazier, they are the ones who spout political involvement.

1982-04-02

18:00 – 18:10 hrs

National Assembly

18:00 hrs

(Cde. Belgrave continues)

I am close to the party and they are the ones who are today creating the burden upon the backs of the working class people.

Cde. Speaker, in racial discrimination in some areas where non party supporters exist you have heard the complaint where food stuffs find itself in those areas. Jobs are always non available to those persons who do not support the party and who may have a different shade in terms of their ethnic origin. I have heard that on several occasions spoken by leading members of the Government, very critical of giving the blessings to a Guyanese as a Guyanese because of their belief in a system by which they believe the party stands for. That is to discriminate ethnically. This has also destroyed the root of production and out of this Comrades the country has reached that ugly position by which none of the ideologies or the scientist or all the glorious ministerial functions can change. Any change in this country must come from the people and the only way it can come is that the people must be allowed to be involved.

This retrenchment system is the peoples' representative body being involved: oh no! Cde. Speaker, there is a long document in which I can hardly afford to read because of my time in which the Trade Union Council condemn the retrenchment seriously. Dictatorship they cry in this document and further to that there is a further document by notes of a special meeting by which they are setting up a committee to meet the Minister responsible to discuss the question that there should be no retrenchment within the various services and this Government speaks of being involved with the Trade Union Movement and the people. Cde. Pollydore in his statement said – we were tricked, we were caught. We were made to believe when we agreed to this system in 1977 that it would only be a few workers and they would have been placed from one job to another. Eventually they were kicked out, 3,500 and when the Minister spoke in terms of 1981 job adjustment in which the T.U.C. demanded 25% interim relief the conditions was that if they have to give 25% interim relief they will have to retrench and the T.U.C. accepted in good faith a seven and ten, ten and twelve under the conditions that workers will not be retrenched. Come the 31<sup>st</sup> April and in some cases 'all fools day' the fools in the street were given their notices, go packing, find a job where you can.

Cde. Speaker, a format is vitally important to understand if retrenchment is a must. I accept it as a fact that in some areas of the service there is a big work force. It is the government's duty if there are jobs in other places and there must be a need for job placement, to examine properly the areas in which the persons can be channeled and carry out a systematic

approach to the system by moving them from one work area into another. But this was not done, all that happened – we are the boss, we dictate the pace, we are the Government, we big, bad and cruel, knock off. It will have serious repercussions, I can warn you because the workers are saying today that they will not take that position. I can assure you that guns had to be used on the workers at the fisheries and I can assure you that guns will have to be used on others workers because the workers are very scared. They have mortgages to pay, they have families to maintain. There is a roof over their head with mortgages and when you dismiss them, you automatically take their homes from them.

It was this Government who agreed that workers must not take long leave, that they must channel their leaves into areas of mortgage to buy homes for themselves. It is the same Government who have retrenched such workers without a hope of paying the mortgage for those houses which they have acquired.

Cde. Speaker, I would like to give the Government a guideline today and they must accept it in good faith because the thing caved in quick. Withdraw the retrenchment notices forthwith. Set up a committee including the Opposition to examine the economic situation in this country so that we will be able to channel our efforts to see what can be done. Close 60% of the foreign embassy abroad. Repatriate the Ambassadors – save foreign exchange, but food, bring more wheat, reduce Ministries as the call was being made or the alternative, resign now or if you cannot, again I will give you a little different position. I will give you up to June. Make up your bag so you could pack up all your various documents and get out of the Government by June 1982. I can assure you that if this position is taken in good faith this country will remain as it is, but the workers are mad, not Belgrave, it is the people outside, they are grumbling. I spoke to hundreds in the street, you cannot, twenty-five you spoke to in Kitty. They want your head, so understand your position. If you are on the side of the worker, accept the P.P.P.'s position, if you are not Cde. Speaker, you will commit yourself to your doom. I thank you Cde. Speaker, no, I speak to the Government, unfortunately you head this position in Parliament, so maybe you can pass it on such information to those as it is.

The Minister of National Development (Cde. R.H.O. Corbin): Cde. Speaker on Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, the Cde. Vice President of Economic Planning and Finance presented a frank and straight forward budget explaining the very serious economic situation of the country, but went on very clearly to point out that the situation of the country at this point in time demanded a particular type of action. Action which could ensure the development of this country in the future.

At the same time Cde. Speaker, if we examine this budget very carefully, we will see that the budget as well guarantees that the People's National Congress Government will maintain and ensure that it carries through with the socialist policies to ensure that socialism is constructed in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. Judging even from the contributions from the speakers on the other side of the Assembly there is definitely a clear recognition of the desire at this time to motivate all the people in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana at this time to pool their energies and resources and contribute to all national development efforts, all the more reason for us at this time to have in existence a Ministry called the Ministry of National Development. At this particular time when people need to be involved for there is a necessity for professionally trained social workers to work as capitalist in the communities working along with people and motivating them, educating them and explaining the issues which are presently facing the country so that by understanding, they will be able to play their part in national development.

In this context Cde. Speaker, it is very easy to understand that the Ministry of National Development, which has been the subject of serious comments over the past few years, has a very important role to play at this particular time especially with its additional responsibilities of forestry. I was rather surprised over the course of this debate to hear members on the other side of this Assembly attempting to use quotations in books out of context to point out that Guyana was not moving in a socialist oriented direction. Indeed I was very shocked and surprised because I am sure that my good friend Cde. Feroze Mohamed knows much more than he attempted to explain to this Assembly. Only yesterday by bringing this book, Karen Brutents and misinterpreting the quotation which has been placed in this book. Indeed Cde. Speaker, if the honourable member had read this book which he quoted so ably from yesterday fully, I think that he would have been on this side of the Assembly aiding and making some positive contribution towards the national development of this country.

This book gives careful analysis of the serious situation which developing countries are faced with at the moment. It goes on to point out very carefully the stress and strain which countries moving in a socialist oriented direction must pass through during the transitional state from capitalism to socialism and if we judge even by this very book which Cde. Feroze Mohamed so glibly quoted from yesterday we can say that the People's National Congress has advanced the socialist revolution to a large extent in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

1982-04-02

18:10 – 18:20 hrs

National Assembly

18:10 hrs

(Cde. Corbin continues)

This very book identifies very clearly eight main points on which some assessment must be made to find out whether a country is moving in that direction. National sovereignty and political and economic activity to demonstrate self-reliance, ensuring that the state performs a very serious regulatory role in the economy which has been done in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana with the People's National Congress, ensuring that there is a dominant public sector to prevent the exploitation of the masses of the people of this country, using nationalisation as a mechanism for removing control of the commanding heights of the economy from imperialist hands. It is this P.N.C. Government that has spear-headed action in this direction.

Agrarian Reform: It is this P.N.C. Government which has enshrined in its Constitution the Land to the Tiller policy and has taken positive steps to ensure that there is agrarian reform in this country so that people will be able to utilise the lands and develop them properly, ending economic and political dominance of the local bourgeoisie. It is this P.N.C. Government, through various mechanisms in Guyana, by the establishment of local financial institutions, the banks etc., by instituting certain regulatory functions in the Ministry of Trade and certain financial regulations which protected the small man in this country from exploitation and ensured that those enterprises work in keeping with the social goals which we have in mind, social legislation in the interest of the working class, mass education system so that all the people will benefit. It is this P.N.C. Government that established free education from nursery to university and, finally, an anti-imperialist foreign policy.

Cde. Feroze Mohamed quoted glibly from this book yesterday. If he will read pages 48 and 49 again he will, I am sure, learn a little more than he learnt from that little paragraph which he attempted to quote. This very book from which Cde. Feroze Mohamed quoted yesterday, amply explains that in developing countries like Guyana, countries which are moving in the socialist direction, we can never be over-optimistic and too simplistic in analyzing the situation during this particular transition period.

Incidentally, Cde. Feroze Mohamed took up ten minutes of the time of this House by saying that Guyana is not socialist and ended up afterwards by admitting that we are in a state of transition. This was, indeed, a very bold attempt by the Comrade to misuse books which have been written for guidance, for action in developing countries and, instead of using them for action for development, using them for confusion. I am sure that his former teacher must have been very disappointed that he has been able to misinterpret so badly a book which is so very clear about the development of socialism in this country.

At this particular point of our country's history Marxists and those who claim to take principled positions need to make an objective analysis of the situation as it is and not attempt to score debating points using Marxism as a tool. It is a tool for the development of the working class, to provide a better way of life for all the people of this country and perhaps if we did not have so much misinformation being spread around this country there would have been no need at all for the Ministry of National Development, but it is precisely because there is so much confusion around that there is need to keep the people of Guyana fully informed of what is taking place. The Ministry of National Development, through the Youth and Sports division, through the Department of Mobilisation and through the division of National Events and Ceremonies, utilises every opportunity to explain to the people and assists in motivating them to national development efforts.

As we examine the Budget Speech we will see that notwithstanding the serious economic circumstances which this country is in at this particular point of time, the Government has still seen it fit to ensure that certain important provisions are made for the development of Youth and Sport, which is a part of the Ministry of National Development.

The Speaker before me has amplified the need for youth employment in this whole thrust of national development at this point in time but perhaps, to be more specific, one needs to ensure that at this particular juncture an agency in the government indulges in the type of work that can provide craft training, skills, work experience and support to youth organisations at this time so that young people can play a more dynamic role in aiding us to come out of the present economic circumstances.

Social development in any country cannot be neglected at the expense of economic development for when we speak of genuine development, in the context of the P.N.C., we speak of people's development, and economic development in isolation is meaningless. Hence there is the need for us, notwithstanding our economic circumstances to pay particular attention to the recreational facilities which are available to the young people and the social work intervention programmes which are being organised by the Youth Division to ensure maximum participation. That is why in the people's new Constitution there has been emphasised the need for the Right to Leisure. No nation can afford, no matter how poor, to fail to recognise the important and significant occasions in its history. As a result, all national events and ceremonies fall within the ambit of the Ministry of National Development. There is need to mobilise our people, to demonstrate solidarity and support to our national thrust from time to time and it is the Division of National Events and Ceremonies and a Department of Mobilisation which are charged with this specific responsibility. There is a National Exhibition Park at Sophia which has to be



1982-04-02

18:10 – 18:20 hrs

maintained and which is used as a very important educational compound from time to time with various exhibitions etc., when people from all walks of life have an opportunity to see what is taking place in Guyana and to see, at the same time, in what way they can increase their contribution towards national development.

1982-04-02

18:20 – 18:30 hrs

National Assembly

18:20 hrs

(Cde. Corbin continues)

These are perhaps areas which are often neglected, are perhaps not observed by those who fail to see the Ministry of National Development has an important task to play at this particular time.

Cde. Speaker, it is from the contributions of the members of the other side of the Assembly during this debate that we have been told that the people must be properly informed. In the words of Cde. Feroze Mohamed himself: "Let the workers know that the industry belongs to them". He was speaking of nationalisation, and in his own words said, "Party workers are being paid by National Development" and other speakers have referred to this situation wrecking the economy. For that matter, Cde. Speaker, I have a difficulty in understanding how is it possible for a political party like the People's National Congress not pay supporters in any Government Ministry. If the People's National Congress won by more than two-thirds at the last election, do you want to believe that there will be people in any sector of the society who will not be members of the People's National Congress? Naturally, in the Ministry of National Development, and I suppose in every Government Ministry, in every field of human activities in this country, there are people who are paid, but the fact that they are paid is no indication that they are necessarily paid for doing that work alone.

Cde. Speaker, I wish to say that recently, the Ministry of National Development has had added to it, the responsibilities for the development of the Forestry sector. Page 90 of the Vice President's Address identifies very clearly, the role which has been identified for the forestry sector. Indeed Cde. Speaker, when one looks at the economic conditions which exist at the moment in Guyana, the lack of foreign exchange, the inavailability of spare parts in some cases, we recognise that if these problems are to be overcome there is need for greater production from the forestry sector. I would like to assure this Assembly, Cde. Speaker, that the Ministry of National Development and Forestry, the Guyana Forestry Commission, has a carefully planned programme which is geared to give all the necessary support to the forestry sector to ensure that the aspirations and the expectations which have been pointed out in the Budget Speech are met in 1982. It is expected that with the re-organisation which has already taken place in the Guyana Forestry Commission, there will be a system where we would be in a better position to manage our forestry resources more effectively.

The re-organisation, Cde. Speaker, coupled with the fact that there has been approved by cabinet, and soon to be approved by this House, a new Timber Sales Agreement which provides an opportunity for sawmillers and loggers in this country to have more permanent basis for the development of the areas which have been allocated to them for forestry development. This

Timber Sales Agreement gives opportunity for those involved in this sector to put forward a detailed plan for the exploitation of all species of wood which are found in the area in which the operation is taking place. And it is hoped that this exercise will avoid the present situation where only prime species are being taken out and the lesser known species are being left, which means that in a few years time, we will have a more difficult and a more expensive operation in reaching the better known species and even pulling out the lesser known species. With the addition of the former Guyana Timber Export Board now known as the Ministry Unit of the Forestry Commission, it is also expected, Cde. Speaker, that we will be able to have a more dynamic and effective marketing policy so that we will be able to increase by some 40 percent, our export of lumber in the overseas market during 1982.

This is no boast or no guess work, Cde. Speaker, because discussions have been held with the Guyana Forestry Products Association and a number of timber producers of this country already, and when one takes into consideration the expansion which is going on at some of these mills, we are certain that we will be able to export our lumber by some additional 40 percent during 1982.

Indeed, Cde. Speaker, in the Public Sector Loan, it is hoped that the Upper Demerara Forestry Project will be able to produce in even larger quantities, the lumber which is produced in 1981. It is expected that the sawmill will not be completed before the latter part of 1983. However, the Upper Demerara Forestry Project has already commenced its logging operations, and has already exported sizeable quantities of timber in the Caribbean and European Market.

