

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 8]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION (1981) OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

9th Sitting 2 p.m. Tuesday, 3rd March, 1981

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (82)

Speaker (1)

*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (69)

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., (Absent – on leave)
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., (Absent)
Minister of National Development

*Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P., (Absent)
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P., (Absent)
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

*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture

*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P., (Absent)
Minister of Home Affairs

*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Education

*Non-elected Member

Ministers (13)

- Cde. J. P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.,
Minister, Environment and Water Supply, in the
Ministry of Public Welfare
- 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, Crops and Livestock, 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. C. A. Nascimento, M.P.,
Minister, Mechanical Equipment, in the
Ministry of Works and Transport (Absent)
- *Cde. F.U.A. Campbell, M.P.,
Minister of Information
- *Cde. F.U.A. Carmicheal, M.P.,
Minister, Forestry, in the Ministry
of Agriculture
- *Cde. Y. V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Public Service (Absent – on leave)
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister, Office of the President
- *Cde. R. C. Van Sluytman, M.P.,
Minister, Drainage and Irrigation, in the
Ministry of Agriculture
- *Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M. P.,
Minister, Health, in the Ministry of Public Welfare

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 (Absent)

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Women's
Affairs and Housing
- Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
- *Cde. E. M. Bynoe, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. D. A. N. Ainsworth, M.P.
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. E. B. Davidson, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. R.N. Primo, 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, 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 – Pomerom/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. Dorrack, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo) (Absent)
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., (Absent – on leave)
Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P.,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P. (Absent)

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.
Minority Chief Whip

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.

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

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

Cde. I. Basir, M.P.

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

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

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh, J.P., M.P. (Absent – on leave)

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

1981-03-03

2.00 – 2.10 p.m.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

2 p.m.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Minister, Health, in the Ministry of Public Welfare (Cde. Van West-Charles): Cde. Speaker, yesterday, in Mrs. Jagan's address to this Assembly, she made a number of statements, some of which refer to my Ministry, that being the Ministry of Health, and I would just like to bring the Assembly up to date to the inaccuracies of Mrs. Jagan's statements.

In reference to the salaries of our Government Medical Officers, for your information, a Government Medical Officer is one who has just completed his or her internship and the salary as such is basic salary of approximately \$840.84 per month. Then you have a series of non-taxable allowances. If the officer is attached to a Medical Institution, free unfurnished Government quarters, if available, will be provided. If Government quarters are not available, a tax free allowance at the rate of \$250 per month is given. If the officer is attached to certain Government institutions, an allowance of \$200 which is tax-free, is paid and he does a minimum of eight nights a week –

The Speaker: Eight nights a week?

Cde. Van West-Charles: Seven nights a week.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I want to say that what Cde. Van West-Charles is doing at the moment, although we have not heard him completely, will all due respect, does not fall within the ambit of Personal Explanations because under Standing Order –

The Speaker: We have not heard him yet you know.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: He is rebutting the speech which can be done in the debate.

The Speaker: When I am satisfied that he has gone too far. I don't know what he is saying at this stage. Yes, Cde. Van West-Charles.

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2.00 – 2.10 p.m.

Cde. Van West-Charles: Cde. Speaker, apart from the basic salary it is evident that the take home pay for a G.M.O. is more than \$1,000. Approximately, it is \$1,200 per month.

The Speaker: Cde. Charles, are you controverting the statements that Cde. Jagan made?

Cde. Van West-Charles: Yes.

The Speaker: I don't think that would come under Personal Explanations. Maybe in your contribution in the debate on the Estimates you will have an opportunity of stating what the facts are.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1981

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 1981.

The Speaker: We now resume the continuation of the Budget Debate. Cde. Gilbert.