Guyana Timbers – it is also expected, Cde. Speaker, that there will be serious efforts to re-organise Guyana Timbers in 1982, a company which as the Cde. Vice President pointed out has been reporting losses for quite a number of years. This loss has been due to a number of factors which time does not permit me to amplify and go into details today. However, Cde. Speaker, in a nutshell, it is hoped that we will be able to deal with some of these problems particularly in terms of management and in terms of streamlining our operations so that in terms of the export as well, we will be able to increase our capacity of prefabricated buildings particularly in the Caribbean Market. It is hoped that with the involvement of management consultants at Winoperu we will be able to produce lumber from that area at a lower cost per cubic foot and by that act, alone, bring down the operational cost of the industry at Guyana Timbers, Houston.

In the forestry sector as well, Cde. Speaker, there has been a lot of discussion over the past few weeks and months about the revitalisation of the charcoal industry. This is an industry

1982-04-02

18:20 – 18:30 hrs

which has not been seriously tackled in recent years from the point of view of the great export potential of this product. The Guyana Forestry Commission have done the necessary research, marketing and production research, and we are in a position at the moment to guarantee the effective marketing of the charcoal which is produced in Guyana at the moment.

1982-04-02

18:30 – 18:35 hrs

National Assembly

18:30 hrs

(Cde. Corbin continues)

In addition to that we have not only said to the producers, produce charcoal. We have been involved in the act of providing the necessary support services so that small groups of people and individuals would be able to get involved in charcoal production under control conditions to meet the necessary specifications which have been set down by the purchasers of this charcoal. For example some 200 mark 5 kilns will be on stream within the next two months and these kilns will be made available to charcoal producers around the country particularly on the Soesdyke/Linden highway and in the Linden area. This is to ensure that the wood which is available, in some cases wood which would have been destroyed because of the expansion of the bauxite industry, that this resource is properly utilised and turned into money value.

The facilities of the Guyana National Co-operative Bank have been made available and these facilities will provide loans to the small producers and at this very moment the bank is in this area interviewing charcoal producers who have answered the call of the People's National Congress at this particular time to produce more to overcome the present economic circumstances.

The Speaker: Three minutes more.

Cde. Corbin: It is this type of action which at this particular junction of our present economic circumstances would help Guyana to overcome the present economic problems. Indeed, Cde. Speaker, the People's National Congress has over the year given clear and precise directions. It is the P.N.C. which in the past over every difficult circumstance has stood up boldly with the people of this country and not lifted its arms in despair but has provided an opportunity and piloted the way for future difficulties. I am sure that in these difficult times, notwithstanding our problems we can overcome. In the words of the Speaker from the Minority Group who said that 'if the P.N.C. socialism is here with us' I say to them that socialism is not theory. Socialism is theory and practice and if the People's Progressive Party is serious and wishes to take a principled Marxist position then their action at this time must be different and in support of national developmental efforts.

1982-04-02

18:30 – 18:32 hrs

I give a prescription if you are interested in joining the band and taking principled position then

- (1) Join the Guyana National Service and encourage your members to join. That is a practical step.
- (2) If you are interested and patriotic join the Guyana People's Militia and encourage your members to join.
- (3) If you are interested in making a contribution stop encouraging strikes, disrupting production and participate in production as well as encouraging your member's production.
- (4) Practice self-reliance and encourage your members and your few remaining supporters to use local products instead of crying out for imported commodities.
- (5) Take principled Marxist position and avoid opportunism at this time rather than misleading the people.

Give positive guidance and probably if that is done I agree there will be no need for the Ministry of National Development for all Guyana will be moving in the same direction. Thank you.

[Applause]

Suspended accordingly at 18.32 hrs.

1982-04-02

20:00 – 20:05 hrs

National Assembly

20:00 hrs

On resumption --

The Minister of Co-operatives (Cde. Johnson): Cde. Speaker, those of us who occupy seats of this National Assembly do so because the people of Guyana have expressed their faith in our ability to lead and guide them so that with us in every field and in every sector they work in participation with us for the development of our country. But, Cde. Speaker, for seventeen years the People's National Congress as a party in Government has committed itself to working with all Guyanese when things are good, when things are not so good and when things are bad. The People's National Congress stays with the people when goods and services are in abundance and when goods and services are scarce. The People's National Congress does not in times of crisis, (which have been rare over the last seventeen years) abandon the ship, it is steering. But the leadership on this side consolidates its efforts and resources, go to the masses and tell the facts as the Vice President has done in the Budget Speech on Monday, March 29, and further organise the masses to work with Government to provide increased goods and services. That is why, Cde. Speaker, even though some of this honourable House have decried retrenchment, the aim of which is to put workers in jobs that are available and where their services are more readily needed, the People's National Congress is confident that the workers who are affected will co-operate with Government in offering their skills in other areas, for this Government has demonstrated that it is a working class Government. It will not abandon the ship and cause the confusion we witnessed in the early 1960's before the P.N.C. took office. A period which could have been only described as chaos and disaster, thanks to the P.N.C. we have come out of chaos into a new road. The kind of chaos we witnessed in the early 1960 will be never, and I reaffirm, will be never witnessed in 1982, for the P.N.C. will continue to stay close to the people, will work with them and channel their energies into productive work so they will work with us for the economic recovery of our country.

This is because notwithstanding the economic difficulties we face thousands of small men have become real men since the P.N.C. took office, and Cde. Speaker, the small woman has become the real woman due to the instrumentality of the People's National Congress.

May I immediately point out, Cde. Speaker, that my use of the term small is used not as an indication of the lack of ability and potential of our resourceful Guyanese women, or I would not have had the honour of speaking in this House not only as a Member of Parliament but a Minister of Government. [Applause] When I spoke of small I referred to the limited opportunities for education and training and development which was the order of the day for women before the P.N.C. took the reins of power. Our women folk are more confident than they

1982-04-02

20:00 – 20:05 hrs

were ten years ago, are more organised than they were ten years ago and what is more important is that due to the consciousness raising the majority of women folk imbued with a high spirit of self reliance can take advantage of many opportunities open to them for employment, self employment and training. The days have passed when our women folk advocate for equality.



1982-04-02

20:05 – 20:15 hrs

National Assembly

20:05 hrs

(Cde. Johnson continues)

The days have passed when our women folk agitate for equality in the legal, political, social and economic spheres. This Government, subscribing to its object of providing every Guyanese to work for and share in the economic well being of the country, has recognised the inalienable right of women to be involved as active participants in development. Women, therefore, instead of utilising energies for agitation, could work and plan with Government and participate actively to ensure that the rights to work, to education, to health, to housing and to democratic participation are achieved. In short, to ensure the achievement of the rights set out in the People's New Constitution.

Article 29 of the People's New Constitution subscribes to the equality of women in all spheres of political, economic and social life and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex. It gives women the right to education and training and opportunity for employment.

This Budget Debate falls within the period designated as the "United Nations Decade for Women", a period spanning the years 1976-1985 when all Governments must achieve certain measurable targets for women's integration in national development. Those targets prescribe certain areas of achievement for women as a group working to level-up in those areas which were formerly closed to them as well as areas of achievement which have been integrated into the national fabric of society through various Governmental machinery and institutions. Guyana, I am proud to say, has surpassed all those targets.

The achievement of free education has been a significant gain for our women folk at the adult and adolescent levels. How many of our women folk have gained the right to education and training because of the revolutionary gains of free education and nationalisation? These gains have enabled us to fashion our institutions so that equality for all our people is engrained in their very fabric by deliberate strategies and not by criteria such as social status, economic status, discriminatory considerations or barriers based on sex.

Our health gains and our gains in housing have benefited women as parents and as heads of households. We have heard at several fora before that the institutionalisation of certain equal rights for women now put them in a position to function as drivers, carpenters, Permanent Secretaries, pilots, managers, Ministers of Government and in several other fields.

Women's participation in co-operative enterprises such as catering, craft production, garment manufacturing, pig rearing and crop production have come about because of a conscious

programme of channeling their energies into productive efforts rather than waiting on Government to provide jobs for them. At this time of our economic crisis there are some in this Assembly who would continue to misdirect and mislead a handful of our women through destructive, unproductive and unrewarding activities. While some progressive women's organisations ever more alert to our women's needs organise them to take advantage of opportunities for orientation, training and employment, some organise them for destruction. It is to the credit of the Council and Status of Women in Guyana that at the same time a handful of women were calling on Government to bring in food items which we do not need for survival and which a lot of our friends here existed without during the war days, CASWIG was having an orientation programme for over two hundred women to prepare them mentally, psychologically and physically for dignified work they had never had an opportunity to do before and to put them in a field which could put them in the vanguard of defending our nation and safeguarding our revolutionary gains.

It is to the credit of women's organisations like the Young Women's Christian Association and the Women's Institute that they have been preparing our women folk for self-reliance long before the crisis. It is some of those skills which women are harnessing today to earn for themselves.

It is to the credit of the W.R.S.M. that while some organise a mere handful to picket for food commodities we do not produce, leaders and members of this vanguard organisation, with clear minds and a sense of purpose, teach women to grow and utilise the alternatives. The W.R.S.M. has gone to different communities and have shown men and women how to cope with this crisis, how to prepare what they grow in the country, whether it be cassava, bananas, pumpkins, mung, urid dhal or breadfruit. What is more, we have shown them how to plant alternatives. The W.R.S.M. has left no stone unturned to bring about a reorientation of food preferences.

I had the opportunity of visiting Essequibo last weekend and at a forum when it was question time there was an elderly gentleman who got up to ask a question which he said he had asked the Cde. Prime Minister last year at the same venue, it was Huis T'Dieren. He asked why when the younger girls go to the hospitals they had to be given blood transfusion but the older women did not get blood transfusion. He was trying to draw the linkage that the older women were stronger than the younger women and he cited it to the fact that the women were undernourished. When I asked him what he thought was necessary to have people nourished as distinct from women being nourished, he said because we do not have sardines. Cde. Speaker, I would like to indicate that this is the kind of disorientation we have in the society and I suspect that that gentleman belongs to a particular political party. It is this kind of disorientation that the

W.R.S.M. is actively working on to create a change in our society. After the meeting I went to the gentleman and I indicated to him that if he were interested he could have the opportunity of learning how to utilise fresh fish which he said was abundant in his community so that he could make his choka, because he said when he took visitors to his home his auntie could not get sardines to prepare a good dish for them. We know that we have passed the stage of preparing a good meal with sardines in this country.

The W.R.S.M. has self-reliantly organised women in a number of projects and it is to the credit of the W.R.S.M. that many of these projects are not funded by the Government of Guyana. These projects are funded by international organisations such as UNICEF, U.N.D.P. and the World Council for the Decade of Women. This has come about because when the W.R.S.M. has the opportunity to attend conferences abroad, the W.R.S.M. utilises its time productively and sells the capabilities and potential of Guyanese women. As such these organisations have consented to work with us so that we could together create better conditions for our womenfolk.

The W.R.S.M. we know has set up a garment factory at Melanie Damishana which employs over fifteen women. The W.R.S.M. has two very vibrant co-operative canteens, PENWA and the Corriverton Canteen which employs over twenty-five women. The appropriate technology project of the W.R.S.M. which is funded by UNICEF has directly benefited some fifty women through the process of education. Hundreds of others have benefited because we have taught them to use the devices.

The fuel conservation project of the W.R.S.M. is very relevant at this time when government has decided to bring in 10 percent less of fuel than it did in 1981. The table ware project of the W.R.S.M. which will come on stream later this year or early next year will employ some fifty people. That project will save this country one million dollars worth of foreign exchange because we will produce our own local table ware. In addition we will earn foreign exchange because we will sell table ware to Caribbean countries.

We know the Grate-O-Mate project of the W.R.S.M. which is not only aimed at making women's work less burdensome, but it is aimed at saving fuel and also it is aimed at earning income which can be revolved into other women's projects. The textile design unit of the W.R.S.M. has trained over one hundred women and employed some fifteen women. This is the kind of self-reliance the Vice President spoke about in his presentation and this is the kind of self-reliance that we know Guyanese would accept the challenge in realising during this period.

1982-04-02

20:15 – 20:25 hrs

National Assembly

20:15 hrs

(Cde. Johnson continues)

The W.R.S.M. Cde. Speaker, has over the past ten years therefore given the kind of leadership which this country demands. I would like to use this opportunity however to respond to some of the criticisms made about the Co-op sector by Cde. Feroze Mohamed yesterday.

Our party has identified clearly in its policy paper on co-operativism, that co-operatives is the vehicle which will be used to achieve socialism because it lends itself structurally, historically, and it is the tendency which has been most evident in all the endeavours of our people in terms of how they have mobilised their resources and pooled their labour for production during the days of slavery and after. In every region of this country there is immeasurable results in terms of the role the co-operative sector could play in different sub-sectors in providing economic earnings for the small man.

In the pig rearing industry the Co-operative sector accounts for 31.7% of the total amount of pork for the Guyana Marketing Corporation in 1981, and what is sold privately is not reflected in those figures. The Credit Union Movement has in 1981 with a membership of 31,580 granted loans of over seven million dollars and it also has shares and deposits totaling over \$15,000,000. In the areas of food distribution, the Consumer's Co-operative Sector in region five has assumed the role of wholesale distribution which was not possible in the past and the Rosignol Consumers' Co-operative is the wholesale distributor for all shops in the West Coast Berbice region.

In region three, the West Demerara Federation of Consumers' has developed a similar capability. Not only on being wholesalers to the eleven co-op societies in this region but also will be distributing goods to the private sector as well. Cde. Robert Williams, Minister of Fisheries outlined last night clearly the role the fishing sector is playing and that is through co-operative enterprise as well.

In the area of craft production, which is done to a large extent by group effort over 2,000 people earn a livelihood in this sector. We on this side Cde. Speaker, will like the Minority Party to understand that our framework of the co-operative is not limited to the traditional co-operative society, but in a more expansive sense to the organisation and mode of production and the principles upon which the production relations are affected. There could therefore be state owned agencies which could operate according to co-operative principles. When Guyana became a Co-operative Republic in 1970 it was then that the environment was actually created for the co-operative sector to assume an important role. This Government never envisaged that

the co-operative sector would become the dominant sector in eleven years when the production relations for over three hundred years militated against group effort, but with consistent work and with the emphasis on regionalism and the Local Democratic Organs, the base of which will be the People's Co-operative, the foundations will be further laid for co-operativising our communities and our institutions. Co-op is not an institution imposed on people. There are certain internationally accepted principles of co-operativism which are vital to its success. However, a county is free to deliberately guide the co-op around the framework which is best suited to its objective conditions. As such government sees education as a fundamental tool to the co-operativising of our economy so that workers' seized with a high level of consciousness should stage by stage develop the confidence to own and control the means of production and work in an environment where the relations of production do not alienate them.

Cde. Speaker, at this time therefore research is going on on some models of co-operative organisations in an effort to develop the most relevant co-operative organisational form for state owned enterprises. It is clear that the production relations in a state owned enterprise to be co-operativised will be a significantly different character to the kind of co-op which people come together in to plant rice, to raise pigs, or to produce craft. It is a much more complex organisational form.

The over simplification of this issue Cde. Speaker, will not make the People's National Congress jump to satisfy the whims and fancies of critics. Working with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Co-operatives will play a significant role in the ideological development of the co-operative and these Ministries will continue to set the stage through education so that we could promote co-operative development as an integral part of national development.

I would like to make reference to what the P.N.C. says in its policy paper of co-operativism. Pages 27 and 28 and I quote "nonetheless we should mind that we do not fall into abstractionism by idealising the potentials of co-operativism and attempting to introduce it with scant regard for our stage of development. Such an approach may destroy for some considerable time our tempted liberation." The party intends to introduce co-operativism in stages. We concede its introduction as a dialectical relationship between our goals and development within the society. I would therefore like Cde. Speaker, to recommend to the Minority Party that when they want to make a really objective criticism of the P.N.C.'s subscription to co-operativism that they should read thoroughly in this booklet so that their comments would really be valid.

In these times when detractors would organise and use every means at their disposal to thwart our development course, our women folk who have earned respect and dignity and in fact

1982-04-02

20:15 – 20:25 hrs

all our people under the P.N.C. must let our voices be heard throughout the ten regions of Guyana and beyond our borders that we will work with Government to safeguard the opportunities we have secured, to safeguard our gains of free education for ourselves and children, to safeguard the gains in health, to safeguard our housing programme, to safeguard our opportunities for self employment, for we have seen that it is this Government that has made a reality of what all our people were struggling for before and after independence. I am sure that I speak for more than 70% of the Guyanese people who will say at this time that they will work with the P.N.C. to safeguard our revolutionary gains, they will work with the P.N.C. to defend our country and they will continue to work and win with the P.N.C.

Thank you Cde. Speaker.

National Assembly

20:25 hrs

The Speaker: Cde. Hope.

The Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Cde. Hope): Cde. Speaker, the Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance just four days ago presented to this nation a Budget Statement in which he sought to give a very clear and candid description and analysis of the economic situation and the state of the economy in this country. In it he indicated that there were a number of problems with which we are faced and which, in fact, constitute a challenge for this young nation. I wish to say that we should all recognise that the course of economic development and social reconstruction never in fact runs smoothly. There are periods of ups and there are periods of downs. Perhaps we are in a period of “downs” at this moment. But I think it is instructive to point out that for the first decade of the period that the People’s National Congress has either led the Government, or constituted the Government, economic development in this country was in fact moving on steadily, systematically, every year.

If one looks at the figures and if one were to take the G.D.P. as a measure of the economic status of the country one would observe that in 1965 the gross domestic product in this country was \$325 million. Just 10 years later that value had more than trebled. It was \$1,096 million in 1975. In just 10 years under the P.N.C. output of this economy, as measured by the Gross Domestic Product, had in fact trebled. It is significant that the slowing down of the rate of growth occurred essentially in a period when the world was required to absorb the tremendous shock of oil prices and further, in our case, the further shock of rising prices for industrial goods.

Indeed, in explaining the economic problems the Vice President sought to put them in perspective by pointing out that these problems were neither specific nor special for Guyana. He meant by that that international economic forces were affecting all countries alike irrespective, as he said, of ideology and social systems. Unfortunately the P.P.P. sought to misrepresent – perhaps he misunderstood – the thrust of what was being said. He interpreted that statement when reference was made to the Soviet Union as an attack on that country, when no attack was intended and he proceeded to regale the House with statistics which he said represented the expected achievements, not actual achievement, of that country in its current development plan. For instance, he asked a rhetorical question: Can we boast, we in Guyana, of the stability in prices which was stated to be a goal in the U.S.S.R.’s current economic programme? Well, Cde. Speaker, no comparison could have been intended because one cannot in fact usefully compare like and unlike. What was meant was that the world was in a state of trouble and in that troubled situation no country was escaping, irrespective of its size, irrespective of its ideology, irrespective of its economic organisation. However, when that trouble spills over into Guyana,

then the P.P.P. calls it mismanagement. That in my view is a very simplistic explanation of what is in fact an international phenomenon.

Let me just refer to two or three commodities to illustrate the point. First of all, let us take sugar. Sugar in this country constitutes about one-third of the value of our exports. At the end of 1980 sugar prices on the world market were about £300 sterling per ton. By the time we reached to the end of 1981 the prices had fallen to £160 per ton, a tremendous drop in any case but a drop that was bound to have very serious effects on a country that was selling half of its total exports on the world market and when we are dealing also with a product which represents one-third of the value of total exports.

The question one asks oneself is: Was this mismanagement? If it were not mismanagement – and certainly only the P.P.P. would say it was – then what was the cause? All are agreed that the major cause of this collapse in the price of sugar was the over-production of beet sugar in Europe, and the figures indicate that in 1976 Europe was exporting just 100,000 tons of beet sugar. That was all the exportable surplus of sugar in Europe, but four short years after that, by the end of 1980, Europe had available for exportation 3 million tons of sugar. In those circumstances one begins to understand why the price for sugar was falling everywhere. They had to fall and neither Guyana, nor Mauritius nor Fiji, not Brazil, nor any of the countries that are producing sugar had any part of this nor could they avoid it.

But it was not only Europe that was causing the problem of sugar. There was also North America where corn syrup as a sweetener was rapidly taking the place of cane-based sweeteners or sugar. So we were in the circumstance where a commodity which was responsible for one-third of our exports was facing, and continues to face, serious economic challenges and a very difficult time on the markets of the world today.

Let us look at gold: US\$800 per ounce for gold. That was the price of gold in early 1980, but by the time 1981 arrived prices had collapsed to US\$300 per ounce. Now, one of the leading gold-exporting countries in the world is the Soviet Union and it is in the context of that decline, particularly when there were failures in the targeted production of grain that the Soviet Union found it very difficult to find hard currency to pay for imports of grain from the West. It is for this reason clearly that that country had, as the Vice President pointed out, to ask for a deferment in some of its commercial debts to the West. Now, what would we say if this happened in Guyana? That it is mismanagement? What we are clearly facing, Cde. Speaker, is the effect of the forces which determine commodity prices on commodity exporters, whether they are small countries like Guyana or large rich developed countries like the Soviet Union or, for that matter,



1982-04-02

20:25 – 20:35 hrs

the United States. It was not corruption therefore. It was the circumstance of the international trading conditions.

Let us also come a little nearer home and take a look at bauxite.

National Assembly

20:35 hrs

(Cde. Hope continues)

We all know that in the United States interest rates are very high. They reach anything between 16 and 20 percent per annum. In those circumstances, businesses are finding it very difficult to make do. They cannot get credit, credit is tight, and so there are numerous failures in business. But, also I think one of the most significant development is in the area of motor car production. There has been a substantial decline in the United States, because credit has become too expensive, a 20 percent odd. Credit has become too expensive for the Americans to purchase cars. So there is a glut of cars. Production has to go down. Production has gone down and this is bound to affect adversely those who are producing aluminum and in the final analysis, those who produce bauxite. Those are the international facts, and none of these things in any way suggests economic mismanagement in Guyana. I think it is necessary for us to understand these things, and to put these things in the right perspective.

The terms of trade in this country during the last three or so years, moved very sharply against this country, 30 percent between 1978 and 1981. In 1981 alone, the terms of trade moved as much as 10 percent. The Leader of the Minority Party is looking at me very very carefully. There was one time when he used to understand the effect of terms of trade on the economic situation of countries. I hope these facts he still understands, because they have not changed. But clearly, Cde. Speaker, the central problem in this country is one of foreign exchange availability. If we are not able to meet all our commercial debts, if we are not able to import all the spares that we need, if we had perforced to resort to rescheduling, it is because of low foreign exchange earnings, and as I pointed out, prices were an essential factor in the situation. But, of course, there was the question of production. But I would like to suggest that when prices are behaving in the way they do, it would take a mammoth effort in production really, to compensate for price movements that have taken place in the world. Sugar for instance. And if markets are contracting, it is difficult for me to see how production can be made to expand sufficiently without causing problems of stock. But Cde. Speaker, we the Government and Party, recognise that production and exports must increase. We recognise that, and we take it as a challenge. I think this was one of the main features of the Budget Statement.

Cde. Speaker, the solution to the country's problems as I indicated, I think century to century, those problems occur, and it is the foreign exchange shortage. In those circumstances, the solution to the country's problems, we must all agree, lie in production and not in the picket lines, to parade placards which say no split peas, no work; no cooking oil no work, as the P.P.P. were doing a few weeks ago, clearly is not the answer to the problem. What the P.P.P. has to do, is to urge those people who still believe in the P.P.P. and follow it, to produce. To produce to

replace some of the things which foreign exchange demands we cannot import. This is precisely what the P.N.C is doing. It is urging the people in the regions to get down to the job of producing by taking up vacant and available land and produce to replace the things we cannot import. The P.P.P. should be urging that people not to come out picketing, not to cease work, because they cannot get split peas or cooking oil to buy in the shops and so aggravate the situation of production. In fact, they should be urging their supporters to produce more coconut oil, to grow more mung and urid peas to replace split peas, to grow more ground provision to take the pressure from flour.

It should be taken in my view, Cde. Speaker, the truth that the P.N.C. policy of self reliance and self sufficiency in food has worked to the advantage of farmers of this country and will continue to do so. This is important, because if one looks at our programme, we have instituted on the restriction of food commodities in this country, they all have enabled the small farmer to grow things for which he can get a good price.

Cde. Speaker, recognising that the effort and the solution to some of our problems must lie in the earning of foreign exchange, we need to accept as a challenge, that there must be a drive to export. To help in this direction, the Ministry of Trade, for instance, has been able to revamp and strengthen its staff dealing exclusively with export promotion. Training courses are being devised and it is expected that we will have at our disposal, young people who understands the job of promoting exports. And further, as has been forecasted in the Budget Statement, very shortly we will proceed to the appointment of an export promotion council which should be composed of people in the manufacturing field both in the public sector and in the private sector. And for that matter, any co-operative that is in manufacturing, as well as other interested people who can offer advice, constructive advice, in order to achieve the promotion of Guyana's exports. We have also in the course of seeking to promote exports, participated in trade fairs and exhibitions.

1982-04-02

20:45 – 20:55 hrs

National Assembly

20:45 hrs

(Cde. F. Hope continues)

The public sector and the private sector exhibited commodities which are produced here, in a fair in which we participated in Suriname last year.

The Speaker: Five minutes more.

Cde. F. Hope: We recently participated in a fair at Leipez and the purpose of all this, Cde. Speaker, is to ensure that our products get known on the market and in fact we have been successful in promoting trade, in expanding our exports. We recently, for instance have signed a contract to export some two million litres of neutral spirits to the German Democratic Republic. We have exhibited our goods and we have been able to get orders in Mexico City recently. This is really in goods and alcohol.

Generally, Cde. Speaker, what we would be proposing to do in the periods ahead is to use the Ministry of Manufacturing Industries to help not only to promote manufacturing production among our indigenous manufacturers but also to identify a number of import replacement manufacturing industries which can help to promote our export drive because as the Vice President said the area in which we have to concentrate is the area of manufacturing non-traditional exports. I would like to close by saying in recognising as we do the need to expand exports, the need to solve our problems by promoting our manufacturing sectors efforts have already begun to be made to secure the necessary facilities by which the manufacturers can find it possible to get the raw materials to re-commence the drive towards producing for the export market. In this drive I hope we will have the co-operation of all, the private sector whom we constantly invite to participate in the export drive, the public sector as well in terms of increasing their efficiency, increasing their recognition, their ability to spot new markets and investment opportunities. In this way I feel confident that we can help to do the things that would see this country solve the very serious economic problems. [Applause]

The Speaker: Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, the Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance must be congratulated for being so bold in the 1982 Budget Presentation because it must indeed have called for many sleepless nights on his part and that on the part of his officers involved in this exercise for coining the many new rhetoric we have had to listen to in his over two hours address, while at the same time admitting that the country was bankrupt. Mr. Speaker, according to Sir Alec Cairness, one time economic adviser to the British Government, he said:

“Development is not governed in any country by economic forces alone. The key to development lies in the men’s minds, in the institutions in which their thinking finds expression and in the play of opportunity on ideas and institutions.”

Mr. Speaker, year after year, this Government brings to Parliament a Budget cataloging a litany of woes, yet expressing pious hopes and optimism about the country’s future in accordance which is proven to my mind unworkable policies. For example, in the 1981 Budget, “I am sure, said the Vice-President on page 62, that in 1981 and in the years ahead we will do better”, and on page 63 he said “the conditions are favourable for the people to liberate the production forces and assert their mastery over the development process.” This year, Mr. Speaker, we are presented with a budget that negates all the hopes and aspirations that Guyanese will let entertain in 1981. It is a budget of gloom, of bankruptcy born of the P.N.C. policies and strategies which all of us must now face.

But let me straight away dissociate my Party and myself from the Vice President’s statement on page 17 that “we as a people cannot evade a collective responsibility for a failure to manage our systems efficiently and to implement with a timely ruthlessness desirable policies and programmes”. He admitted that, and I quote: “physical output was unacceptable low”. Of course, Mr. Speaker output was low, but how can people be motivated to produce under the doctrine of paramountcy of the P.N.C. over Government and Parliament, with party interference, fear for their jobs, jobs 80 percent of which Government controls man hours lost queuing up in lines for food, collecting children from school because of chaotic transportation systems which resulted in the change in school hours, etc, and I can go on.

Mr. Speaker, our Budget Presentation to my mind was a bit of a disaster. The Bauxite Industry failed, the Rice Industry failed, the Sugar Industry failed, resulting in the sum total – Guyana failed. This time the failure could not be attributed to the protracted sugar strikes, neither could it be attributed to increased oil prices because they have already increased. Then, Mr. Speaker, to my mind the Government should enquire into the reason for the failure. The main industries in Guyana are labour intensive or people oriented. The Guyanese people have to plant and cut canes, the Guyanese people have to work the mines, the Guyanese people have to plant and reap the rice and if these Guyanese people have failed to produce since 1976, according to the Budget Speech, then the only reason I could attribute to this failure is a credibility gap between the people and the Government. No whip could make people produce, Mr. Speaker, External influence cannot account for low production by the people. The Government has created a credibility gap between themselves and the people of this country, and until that is corrected I can only see very little hope for the future. Not-with-standing the

economic crisis which the country has found itself in the Vice President is still talking of no change from the socialist thrust to which Government is committed. He said this on page 44 of the Budget Speech. Mr. Speaker, this is the same socialist thrust which has brought our nation to the part where they cannot get bread and butter. There are sometimes when they cannot get rice or sugar. Saying that we have a beautiful country will not remove the many shortages. Having learnt from experience that Socialism and paramountcy of the P.N.C. only breeds corruption, poverty and hunger I expected that the Government would have addressed its mind to a system which can correct the situation and I say only a vibrant private sector can pull us out of the bankrupt position in which we find ourselves.

The Vice President emphasised the important role which the Forestry Industry has to play. Mr. Speaker, I call on Government to offer real incentives to investors and the Forestry Industry will perform. Give investors duty free concessions for machinery and spare parts imported. Offer them 100 percent first year allowances on all machinery purchased, offer tax free holidays to new investors. There are areas in which the government needs to look into. In 1979 representatives of the private sector met with Mr. Hoyte, then Minister for Economic Development and Mr. Hope, then Minister of Finance. They met to discuss the investment code. The Government, I understand, was asked to decode the code. The government was asked to create a climate of confidence. A request was made for the repeal of the acquisition of land for public purposes act, under which Government was taking over the properties of people and companies without offering adequate compensation. The Government, Mr. Speaker, responded negatively to all the requests. Have they only now after more than three years suddenly discovered that the document, the investment code needs to be refined.

National Assembly

20:55 hrs

(Mr. Singh continues)

Mr. Speaker, there are big shouts about a tax free budget. The Vice President has conceded that we already have an austere regime of taxation. What we expect is more relief from the austerity. Our tax bands still need widening. We still need to introduce separate taxation for husband and wife. Our personal allowances are far too low. Can you imagine \$1,250 to upkeep a wife for a whole year? Isn't that ridiculous? We are told that the Public Service is overstaffed. Has this happened overnight? For years I have been questioning vacancies in Government departments and for years I have been getting the assurance that these vacancies would be filled, they are shortly to be filled and that the Public Service Commission is meeting. Now, suddenly, with all the vacancies that we were told existed last year, we are now told of over-staffing.

Service in the public sector at the present moment has reached an extremely low ebb even with the alleged over-staffing. One shudders to think what will happen after the retrenchment programme is completed. In the Chronicle yesterday, in justifying the retrenchment, it has been reported that whereas in places like the United Kingdom there is one public servant to every 80 citizens, in Guyana there is one public servant to every 20 citizens. If that is the criteria used to arrive at the conclusion that our Public Service is over-staffed, did the administration consider the extent of mechanisation in the public sector in places like the United Kingdom where things like computers are widely used to replace labour as against labour in Guyana? Maybe in the United States you will find the ratio is one hundred to one. But that is certainly no reason why Guyana must also be one hundred to one.

In the Budget Speech important developments like the Caribbean Basin Initiative and the Government's attitude towards the C.B.I. were not even mentioned. The presentation refers to problems and more problems, but offers no real solutions. Mr. Speaker, the only real hope is a vibrant private sector and the Government needs to address its policies towards this very urgently.

What is the general picture which emerges from the Budget Speech? Let us look at the public debt. The country's public debt has doubled between 1977 and 1981 from \$1½ billion to \$3 billion with the external element almost doubling itself from \$689 million in 1977 to \$1.2 billion in 1981. Having caused a bankruptcy to ourselves, we are now sorely and severely mortgaging posterity. Will our children ever forgive us? What about the net international reserve? Despite its use of every known strategy of fiscal and monetary policy, the P.N.C. Government has dragged this country down the drain to the point where we are no longer a credit

worthy risk on the international market. Our net foreign reserve which stood at a healthy \$197 million in 1975 had by 1976 turned to a negative \$29 million rising to a minus \$396 million in 1980 and now it stands at some minus \$500 million in 1981. I do not know what the figure is now but it is certainly above minus \$500 million.

For decades immediately preceding 1976 our net international reserves were consistently in surplus. Equally consistently, since 1976 not only has the pendulum swung to a negative balance, but we have faced a progressively, deteriorating, alarming and wholly unwarranted and unacceptable situation. It provides no consolation and indeed gives no solace to the starving Guyanese masses, to the unemployed, their children, their army of unemployed already dumped and about to be dumped on the road. It is no consolation to tell them what is happening in the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R. and other countries.

What about devaluation? That is a point that has been touched on. Mid-way through 1981 when it had become clear to the Government that none of its targets were going to be met, what happened? The government resorted to the ingenious device of realigning the Guyana dollars. Guyanese however have a more appropriate word for it. We know it as 'devaluation'. Devaluation by nearly 20 percent in relation to the major currency in which our export earnings are denominated. But was any thought given to the effects of this on our capacity to finance our external commercial and other debts? No quantification has been suggested in the Budget Speech, and we know why. The fact is that we lost millions of extra dollars by this device and we did not receive any compensating gains which we were told we would, even when production shortfalls and world market price fluctuations are discounted. There was, for example, a 25 percent production drop. Bauxite earnings dropped 32 percent from projected levels and rice 14 percent. Such has been the P.N.C. Government's incompetence that even the most elementary truths seem to elude it.

Here, let me quote from a publication entitled "Economics of Devaluation under West Indian Conditions" issued by the Commonwealth Caribbean Regional Secretariat in 1972. I think it is very opportune to quote this and let us realise really what devaluation is. I am quoting from page 9. It states:

"The extent to which a devaluation can improve the balance of payments of a country depends therefore on the responsiveness of the quantity of exports and imports of goods and services to the increases in local currency prices of exports and imports and the cheapening of exports to foreign buyers brought about by the devaluation – that is to say, on the "elasticity" of supply and demand for exports and imports.



The effect of devaluation in improving the balance of payments carries a cost, however. The cost is a rise in the domestic price level (and hence the cost of living) because of the rise in import prices expressed in local currency. Devaluation is usually undertaken to help production – that is to say, to promote (or maintain) export production (including tourism) and to encourage (or maintain) import substitution in agricultural or manufacturing activities and in services. Simplifying somewhat, it can be said that, with a devaluation, the consumer pays for the producer of exports and of import – substitutes.”

These are the facts as stated there. The document also makes the point that there must be both expenditure reduction and expenditure switching. Devaluation has to be accompanied by other fiscal and monetary policies in order to assist with the expenditure reduction effects.

The 1981 realignment – as the Government called it – of the Guyana dollar must rank as one of the many nadirs of the P.N.C. policies of all times. It has done nothing but add to the burdens of the already over-burdened people. Small wonder therefore that I have looked in vain in the Budget Speech to learn something of the rate and effects of inflation in the internal economy or of price changes and price movements. I have looked also for cost of living information. The truth is that it is not in the Government’s interest and does not suit its purpose that the Guyanese populace should be informed on such issues. But the Guyanese people cannot be fooled.

What about bauxite? The Budget Speech has a lot to say about the problems in the bauxite industry. Much of it is undoubtably true, and much of what is true is a direct result of policies and practices initiated and/or aided and abetted by Government policies. What I would like to know is why was this Assembly misled in the 1981 Budget Speech when it was stated on page 43:

“The real issue in the Bauxite Industry, as indeed in the other two major industries, is really one of production and exports. The markets are there and the prices are good.”

1982-04-02

21:05 – 21:15 hrs

National Assembly

21:05 hrs

(Mr. M. F. Singh continues)

1981 Budget Speech Mr. Speaker, if that is true then how come are we now being told on page 22 and 23 of the present Budget Speech “the most serious problem facing the industry is the fact that it has lost its near monopoly of the supply of calcined bauxite to the world market. During the years 1977 to 1979, the industry was unable to satisfy the market demand and this presented an opportunity for the entry of competitors. China has intervened actively in this market over the past two years. Guyana’s share of the world market for calcined bauxite has now slipped from some eighty-five percent to about fifty-seven percent”.

Mr. Speaker, was China’s intervention and South Africa’s research progress substitutes really not known on the twentieth of February 1981 to the P.N.C.’s government when the 1981 budget speech was presented or was it considered prudent to with-hold this information then? What about sugar? The honourable Vice President says sugar is an ailing industry and Guysuco a deficit Corporation. Let me simply ask when last did Guysuco suffer a deficit and what was the magnitude of that deficit? It must have been a long long time before that happen.

Cde. Speaker, don’t let them tell us about high fructose syrups competition. These have been around for a long time. Also the per capita consumption of sugar in the developing countries of Asia including China and Africa and the Middle East is still so negligible that given overall development to those areas and provided our cost of production can be contained to acceptable levels – there is, I am confident still a bright future for Guyana’s sugar. But the industry must be allowed to run itself as an efficient entity, free from political dictate, party maneuverings and interferences. Too many Guyanese lives depend on the industry for it to be made a pawn in any political game.

Finally on this point, it would be revealing for this Assembly to be told how much of Guysuco’s deficit of \$81 million is attributable to foreign exchange realignment losses in respect of unpaid bills for supplies and services up to the time of devaluation and also what proportion if any is represented by losses of the other crops division of Guysuco. Until such information is available I shall reverse any further comments.

OTHER CORPORATIONS Mr. Speaker, had enterprises like Guyana Rice Corporation and Guyana Fisheries been run as true private enterprises they would not have sustained the losses indicated: what management worthy of its name in the private sector could suddenly wake up one morning in 1981 and find that it had six hundred staff surplus to requirements. Only a Government corporation like the Guyana Rice Board with a bureaucratic superstructure

staffed by partisans who knows nothing about either rice or management could have achieved such a performance, losing approximately \$2 million in the process. If we are serious about increasing production and improving productivity in the rice industry, some indepth rethinking needs to be done. The local politics of rice has bedeviled the industry for too long. In an already over mechanised industry farmers still cannot get hire equipment at the appropriate time because Guyana Rice Board and regional functionaries cannot get their priorities right, are just thoroughly incompetent or barefacedly discriminatory, nor will the farmers of this country whether rice farmers or others feed this nation or contribute to our export earning capacity on a credit or hire purchase basis. Moreover, they demand a fair price for their produce and a fair price is not necessarily fair if fixed unilaterally.

As regards fisheries, I'm almost tempted to ask who's been fishing in or with Guyana Fisheries which has ended up with \$6 million losses. Where is all the fish protein promised the people of this country and how much foreign exchange has it earned. All we can hear about is this and that phase of the Demerara Fish Port complex being vertically completed. Time was when the export of shrimp alone brought in more hard currency earnings than rum. Foreign exchange earnings from shrimp rose from \$10½ million in 1975 to nearly \$13 million in each of the years 1976 to 1978 and to \$17½ million in 1979. The performance of rum during this period was consistently lower, but in 1980 shrimp export earned under \$18 million and for the first half of 1981 only \$2.4 million. These are Bank of Guyana figures.

A virtual gold mine sees to have been exhausted and thus despite the addition to the trawler fleet and all the modernisation plans being carried out. Mr. Speaker, the Budget Speech seems proud to announce that the Bicycle Factory is completed and went into production. But is it not a fact that the factory ceased production some weeks before and that its staff had been laid off. Incidentally, I wonder why no mention has been made of the much vaunted Glass Factory project or is it complex? Everything seems to be complex these days at Yarrowkabra which last years' budget speech indicated had already been completed. Has it produced anything? No. What a colossal waste of money? I now call on the government to face the realities, to be pragmatic about these issues, to eschew ideological fantasies and pass some of these operations over to private enterprise.

It is said on page 72 of the Vice President's budget speech that "public sector corporation of a commercial type will be given until end of June to make themselves profitable". We say denationalise them, hand them back to the private sector under whose expertise and managerial skills they used to make profits. Also offer shares in Government Companies and Corporations for sale on the international stock market. Even if the Government wants to retain five percent, in this way foreign exchange would come into the country.

Mr. Speaker, there has been no glimmer of light appearing on the dark horizon, neither conceptually nor in its detailed policies. Does the budget offer the Guyanese people any real hope – but perhaps a hope for the silver lining lies in the fact that the government saw the

necessity to bring in such private enterprise. Enterprise as the American Green Construction Company at Linden, a Canadian private sector company to manage the timber operations at Winiperu and the various private companies operating in the mining sector which have been used like Cogene.

Cde. Speaker, I have not been critical for the sake of criticism. I have tried to be objective and have made suggestions based mainly on the reintroduction of a vibrant private sector and the scrapping of the doctrine of paramountcy of the party, so that Guyanese may be deeply motivated to produce more. I sincerely hope that my suggestions will be of some use towards putting our beloved Guyana on the road to recovery. With such a change of attitude by the Government I am sure that we can all pick up the crutches and march forward in unity, with new visions of hope and faith and trust that progress and prosperity will soon be achieved. Thank you.

**SUSPENSION PAGE  
MISSING**

1982-04-02

21:30 – 21:40 hrs

National Assembly

21:30 hrs

On resumption --

The Speaker: Comrades, I think we had agreed that we would take a suspension for 15 minutes and on the resumption the two main speakers would complete their presentation. Dr. Jagan.

Cde. Dr. Jagan (Minority Leader): Cde. Speaker, the Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance has given us a Budget with a lot of facts, with a lot of figures and, as he put it, pointing out a perspective for the future. But when we divorce it all from the verbiage, basically the reality remains: the country is bankrupt.

As we listened to the speeches, three lines appear:

1. Put the blame on others – the world crisis – so we are told – the bad weather, the mismanagement, the inefficiency. Somebody else, not us, not the ruling party.
2. Like Muhammad Ali they beat their breasts: “We are the greatest.” No problem. Everything is going to be solved. Hope for the future.
3. Epic appeals, as the Guyana Chronicle puts it, for co-operation.

The Guyana Chronicle of the 30<sup>th</sup> of last month, in an editorial, said that every recent Budget sets out (1) production targets which are quite modest compared with previous performance and “certainly attainable” – to quote the words of the Minister. Reasonable and attainable, modest. (2) Epic appeals to the nation to rise to the prevailing challenges. Then the Guyana Chronicle concludes:

“But neither the Vice President nor his government now this news paper (which the latter owns) could escape the reality that those epic calls have not succeeded in getting our people to produce those modest targets.”

Verdict: We must ask ourselves, why? Why the stagnation? We hear about all the plans but when we boil it down – stagnation. We will come to the production figures just now. Who is to pay for it all? The working class, the working people. More pressures on them every day since the I.M.F. Agreement was signed. Subsidies went; social services were cut; higher taxation was put on. Last year we had two Budgets. The second one came in to reduce the deficit and at the end of the year the deficit was bigger. More taxes, more subsidies cut out and this year, what was avoided last year, the T.U.C. was fooled to drop the demand for 25 percent wage increases because the Government said, “If we were to give that there would be 17,000 dismissals.” The

axe is now falling. Where is that going to get us? The targets are not met because you cannot keep hitting away at the people, hammering them. Even our friend, Mr. Feilden Sing, says no whip can make the people produce. That is a law. Slavery was abolished simply because of that. It became uneconomic as a system. You cannot whip the people and expect them to produce.

Theoretically the problem is that there is a basic contradiction which is facing the P.N.C. and the members of the P.N.C. cannot resolve it. This is the problem. First, theoretically they know that a demoralised and alienated work force is a bottle-neck to production. They know that. Some of them have studied a little bit of Marxism but, to put theory into practice, practically, they do not want to give up their privileges and those of the imperialists who prop them up, and they want to hang on to their power come what may, and to the fruits of office. This is the basic contradiction facing the country today and so it is sinking all the time. Put more pressure on the workers! Increase the alienation! That is what is happening, but they disguise it with rhetoric.

The Vice President says we must continue to be guided by the objective of building a socialist society. The Minister of National Development said that they have fulfilled the conditions for socialist development. He read from blueprints. He read the 29 points, or whatever it was. Generalised statements. They have fulfilled them, they claim

- (1) What is the objective of socialist development? How do we measure it?
- (2) How is income distributed?
- (3) What about the people? How much are they involved? Where is the democracy?

Let us examine it under those yardsticks of income distribution and democracy and then we will see if we are building socialism and whether we can build it at all the way it is going now. All of you who have been reading Lenin go back to that – income distribution. If we look at the structure of the Budget, we will see, when we divide it into three sectors –

- (1) the bureaucracy, the salaries;
- (2) the debt and compensation payments;
- (3) the social service, the third sector.

This has been constantly declining in percentage of the Budget. From 45.5 percent in 1964 it has declined this year to 23 percent. Last year it was about 30 percent. This is why Mrs. Jagan said this afternoon that Health is only getting 4.5 percent of the Budget and Housing is getting less than one-half of 1 percent.

They tell us about the problems of the Soviet Union and Cuba. They are all failing to tell us, but we were reminded by our friends from this side – free medicine, free education, free everything, stable prices; in spite of the whole capitalist crisis wages are going to go up. If there had been no capitalist crisis maybe they would have gone up by 25 percent in the five years, but they are going up by 14½ percent. That is progress.

I have to here two statements which I would just like to point to, not to read them. We just heard from the “Crown Prince”, the Minister of Health, that in Cuba they do not have free medicine. They have to pay for the drugs. He does not tell us how much they have to pay. He tells us they have to pay for kindergarten. The Head of W.H.O. recently visited Cuba. Let me read what he said at a Press Conference in Cuba.

The Speaker: Dr. Jagan, can you tell us from what you are reading?

Cde. Dr. Jagan: This is a paper which I have written. [Laughter] I am not telling you my view. I am reading from a paper which I have written and I have a right to quote from it. If you want, I can bring the original source any time. I am not quoting what I said. I am quoting what somebody said which is in this paper. This paper is called “The Caribbean Industrial Economic Development and Industrialisation”. This is on page 46. The gentleman’s name is Haltdan Mahlier, Director of W.H.O. This is what I say.

“In August 1981 he said that the W.H.O.’s goal of “Health for All” in the year 2,000 was already a reality in Cuba. A single index: Infant Mortality Rate, he added, is enough to attest to the extraordinary success of the work done in this respect”.

He has a large quote here. I don’t want to go into it because that would just waste time.

Let me quote another one because we will come to that just now: Why we are in this trouble? Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, no Marxist, no communist, but recognised as one of the greats in the field of Social Science, attended a World Conference of Economists in Cuba. He held a Press Conference. This is what he said, I quote:

“Cuba is an outstanding success among underdeveloped countries. It is notable from an economic point of view for it has carried out the greater part of the transformation which I as an economist would recommend to developing countries”.

National Assembly

21:40 hrs

(Cde. Dr. C. Jagan continues)

I will skip out a bit and come to this part:

“Moreover, you have gotten rid of unemployment. For these reasons, if anyone were to ask that where there has been success in development, I will tell them to look at Cuba. Not that you don’t have difficulties, you have, but what is special about Cuba is that you have coped with these problems in the most difficult circumstances that any underdeveloped country has had to face, including the terrible U.S. economic blockade which has lasted for more than twenty years.”

Which blockade are you facing? You tell us about the world crisis and the prices which they manipulated as if you expect imperialism to solve your problems. That is imperialism. Imperialism hopes to solve the crisis of world capitalism/imperialism by pushing it to the third world. Do not come here and bloat about that. That is a law of capitalist development. The fact of the matter is that Cuba faces those same marketing conditions. Cuba is worse off in a sense than we are, because of what she inherited. Before the revolution, 85 percent of Cuba’s export income came from one product. We had a diversification of gold, diamond, sugar, bauxite and timber. On top of that they had a blockade. It alone is costing them \$700 million alone. So do not tell us that the whole world is in a crisis. Don’t tell us that. That is rationalisation for your failures. But, anyway, we are not here to complain about your failures. Today we are in a crisis and we want to see what is to be done. What is the root of the crisis? A Budget deficit which is growing year by year. The figures are written in the Estimates. They are listed here: \$217 million in 1979, \$340 million in 1980, and an estimated \$500 million in 1981, but it got to \$700 million, and they are hoping to keep it down to \$453 million next year. Budget deficit. Why? Why? Let us ask ourselves that question because the people are being made to pay for this budget deficit. What is the cause of it? One is the over-bloated bureaucracy, and another is debt and compensation payments. We told them any years ago, about the over-bloated bureaucracy, but they did not listen. You put all those people there now you are dismissing them. But whom you are dismissing? The small man at the bottom. The big boys are here. Look at them all over here. Look at them! That is why my colleague said, okay, if there are to be cuts let us start in the right places. Extravagances must be cut out. Cut down the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as we said. Cut down the number of Minister by half. [Laughter] Cut down the Vice Presidents, we need only one, and one is too much. Reduce the salaries like Bishop did, by some 30 percent.

We were told that the Ministry of National Development is doing so much. Last year, they targeted to reach \$10 million in revenue. They got \$2 million instead. They are spending over \$20 million. If we want to make savings, okay, let us hit those who can afford to pay. Cut the National Service, cut the Foreign Service and delete all their privileges. Stop all this: taking horses and aeroplanes to North West and Matthews Ridge; chartering aeroplanes; refurbishing



them with beds and all kinds of things. That involves millions of dollars, not only for the Budget, but for foreign exchange. Cut all that out. Cut it out! Cut out all the corruption and all the big overseas allowances of \$400 to \$450 a night. Cut it out. If you want to talk of sacrifices, that is where it is got to start.

Now we come to number two. Two elites are being served in this place. One is the local elite and the other is the foreign elite, at the expense of the people. The foreign elite is now taking 75.2 percent of all revenues collected from the sweat and tears of the people. Imagine that! We are warning them. When Hope was the Minister of Finance, he said that we have the capacity to borrow and they kept borrowing like mad. Today 75 percent of the current budget revenue is going - \$462 million is going to pay debts. When we told them long ago to talk about rescheduling, and we were warning them about this, they said we were crazy. Well, they may very well refuse to reschedule their debts, and then they will find what Brazil found when they went to the U.S. in the mid 1970's. Then what do you come to? You cannot solve this problem now. You are so deep in hole.

Cde. Speaker, the two heads, salary payments and debt payments, alone are more than the whole revenue. They gave you the figures for the two heads in 1981 that was \$675 and revenue was \$558 million. For this year, the two heads add up to \$686 million and the revenue is only \$614 million. Where is the rest of the money for the people? The money is going to the two parasitic elites.

Therefore, we say solve the crisis. If they refuse to reschedule unilaterally, cut it by  $\frac{3}{4}$  million. Pay them a quarter, and tell them to wait. This is not our problem, they created it. My colleague said that the debt payments and the compensation payments take up one-third, that is 30 percent. That came from the Budget speech. Who gave them all this compensation? When I told the then Prime Minister to do what Allende did, he said, "you want what happen to Allende to happen to me". Then, Cde. Speaker, the point is that they revised the Demba payments unilaterally. Almost double the amount unilaterally. In Parliament, Mr. Burnham announced \$100 million, no interest, 40 years and above to pay. When the pressure of imperialism was put at them, \$100 million went to \$107 million, no interest went to 6 percent, and 40 years went to 20 years. The original clause was that if you do not make any profit, you do not pay. When Kennard and Sukdoo – he is in jail now - [The Speaker: Dr. Jagan, please now] went to negotiate with Bookers, they offered \$1, they changed it to \$102 million, 6 percent interest and so on. If we are in problems today, it is of their making and therefore, we are saying we are going to go back to you. There is only one way not to penalise the worker – penalise the imperialist, cut it down. Tell them you will pay them later.

National Assembly

21:50 hrs

(Cde. Dr. Jagan continues)

We speak for the majority, no matter how much you twist and turn it and make minority into majority in this Parliament. We will back you and the people in this country will back you if you stand up and fight imperialism. But that calls for guts, political guts and now we want to see whether you have the guts to fight the big boys and fight the corrupt and privileged in this country and help the poor. That is the only way to get this country moving.

Now we come to the other one. That is the Budget problem. But we have another one called the balance of payment deficit, the shortage of foreign exchange and that is also growing like a mountain. \$279 million in 1979, \$258 million in 1980. Last year planned at \$314 million. It went to \$558 million and they are hoping to have it this year at \$303 million. Even if they meet all those targets that they put in the books which were never realised before they still have this deep hole. What is that causing now? Not only no food for the people, basic food, no raw materials for the factories, for the paint factory, for the garment factory and other factories, no spare parts for transport, machinery, agricultural machinery, for industrial machinery, foreign exchange for capital equipment and people are thrown out of work. How can you increase production and productivity when you are squeezing the workers everyday, throwing him out of work and at the same time you do not have the means of production to carry on production? Aren't you just beating hot air when you talk about production and productivity? How does productivity come? Productivity comes from scientific and technological revolutions and that means money – foreign exchange, because we do not produce them here. But why talk? What is the answer then? 41 percent of foreign exchange earnings is going for oil. 41 percent of foreign earnings is going to pay debt payment. How much left? 18 percent is left for all the other things, to satisfy consumers and producers of Guyana, to raise production and productivity. You can see that the situation is impossible. I am only hearing, ad nauseam, about how oil prices have gone up.

Let me quickly say they are now admitting the railway up-rooting was a blunder that caused us more importation of fuel. Forget the price. More importation of fuel. They failed to the Tiger Hill Project which the P.P.P. would have started in 1965, and in 17 years they have not done one hydro project in this country, even though this country has tremendous potential for hydro electricity. Not one. So why bleat, keep bleating about this oil crisis. Anyway that is taking up 41 percent. We cannot do anything about that. Except now they are going for conservation. We will see how that will work.

Let us deal with the main problem now. The main problem, even if you conserve 10 percent, some Minister said \$40 million, that is chicken feed according to the trouble you are in. Come back to the debt problem. 41 percent of foreign exchange is going to that. Therefore, if you cut it by one  $\frac{3}{4}$  not only will you save on budget deficit but you will also have foreign exchange to bring your goods into the country. I repeat, that requires guts and it requires two things. We will co-operate if you begin to fight. It requires another thing – diversifying our economic foreign relations, not only to talk about it. That is important Revolutionary democratic countries particularly of the third world Ethiopia, Mozambique and so on, but more particularly the socialist world can help you. Experience has shown, when you want to fight imperialism, when you want to grow and develop they are your most reliable allies and realistically the only ones who can help in this situation.

So, Mr. Speaker, what we say therefore, I repeat reschedule. If that cannot be done voluntarily, then unilaterally. Cut down by three-quarters. Cut out the extravagance. We will show you how to do and where to dit. You have our technical advice on that. [Laughter] Free. Now, low foreign exchange earnings. We are told the reason by, my good friend, Mr. Hope, why we have low foreign exchange earnings is because of low prices. But what about production? We heard from the Agricultural Minister how productivity per acre has doubled since 1969. But what he forgot to tell us is that with all that and with all the millions they are spending, hundreds of millions, in the agricultural sector today the production of rice is the same as it was in 1964. What the Minister forgot to tell us is that 9,000 rice farmers have quit; that for the first crop of last year, 45.6 percent of the land remained uncultivated and for the second crop 49.5 percent. Have you asked yourself the question why? Why are farmers leaving Guyana and going to Suriname to plant rice? Why? You are telling us about all the reorganisation here and there and all the rigmarole and bringing one man from Corentyne to come and sit in Georgetown now. He is the cause of the problem in Corentyne. How will he solve it in Georgetown? The real thing is to involve the people, the rice farmers, as we were doing.

How is it that the P.P.P. in seven years, 1957-1964, increased production by 74 percent? How? Try to answer that question. We did not have much money. We still had bad weather in these days. Things did not change suddenly. The drainage and irrigation system is better than it was then because you are squandering a lot of money. Spend it wisely but spend it. But the back lash is the debt payment as I was telling you. Mr. Speaker, I would like to come to this point. The sugar. We see the production. What we have to ask is really how the money is spent. What is got from the people? How is the income distributed in this country and what is really done with foreign exchange that we earn? As we all admit the answer is more production and productivity. But you are not going to get it the way you are going about it. Therefore, to stimulate production we have to satisfy the consumer first of all. We cannot have consumers

1982-04-02

21:50 – 22:00 hrs

wasting time. It is not that consumers are refusing to eat substitute local products. There is none to be had! How long have we been hearing about urid dholl and mung? What happened to blackeye peas? What is the use cutting out flour when the people eat three times more rice, when you can sell the rice to buy foreign exchange? Even the Soviet Union imports grain because no country can become completely self-sufficient, no matter how big they are.

1982-04-02

22:00 – 22:10 hrs

National Assembly

22:00 hrs

(Cde. C. Jagan continues)

The only difference is that they have money to pay for it. We are bankrupt. So what I would say is that we must satisfy the consumers. We must make those adjustments which I mentioned to satisfy the producers too because producers and consumers are interlinked. You cannot divorce them, they are the same people.

I come now to the next point which is democracy. The theoreticians on that side will tell you, Lenin made it clear over and over, that you cannot build socialism without democracy, you cannot increase production without democracy and you cannot distribute, if you do not produce. Our colleagues have spoken on this question. At the political level, the central Government, Regional Government, Local Government there is no democracy in Guyana. It is no use telling us about the glories of the democratic regional system and what is written in the Constitution. Tell us how it works down at the bottom. I am sorry this gentleman McGowan is not here. Ask him what happened at the meeting held at Manchester. Six people turned up. You rigged elections to get there. We are not talking about form, we want to talk about the content of democracy. That is lacking.

Cuba has got the same form that you have got but in Cuba the people are elected democratically and those who are elected have to go to the people every month and report. They can be recalled. You have got that? So there is political democracy, social democracy. The past Prime Minister got up in this Assembly in 1971 and said machinery will be created to let the R.P.A. play a useful role in the Rice Board. It was never implemented. So we have rice stagnation. You have to recognise the organisations of the people. Do not impose bureaucratically just like you run the Government from on top. There are Rice Action Committees in place of democratic rice committees of the R.P.A. That is the problem. The trade union principle has the right of collective bargaining. The workers must have the right to select the union of their choice and that union must be recognised for the purpose of collective bargaining. Where has it gone?

Let us take the case of G.A.W.U. for twenty-five years it fought for recognition. It won it by struggle. If they did not struggle they would not have gotten it, and because the Minister then gave a poll his head got rolled. Having been forced to recognise G.A.W.U. they sought to destroy it in the 1977 strike but they failed because of international solidarity and local solidarity. Then they sought to wipe out the whole idea of collective bargaining through the T.U.C. which they control through fraud in union elections and manipulation. They hope they have jettisoned

collective bargaining all over the place. They are trying to teach us now and tell us about anarchy. Industrial democracy is not there, social democracy is not there. Where is workers' control? My colleagues spoke about that already. We need workers' control not only at the lower levels but at the top levels, in the Board of management like Guysuco.

Mr. Feilden Singh asked how all these losses have come. Is it sugar, is it soya beans, is it palm oil, is it experimentation here and there? Let us know. We cannot know unless workers are there. What about the contracts? Yesterday my colleagues spoke about corruption. The only way to stop corruption is to put the workers in control, to check. I told the Minister of Consumer Protection that the way to stop blackmarketing is to bring in the communities and let the trade unions at the local level to check on all the distribution systems. You do not have that. There is no democracy in the country and that is the reason for the failure and the alienation because that is compounded with the pressures and the people.

I do not want to go into the other things because my colleagues spoke about them already; corruption, racial and political discrimination which affect management. It is no use talking about head rolling. The P.N.C. subverted all the institutions of the state which were supposed to work independently and which had to deal with promotions and appointments and put their cronies all over the place. Today they are trying to put the blame on them.

Cde. Speaker, let me go on and say this: What Guyana needs is a political solution. We said this long ago. There could be no solution to the economic and social crises without a solution to the political crisis. We said this at our P.P.P. Congress in 1972. We put forward eleven points which must be done to achieve this. We repeated it in 1974. We elaborated to sixteen points and in 1976 when the previous Prime Minister and myself were at the Enmore Martyrs Day Rally I took the opportunity on one of the rare occasions when I could get on the radio to read out the seventeen points. I said it was not enough to get together. You have to lay the foundation. One Minister told us today that there is an inter-connection between domestic and foreign policy. We would like to say that there is also an inter-connection and interaction between the base and the superstructure. The superstructure caused the economy to go down and now the economy is affecting the superstructure. Unless you make fundamental changes at the superstructural level, in politics, in ideology, in culture, in institutions, you cannot solve this problem. There is no way out. But what did they do? They rejected it.

Not only did we make calls for a political solution, but even the year when they signed the I.M.F. agreement TUC Secretary Joseph Pollydore, in his Report at the special conference, warned that there would be no end to the burdens which the people would have to bear. At the end of that special T.U.C. conference in October/November 1978 they called for a political

solution. What did Mr. Pollydore say? They took their proposals to the Constituent Assembly and he said afterwards that not one iota of their views was accepted. Pollydore has written another Report which was given to the meeting last Sunday and what did he say? We cannot only constantly talk about external factors. Had the Government listened to the T.U.C. then, they would not probably have been in these problems today.

We have to see it in that context. The P.N.C. not only rejected our proposals, they called us Mensheviks and all kinds of insulting words. Now we see the Prime Minister is calling for co-operation. Pollydore referred to that co-operation. He went on to say that so far as the trade unions are concerned if they become abject slaves, if you want them to become just yes-men then you are not going to have any solutions to the problems. If they were not made into yes-men like the Transport Union they would have opposed the closing down of the railway which was done unilaterally. That is one example of yes-men, company unionism which they have instituted.

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Jagan.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: We are told instead, now, that we are encouraging strikes, that we are behaving anarchistically, that we are saboteurs, anti-nationals, trouble-makers and all kinds of fancy names. Let me repeat another law of historical development.

1982-04-02

22:10 – 22:20 hrs

National Assembly

22:10 hrs

(Cde. Dr. Jagan continues)

Where the working class is oppressed and suppressed the class struggle is bound to advance, whether you like it or not that is a law of development. That is the law they want to forget in the thesis of co-operative socialism – the concept of the class struggle. It is not the P.P.P. making the people fight, the people are fighting because their bellies are empty inside. That is what is happening and because their living standards are declining. No matter what you say, rhetoric does not improve that.

So Cde. Speaker, the class struggle will go on and let us make our position clear – the class struggle has two dimensions, one is the international class struggle. Imperialism. Imperialism is still taking the biggest tribute in this country, let us not forget that. They Philips Brothers sit behind the scenes and they draw five percent from every ton of bauxite, every ounce sold in this country. Bookers Philips Brothers in London, not only draw compensation and interest but they get commission from purchasing agents, from buying agents, from selling agents etc.

Imperialism is the number one enemy. If you want to fight imperialism – any day you will have our support. We make that pledge. But if you decide to fight the working people in Guyana –as night follows day they will fight back and we as the vanguard party of the working class have a duty to protect them and to lead them to battle, whether you like it or not. That is a fact of life and let us remind you too – repression is not going to solve anything, even Uncle Sam cannot bail out the puppets now in El Salvador and Guatemala. So understand that – the days are different now. Imperialism cannot, willy nilly. Bring in the marines as they used to do long ago. Don't depend on them, but fight them and you will have our support. If you fight the people, you will have to fight us too. We will not shirk our responsibility and we will be there leading the working people in their struggle against state capitalism. P.N.C. capitalism, is a new one, P.N.C. capitalism. Instead of state stores we have P.N.C. stores. We why do we not state stores if blackmarketing is rampant? Why P.N.C. Stores which wholesale and retail all over the country? These are corrupt. They are using the state to fill their pockets and that has got to stop if they want to set an example to the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I call on the government to face the facts, they must face the reality which we are in and no amount of wishful thinking and breast beating will bring results if you don't have the confidence of the people. Be honest and admit that the P.N.C. has little support. Tell us how many people were at all these meeting you held all over the country. How many you got?



Not how many you carried to the meeting. People were not there. Even if the 1982 targets are met, and over the last few years history has shown that in no year have they been met, the financial estimates have worsened when the year ends. Even if they meet those targets, they are not going to be able to solve their problems because of the big budgetary deficit and the big deficit in balance of payments.

The danger of capitalism is there. You cannot retreat further. Unfortunately for you President Carter has gone. Carter would have allowed your vacillation and a little meandering. But Reagan does not want that now. You have to line up with them and so the danger is that while you talk about socialism even the little gains that have been made in that direction will be lost. And so Mr. Speaker, I conclude by saying there can be no economic or social progress without the people. Socialism cannot be built without the people, and the country is steeped as it is in trouble. They can only be solved with the help of the majority party in the country the P.P.P.

Thee Prime Minister: Cde. Speaker, I wish first of all to congratulate the Minister of Economic Planning and Finance for this brilliant presentation of a budget to meet our present circumstances.

I also wish to congratulate those who have spoken on our side in support of that Budget.

I wish to thank the Minority group for staying this time to listen the budget out. Cde. Speaker, I also wish to share your joy that this has been a very peaceful session in this general debate. Cde. Speaker, if I spend some longer time than usual it might not be because of what has been said but because my friend on the other side, Cde. Belgrave, has indicated to this House that this is the last time we will be presenting a budget. ‘Mouth open, story jump out’ ‘what deh a mouth na lone’ ‘mouthar and guitar are two different things’.

Cde. Speaker, I want to deal with the Minority party in a particular way. That is I will deal with Mr. Feilden Singh first. But I just want while I deal with him for this Assembly to consider this little note. ‘New York Times, March 14, 1982’ ‘Money problems plaguing Soviet. Soviet figures have so indicated. Over the past year government specialist report the Soviet Union short term debt to Western Banks increased by \$2 billion as Soviet cash reserves in western banks fell to billion dollars’.

I just passed that out so that we can think about that as the Leader of the Minority Party speaks so glibly of how great this economy is and there is no trouble.

National Assembly

22:20 hrs

(Cde. Reid continues)

Cde. Speaker, there are changes all around us. Today we hear of the C.B.I., sometimes spoken of as the C.B.P., Caribbean Basin Initiative or Caribbean Basin Plan. That debate is now current everywhere. Some are accepting it with joy. Some are accepting it with skepticism. Others are rejecting it out of hand and yet to others there is uncertainty. One thing, however, is surfacing and that is it is infecting and infesting the Caricom economic body with some difficulties that probably were never thought about and the interdependence seems to be shattering before this great effort while dependent development marches on.

I promised to make a few observations to my good friend, Mr. Feilden Singh. It has been reported over the air only this evening that the United States unemployment figure has risen very sharply from 8 million to 10 million of their work forces. That is the plan that our friend, Mr. Feilden Singh, is now advising us to accept and adopt and all will be well.

I want, with your permission, Cde. Speaker, to read a few things and then I will make a few observations. This is News Week of March 15, 1982, page 28. I shall read various bits:

“We are here strictly to give people a place to sleep so that they don’t freeze. Look at the people. A lot of them get social security but half of them are alcoholics and the other half have just lost hope. This way of life can be habit-forming if you don’t get out quickly. A breed apart, they are the homeless, a tattered tribe of exiles from the main stream who are increasingly visible on the streets of most of our cities. There are an estimated number in one city alone of 36,000. Though there is no reliable estimate of their number nationwide, there is little doubt that their ranks are growing as recession and inflation ravage the poor.”

I continue:

“The perennial hard core is a breed apart, all scavenging for their meagre lives in trash cans and alley ways. The new arrivals are mostly younger men who have been forced on to the street by the onset of hard times. These are people who have given up.”

Cde. Speaker, I have read those extracts because those are some of the happenings in the great and mighty and wealthy United States of America where private investment, private corporations, are in control, are dominant. I have said that because there is an illusion about our development as compared with capitalist development. As a matter of fact, if we were pursuing capitalist development some people would have been doing all right but the majority, the great

masses of the Guyanese people, would still have been without the new homes that you see in many parts of this country.

Guyana, therefore, must not give up. Our role is to stimulate our people in this country, to inspire them so that the development can proceed. We all know some of the reasons why my friend Mr. Feilden Singh believes that it is due to the paramountcy of the political organisation in government. Probably he should come to the resolution that this country will always have a political organisation to be paramount and I wish him to know in the historical development of our capitalist masters in the past, when the United Kingdom ruled this country, it was the politics of the United Kingdom that was paramount. It was not the local Governor who came, even though he represented the King or the Queen. It was the political organisations. Britain's political organisations fashioned the policy and gave the orders for us colonials to carry out. I wish him to look at the historical development of this country. When the British politicians decided that they must cease growing cotton in this country, that was the end of the growing of cotton in this country. It has taken Forbes Burnham to be on the scene to have cotton growing in this country once more and demonstrating to us what is meaningful development by using that cotton in the manufacturing industry to make cotton cloth. [Applause.] That is why we will get into the hills and sometimes into the valleys. If you are faint-hearted, if you haven't got the courage, then you will seek to give up.

The tax exemption that you mentioned is an illusion because I do not know that you, a learned man, could interpret this allowance as the total money that is granted for the upkeep of any person who qualifies for that allowance. And you are a learned man. It is good for you to spend some time and study reserve currency, for our country has no reserve currency, but the countries that have reserve currency use that in their interest all the time. It is worth while taking note of how the United Kingdom was able to overcome its balance of payment difficulties, the wide gap that moved for £300,000 to £1,300,000 million after the last war. And how was it overcome? The U.K. established marketing corporations all around the colonies and kept their dollars and their pounds. As a matter of fact, no country, no colony, was allowed more than 17 percent of its export earnings for her use. It was reserved in the British banks for the use of the British.

1982-04-02

22:30 – 22:40 hrs

National Assembly

22:30 hrs

(Cde. Dr. Reid continues)

And today we do know that in times of difficulty – and this happened only in 1967 – sometimes all they have to do is to devalue that currency and the cheating goes on. I did not expect with all the vast changes that are taking place hourly and sometimes every minute, that you will want to compare 1981 to 1982 as far as prices are concerned in this world. Prices are changing everyday. Those who control the world market, prices of that world market, are causing those changes everyday. I cannot see how you will want to think that because certain things were in a certain way in 1981, then it must be the same in 1982. You quoted the example of prawns, the decline of that kind of trade. All these are facts, but you must be able to interpret these facts. With the increase in petroleum prices, the consumers who visited restaurants to use the prawns decided not to go. The export market interfered with that and as soon as that export market reacts in a certain way, then that is how it will be.

We have no shame, we have no apology if the objective circumstances indicate that we must hire foreign management. That does not mean that we will denationalize. Not at all, and it is wrong for you to think that is what we are going to do because it is a different exercise. When Alcan ran it, when the Manganese ran it, when Bookers ran it, some people argued that all you need to do is to tax it: - income tax, property tax and what have you and they continued to get the best of it all because even though you legislate the rules and the laws to tax them, that is only one aspect. But how would you collect the tax? Their book-keeping, their accounting was such a vast exercise that many a time they cheated you from the beginning to the end. If we are to develop then we must own and control those means of production. The resources of development must be in our own hands, and we have no intention of changing from that.

To talk of extravagance and so forth. Cde. Speaker, if we were to operate a Government there are certain things that we must have and even though we speak of corruption in our time, we have the courage, and that budget is indicating to the entire country that we have the courage to tell the people the facts of the matter. There are others who probably would not have dared to say that because they would have been exposing themselves. But here the P.N.C. Government can tell the entire country of the factual happenings in the country. And so we have our opportunist around at this time, the faint-hearted and the hustlers trying to make capital out of that. We have listened to them setting the time and there should be the retirement of this Government or the death knell would be in the month of June. Here the opportunists who were seeking to claim now, that they have the majority and they are in the van guard, but in 1978 to 1980 proved differently and come the next election they will see that the people in this country are not going to return them to any office in this country any more. [Applause.]

Those who think we should go back to the old capitalist system are looking at the whole thing very superficially. They believe that we should only have the crumbs. We are the Lazaruses and must wait at the gate. We must sit at the table if practical but without being involved in any of the meals on the table. We of the P.N.C. do not see ourselves leading Guyana in that direction. When it is not superficial the capitalist wake can also be long-term. One thing is certain but it is for dependent development.

United States is labouring with all its energy, with all its skill, so to achieve what you are preaching to us now. Let us take a look at the Caribbean Basin Initiative and hear what is said by the leaders in the United States. A research paper page 4, by Tommy Payne, these are the words of the Under Secretary of State for economic affairs in the Carter Administration, United States International Trade Strategy. "I have pointed out that we are highly independent on these countries" – referring to the countries of the Caribbean – "We have become dependent on them for markets for our exports. Of course, they are able to buy our goods only as they are able to earn. Their principal source of earnings is sales to other countries. It is in our interest to keep our markets open so that they can buy from us." And when all this happens they keep you at a stage where you can just keep your noses above water. That is not for the development of the masses of people in this country and we are not prepared to pursue that road. It is worthy of note that from the presentation of the budget speech to now, the P.N.C. has not denied as I heard here, that mistakes were made. We have said in this Assembly already that when the rail-way was removed that was a mistake. Some people have seen that as wrong from hind sight, and they have their field day talking about that. But mistakes will not be made by people who do nothing. Once you are pursuing development in an under-developed oppressed country then it should not be unusual for mistakes to be made, but it is also worthy of note that the Minority Party has been doing a futile job of washing their hands. They shout that they are blameless. They shout that they are without sin. I leave that not for me to pass judgement on them, but for the people of this country who know them so well, who know the subversions that many of them have been carrying on with, whether they are blameless or not. There is no way of escaping the blow from the oil prices but there are several other factors all operating as it were simultaneously.

National Assembly

22:40 hrs

(Cde. Reid continues)

Some, of course, must be due to the world situation including the development distortion that has happened in this world, where countries like Guyana operated on the periphery of development for generations.

We are courageous enough and truthful enough to admit that we too have made some mistakes and I said there is no way that those who are doing things would never make mistakes. But some of our troubles have been from lack of understanding, deception about foreign goods that keep plaguing us even now. When we talk of getting more and more food imports instead of using what we have. It is a lack of understanding and so by habit we have come to believe that the good things come from abroad. We too have been cultivated by our masters to have conflict and confrontation. As a matter of fact in the very early days when slavery was abolished, when indentured labourers came it was the policy of the masses to divide and rule, and until today we are still struggling to work together without unnecessary conflict and even though we have seen so many changes around for the better, long list of them, the roads, the vessels that we see and use as ferry that take us across the sea and along the rivers to distant places, the schools, the parks, even though the old age pension is being criticised, to a lot of people old age pension has meaning because it has moved from a couple of dollars to what it is today; secondary education; textile mill; leather factory; the improved drainage and irrigation; admitted by our friend; the buses; the Demerara Woods; the bridge across our rivers; the stelling and harbours, the training that is going on; the manufacturing that is taking place, the workshops for maintenance and building of selected parts; wells for the hinterland; some thirty-six have recently been drilled; hospitals and health clinics; oil exploration in the Rupununi and the fish fort complex; the bicycle factory; the tractor assembly plant; the solvent extraction plant; and so many new things have come about in our country. But still we hold on to some of the old habits, which our difficulties in circumstances like these. All these habits have resulted in shortages of some of the goods we have been accustomed to. Some of the shortages are real because we need our tractor, we need spare parts. But some are not real. They are just from habit, from culture and so our people stand in lines. Some are encouraged; some are agitated to stand in lines so that they can create an image to carry out the agitator's purpose. But the real indication of all these happenings in our country today has taken shape and so we are faced with retrenchment and growing unemployment.

It is a hard time for all of us in this country. But if development is to take place these are difficulties that we cannot escape. Greater inflation is on us. We still have continual work

stoppages. As a matter of fact last year we had more loss in man days than in the previous years. We face low production and productivity. Some proclaim it is because of food. Others have that it is because there is no political solution. Many things are happening to cause low production and productivity. We have set about to deal with those. But we have evidence in this country of progress. I sometimes wonder what it would have been today if we were forced, compelled to import the quantity of food that we used to import in the early 70's or late 60's. What would have happened to us in this crisis if we had to import all our foods? Hence, there is evidence, tangible evidence of the changes that have taken place. We have seen the upsurge of our culture in this country which can help us to overcome these difficulties. We are not depending on restrictive measures alone because those cannot contain the kind of inflation for which this country's happenings cannot be responsible. Prices are difficult to hold down and when I come to the other part you will see that even in the socialist countries prices are going up.

Our right to work in the Constitution, we stand by that. Here you have vacancies being advertised in many parts of this country and it seems as if something is being missed out when we read the Budget, for I have noticed that in this Budget the Vice President in his presentation, he said, this is on page 79, dealing with curtailing expenditure we have to trim the staff by some six thousand employees. He has given the reason for that but that is not the end of the matter I wish to read from page 80, "I wish to say that retrenchment in the public sector does not necessarily connote massive unemployment. It is paradoxical that while the Public Service is over staffed many areas of productive activity are starved for workers. The Government, through the Central Recruitment and Management Agency has mounted a special programme to redirect retrenched workers to other areas of employment to facilitate re-training and to assist them to establish themselves in areas of self employment." It takes some strength to do that kind of changing of people from activities that they were accustomed to new activities. But this is the time when that has to be done and if you believe in what we are endeavouring to establish we will accept that all useful work is important and our citizens must come to the resolution that once they have useful work to do then that work has to be done.

This overstaffing of the office and service sector has to be corrected for this is one of the very serious concerns for a system to ensure workers have a future that offers greater security and stability. We must go through the pains of that change now. Discussions did take place with T.U.C., with individual trade unions and other organisations including women and young people. Mobilisation has proceeded at work place and public gatherings and so this exercise will go on and we are confident that people will respond. I do not know of the meeting he talked about but I have been to some of those meetings and people did not only attend the meetings but they contributed to some of the ideas that have come up in the Budget.

National Assembly

22:50 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

But the opportunists in our country today provide fertile ground for sowing dissensions and destructive plans and programmes. The P.N.C. Government would not lose faith in the good sense of Guyanese who would not give in.

Following World War II the average American changed his type of job some four times during the course of his life time. With the changes already obvious in our society because of the development process, workers must be prepared with more than one skill so as to ensure flexibility and job security. That is the happening when there is a right to work, that workers have to be prepared to do the tasks that are available. We are blessed with the land resources which are crying out for the labour of our people. These resources, because of land to the tiller, cannot now lie idle. Idleness of people must be dealt with so that this problem can be resolved and be removed from our society. For me, it is one of the greatest evils in any society, when there is work to do and people, because of habit, because of orientation, are accepting idleness instead of doing useful work.

Hence, there has to be some new work organisation. Some of this will take time because even though we talk of democracy and all that, in so many places it is the system and the way the work is organised that will cause production to take place. For we have come through a system where you do period work and we have stayed with this old system for too long. If we analyse our own situation we will be certain that areas where you get production in these days are not areas of period work anymore. They are areas of product work, where you are paid for production, output work.

There are some trade unions resisting to accept incentives from production. But I would think this is the way it will go for a long time as we struggle to transform our economy. We are aware of the global viewpoints and opinions in the world today. Our problems are in the domain of practice. We have to do things now. In doing we may err but let not such mistakes lead us to think that our answer can be 'if' or 'then', 'on one hand but on the other hand.' Those are answers for theoreticians and professors. As we face these concrete problems, already we are on the ground encouraging and giving evidence to people so that things are happening in Guyana to bear this difficult period. I am certain we will come out the better for it. There lies a way to rationalisation in the country. There lies a way to sanity, not the madness that is taking place with some people. There lies a way to overcome the difficulties. That way certainly is to use to maximum whatever Guyana possesses. I would wish all of us who believe that we can help, to



carry this kind of message to the people that we have the resources and we must use the resources we have. It is only by understanding the wisdom of using our resources shall we obtain the mastery and dominion of our country which shall enable us to create a better quality of life for ourselves.

We are going through a period of pain, of discomfort, but there has never been genuine development without pain. It has often been repeated that development is painful and this pain we are going through now should be the sign for us to perform so that we can return our economy to a healthy state and the P.N.C. in Government has the capacity to do just that. This can only be achieved and maintained if there is productive involvement in the rules to effect the turn around of our economy. We cannot disregard these principles, straightforward and plain. The Vice President has set out all of them; avoid wastefulness, use all the available resources we have, produce more so that we can export more. Some non-traditional things are beckoning us that they can now be exported so that is another lesson we are learning. Then we must resolve at all times to import only goods which can contribute to greater production and productivity. The present uncomfortable and painful circumstances are not an illusion, are not dreams, they are real.

During the last war, Great Britain's sterling liabilities increased from £500 million to £3,000 million. It is said, and we do believe, that the present state of the world economy is worse than it was during the last war. In those days the United Kingdom was able to transfer to the colonies that burden, that hardship, but for us it is hardship we ourselves would have to bear. There is evidence that the United Kingdom did make this transfer and every colony had to bear it. This is what the then Colonial Secretary who was Arthur Chris Jones had to say:

“I think we should be conscious of the very considerable contribution which the goal coast, now you know as Ghana, has made to the sterling area.”

That was why when they were pursuing a new course in Ghana the world itself was thrown into economic chaos so that the price of cocoa would so fall that it would have been almost impossible for a recovery. Guyana, then British Guiana, was not excluded. We who existed during that period should now tell the younger ones the truth so that with understanding would come steadfastness and the release of our energies to do the task before us for a personal and individual development and the genuine development of our country.

1982-04-02

23:00 – 23:10 hrs

National Assembly

23:00 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

Thus would we save our country from the greed, we have seen the greed of Venezuela, some other nations, some other countries. We have seen the faint-hearted in our midst ready to yield to any apparent easy way but if development is to take place, there is no easy way out.

We have seen the opportunist and the hustlers organising themselves for all sorts of evils. But during the period of the war and after we went without so many things so that the United Kingdom's economy could have recovered, not for our benefit but for theirs'. This is our time now and this recovery will be for us and for generations to come.

Cde. Speaker, this very state of our economy, this very deplorable state of the economy must help us to understand a little better the oppression of poor nations. As Charles Bettelheim points out that the greatest majority of poor countries are not simply under-developed but are oppressed. We must try to understand our economic backwardness. One lesson is clear that the industrialised countries are not forced to support the cost of heavy foreign financial obligations.

Another lesson is that developed countries do not depend for their enlarged production on imports of equipment coming from abroad. Their economic structure is not deformed or distorted but integrated and self centered. We are trying to carry out that kind of integration, but even though we might have foreign exchange to purchase things from overseas, that world out there is so harsh that you have to think when you will receive it, in what condition you will receive it. These are all constraints to development. Even when we use scarce foreign exchange to purchase the spare parts those spare parts take such a long time to reach our country. This can be by design or by accident, but that is the world we face and we have to struggle to get rid of the wastefulness, to use our creativity, our brains, how to do things that we never did before so that we can not only survive but continue the progress that has began so clearly in this country of ours.

The development process at this time has been skewed up, (sometimes I think it has been screwed up) and so we have to bear the pains to learn how to put our resources fully to work. That has been the key emerging out of these difficulties, putting our resources fully to work. We are not saying that there would not be problems.

Cuba was mentioned. I would have thought our good friend would have said Cuba has friends that support that economy. He hasn't given us the whole story. He has given us half of

the story. Some other time he will be able to tell us more about that economy that is booming so well.

We have been trying to change the social structure of our country and in doing that there must be an impact on the customs and habits and life styles of our people. We cannot escape that. How can Guyana continue with over employment and what can be described as no work employment in one sector and vacancies in its direct production sector without doing anything about it? We cannot escape having the production of material goods as the building stones. Indeed all the other activities – physical, intellectual, cultural, moral – must cause man to possess the will and the spirit to produce to his maximum so that his material needs can be fulfilled .... More ever, and so we need to ensure that we can do things to feed ourselves and in that particular sector I have already begun to see how people are applying their minds and thoughts. Because of the involvement that is taking place people are ensuring that by using their minds and skills they are overcoming the difficulties.

There was a time in this country when we imported the raisins, the currants and the prunes. When we imported what was described as “ice-apples.” That was the day when some people were calling to march, some people were calling as our friend Cde. Belgrave is calling for us to get out of Government and he has some method and programme to bring that to reality. But people have settled down and people have benefited from being self-reliant.

I met a man from Hogg Island who discussed the issue about white potatoes. He said he has a beautiful cottage built not so long ago and he built that with eddoes. If we were importing white potatoes he said it would have been ‘aloo curry’. But we are selling eddoes so that we can get eddo curry. This period should give us experiences and that lesson should be learnt by now. That is why we have full confidence and faith that people – if needs be – would be able to live in this country strong and healthy notwithstanding Dr. Bhattacharya – without any wheaten flour, without any split peas, and the people in Guyana co-operating for the recovery are already doing some of that.

Cde. Speaker, we know we are in difficult times, but there is a way out. Sometimes they say there is no bright lining beyond the dark cloud. That is for them. We know better than that and soon they will see our workers settling down to new jobs in this country to the benefit of themselves and to our economy.

At the beginning I said changes are all around us and because of these changes some people are determined that they would strive to deceive us. I want very briefly – sometimes you

1982-04-02

23:00 – 23:10 hrs

have long arguments and you don't need long replies to those arguments to deal with some other issues.

I want to ask my good friend Cde. Leader of the Minority party to take note of some of the extracts I will present to this House. I want to deal first of all with the developing world faced with a fifteen percent fall in liquidity. Extracts from the Financial Times, not of ten years ago but February, 1982.

National Assembly

23:10 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

Extract from the Financial Times, not of ten years ago but February 1982. He was not dealing with the developing world; he was not so concerned about that. He was talking about the socialist world. “Czechoslovakia prices continue to rise.” That is an extract from the Financial Times, January 27, 1982. “Czechoslovakia is to raise the prices of meat, cigarettes, spirits and rice by up to 40 percent” from the end of that particular week. That is not a capitalist country. “Problems in Eastern Europe” – New York Times, March 14, 1982. “Where Moscow seems most vulnerable is in Eastern Europe, which faces even more severe credit problems than the Soviet Union does.” “With the Soviet economy standing alone, there is very little we can do,” said Mr. Vanous. “But if we lump in Eastern Europe, the picture changes dramatically.” “Romania in talks with I.M.F.” New York Times, March 14, 1982. “The International Monetary Fund, now playing an active role in rescheduling negotiations between Western banks and Romania ... Romania has told more than 200 Western banks that it wants to delay payment for up to six and a half years of more than \$3 billion in debt due last year and this year.” That is not a capitalist country.

“Poles again fall behind with debt payments” “Poland has once again fallen behind with debt service payments on securities issued in the Euromarket, arousing fears that it could be called into default by an impatient private investor.”

Cde. Speaker, I think these presentations should be enough to let people in this country understand what is the situation in the world at large today. Notwithstanding the noise that is being made, this is the situation in the world.

Again: “Romania in debt talks with western banks”. “Romania is to hold talks again with eight Western banks about rescheduling of debt payments.”

Here we are getting a formula from the leader of the Minority Party which is seeped in his own interest. He said some time ago that he would have given critical support. This time he is saying “in full support”. He wants to go into a fight against the imperialists and probably his advice not to pay anything at all for nationalisation was the right one. I don’t think some of his masters would want to give that kind of advice now, because only living people can carry on the work of development and we are not going to beat our breasts to show and demonstrate false courage in this world.

If we are to develop Guyana then we have to apply good sense in the process of that development, knowing when to press forward, when to retreat, but keeping your principles and objectives clear before you. Those who piloted socialist construction historically know that tactic too well or else there might never have been any socialist victory in this world at all. [Applause]

Guyana has been endeavouring to create a new and better society in a world dominated by the old International Economic Order and unless we understand that, we will not be able to understand the pains of development. I wish my good friend, Mr. Feilden Singh, since he is a member of this House, would take some time off to study the organisation of this world economy. It will be of great use to him, I am sure.

This is our transition period. We do not claim that we have a socialist economy, that we will have all the things you will find in the developed socialist world. We are not saying that. Birth is governed by objective laws and we must go through those laws. We cannot escape those laws. If we take the birth of a child, you cannot escape certain things. It is governed by both the internal environment and the external environment and so our growing up in this transition period is governed by things that happen within our country, but also by things that happen outside of our country.

Cde. Speaker, it is only by understanding the wisdom of using our resources shall we obtain the mastery and dominion of our country which shall enable us to create a better quality of life for ourselves. Pain is the test of our development and we are going through that pain. To ease this delivery and creation of a new and better society, Guyana, at this point of transition, needs not only a responsible midwife – and we have got that responsible person in our tried and true leader, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham [Applause] – but we need also, not only a happy, pain-enduring and contented mother, for if the mother resists to suffer the pains, then there will be no birth, but also sometimes, in these days, we need a responsible father as well. The babe itself needs this whole nation; this growing Guyana needs this entire nation, and even friends beyond, to protect her from the hoards of plundering foes within and without.

The story is clear about so many places in this world when we think of what happened in the Gold Coast, in Indonesia, in India itself, in our Caribbean. In those days our “mother countries”, so-called, looked upon us as little black children. When we did not allow our foreign reserves to stay with Britain she smacked us on our heads. There are still some big developed countries who want to do us that, so that we will be puppets and underlings in our own country. She was able to organise the exports from all these countries but she smacked the little ones, the

1982-04-02

23:10 – 23:20 hrs

weak ones, and she bargained with the bigger ones like Canada and the rest of them. You can check this out in “Britain in the World Economy”, London, 1954.

We have put to the nation the truth and the facts. We told the Guyanese people all. We tell them because we believe in their good sense. We did it by public discussions, consultations. All we did. Now our duty as members of this National Assembly must be to do our part to persuade people everywhere to play a meaningful role.

National Assembly

23:20 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

Do not let us carry placards and deceive them about development. No flour no sugar, no flour no production. You mean on to this day and age leading people in this country would want to believe that we cannot live without wheaten flour. Is that real? Or is that just using this opportunity to agitate people by telling them, no flour no production. By telling them they must stand in lines whether they need the commodity or not. By telling them they must stand in lines whether they need the commodity or not. By telling them they must use split peas if they are to live. You must accept the lessons this crisis is endeavouring to teach us. You must read. You must observe. You must study and you must inwardly digest the lessons that are offered us by this crisis. Guyana is in a position notwithstanding what is being said to make a monumental contribution to the world's poorer nations, especially in the use of their own resources and led by the People's National Congress. We certainly would do that. [Applause.]

We as leaders should manifest our understanding of this global crisis, this deplorable state of economy especially in third world oil importing countries where we spend some 41 percent of our export earnings to purchase fuel and where all sorts of explanations, while they should not be done, pilots washing their hands, why we spend ten times as much for a tractor which we have to import while the world takes our sugar at a price below the cost of production. And how should we manifest our understanding?

This I believe is an opportunity for Trade Unions, Youth Organisations, Women Organisations, Maha Saba Pandits Council, Islamic Organisations, Professional Associations, Churches of every denomination including the Guyana Council of Churches, farmers everywhere, Chambers of Commerce should all raise their voices in concern to protest to the highest world organisation – United Nations and its Security Council – that there can be no peace and security where human beings especially in the poor world and the weak world and the backward world are brought to destitution and lose even their right to life due primarily to the iniquitous cavillised economic organisation of our landlord. That is the key to the happenings in this world today. This should be our united call to the organisers of the world market where equitable prices should be fixed not only for goods from the poor world but for prices of goods in the industrialised world as well. Our call should find rejuvenation – the echoing sound everywhere from east to west, from north to south, so that the dialogue on the new International Economic Order will not only commence but will proceed to herald a more just and equitable system which will benefit both rich and poor and thus eliminate poverty disease and low standards everywhere. Sometimes it is asked how would the rich benefit from such a change.



Real and better life and living is the answer. For in many rich countries people die more from over eating than from starvation. People grow soft and lazy because of luxury living and lose energy to do nothing that would benefit them. As a matter of fact that is the only way to maintain the peace and security of the world. The old Economic Order must now give way to the new International Economic Order in this era of inter-dependence when the mouse can set the lion free.

Years ago when I was a little fellow at school there was a fable ‘The lion and the Mouse’. Some countries, big nations, mighty and powerful believed that they can continue to oppress the poor world and so this is a story worth remembering, for if the mighty lion did not slaken its hold on the little mouse to move the pressure and oppression on the little mouse, the mouse could not have set the lion free to the joy of both of them. United Kingdom at one time used to be so strong, that so many colonies that operated as puppets and subjects, that she believed then she could have caused war in any part of the world making a sign for the puppets to be involved. Yet today she is growing weaker and weaker. That should be a lesson to some of the big powers in our world today, that countries like ours with our resources if we only get the chance would certainly be able to do much better than we have done in this crisis. But with this experience we can now prepare ourselves by using our resources, by putting into that market everywhere some new things that do not come under the pressure and oppression of the world market so that we can continue to earn more and more internationally accepted currency to over come these problems and at the same time ensuring that we live without some of the things we can do without. For instance if we cease to import wheaten flour our economy would benefit by some \$35 million. Let us not therefore turn away from such a great opportunity by worsening our deplorable situation through work stoppages and the devil’s work. As you know the devil always find through work stoppages and the devil’s work. As you know the devil always find work for idle hands. In fact let us advise our people retrenched or otherwise to identify the devil within and without and to have the courage and strength to say to the devil “Get thou behind me Satan”. Then we can manifest our will to succeed by using our resources before us, all the resources of our dear land of Guyana offer an exciting and glorious opportunity if we get involved in any type of useful work.

1982-04-02

23:30 – 23:32 hrs

National Assembly

23:30 hrs

(Cde. Dr. Reid continues)

The Budget Speech on page 8 reminds us that the number retrenched does not necessarily mean the same number is going to remain unemployed.

I wish to close the winding-up of this general debate in the words of the Vice President who is responsible for Economic Planning and Finance, who presented this Budget in his own masterly and brilliant way. The Budget is named 'Ours to Defend', 1982 Budget. These are his last words and I want to leave them here tonight 'To the task now before us, let us turn with all our strength'. [Applause]

The Speaker: Comrades and Honourable Members, this concludes the general debate on the Motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure of 1982. The Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to receive and consider the Report of the Business Sub-Committee.

REPORT OF BUSINESS SUB-COMMITTEE OF COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: As Chairman of the Business Sub-Committee of the Committee of Supply, I have to report that in accordance with paragraph (2) of Standing Order No. 64 the Business Sub-Committee met today and passed a Resolution in terms of the matters set out in paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 64, that is on the allocation of time for the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure in Committee of Supply. Copies of the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Business Sub-Committee and of the Resolution passed by the Sub-Committee have been circulated to members. The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance may now move the motion concerning the Resolution of the Business Sub-Committee.

The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Hoyte): Cde. Chairman, I move that the Committee of Supply agree with the Business Sub-Committee in its Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried

1982-04-02

23:30 – 23:32 hrs

The Chairman: The Committee of Supply will therefore commence consideration of the 1982 Estimates of Expenditure on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1982. The Assembly will now resume.

Assembly resumed.

### ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 1982 at 2 p.m.”  
[Cde. Ramsaroop]