Cde. Gilbert: Cde. Speaker, may I first of all, given this opportunity, congratulate you on your election to the high office of Speaker of the First Parliament of Guyana under the people's new Constitution. [Applause] May I also extend to all the new Members of the National Assembly warm congratulations on their election to this high office. May I, too, express my sincere gratitude to the militant vanguard of the People's National Congress for giving me this opportunity to serve in this high forum in the land of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. [Applause]

Our party is a great party of the people. It is a party which reflects the fact that we are in fact dealing with the revolutionary process in our country. Our party is a dynamic party. Our presence here this afternoon is a reflection of the fact that our party

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2.00 – 2.10 p.m.

is always facing up to the challenges of development and the challenges of the revolution in this country. I must say that we are facing up to the challenges in a dynamic way and proceeding with great success and victory thanks to the great leader, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham and the People's National Congress.

2.10 p.m.

I sometimes wonder, Cde. Speaker, what disaster would befall this nation should the people of this country ever make the mistake of thrusting into the hands of the Minority, the Government of this country. I say so because I am a young man – I want to feel that I am young – and when I look on the other side I wonder why couldn't it have been possible to have present there some active young man, but instead I see a set of comrades who reflect a graying party, a dying party, dwindling every day. What is left now is a mere crust. If you mash it too hard it would crumble in your hands. That party would now need a blood bank. It needs new blood. It is dying and all I see there is a set of incompetent –

The Speaker: No, Cde. Gilbert. We are debating the Budget. We are not making allegations or accusations against the competence or incompetence of the Minority or the Majority Party. Let us deal with the substance of the debate.

Cde. Gilbert: My apologies, Cde. Speaker. However, I was attempting to congratulate the Vice President.

The Speaker: Are you attempting or are you congratulating him? Which one?

Cde. Gilbert: Congratulating him on the epoch-making presentation to this House and to the people of this country, for he has produced a Budget which is a reflection of the objective economic realities of our country. It sets forth in clear terms the road ahead of the people of Guyana and it has also set out the parameters in which the People's National Congress will effectively deal with the economic problems of our society. Therefore, that is the nature and character of the People's National Congress, a party that is fortified, ready, willing and dynamic to proceed with the serious task of nation building.

The Budget, Cde. Speaker, marks another significant advance in the struggle for making our nation truly self-reliant and, also, putting us in a position to contribute to the world process of a new International Economic Order, therefore, from the position of the fact that the youths of this country form over 65 percent of the nation, it behoves our party to be committed in every possible way to ensure that the young people have an important role to play in the process of developing our economy.

The People's National Congress, Cde. Speaker, is irrevocably committed to the contribution that young people can make. Let me briefly remind this House that it is the People's National Congress when it took office that got down to the serious task of setting up a Ministry with specific responsibility for youth affairs in this country because our party recognised that the youth of the country had a most important and pertinent role to play in the revolutionary process.

No doubt, Cde. Speaker, our commitment to the role of the youth has developed over the years to the extent that our party has the credit for reducing the age of majority from 21 to 18 years to allow the vote at 18. It is the People's National Congress, while others talked, that put action into the process of advancing the cause of youth. Indeed, if

you look around this side of the Assembly, you will see a set of young militant cadres ready to champion the cause of the revolution in our country.

But, Cde. Speaker, the People's National Congress having established free education from nursery to university – a reality, a fact now, which my colleagues who spoke before me have spoken about – has not seen free education only in terms of a mere classroom arrangement, the People's National Congress has seen the role of youth in education in a wider context. That is why our party and people took pains at great odds to have established the now famous revolutionary organisation, the Guyana National Service.

Cde. Speaker, when the Guyana National Service was being established – when it was being conceived – you will recall how the Minority, the then Opposition, vilified our Leader and our party. Today, the wisdom of our party and our Leader is to be seen in the magnificent performance of the Guyana National Service at all six centres throughout the length and breadth of this country.

The National Service, Cde. Speaker, set the stage for the involvement of the young people in this country in the meaningful development of the hinterland, giving to the young people in a practical way the true meaning of nation building; giving them the opportunity to understand the realities of development; giving them the opportunity to understand the legacies of our colonialist masters under whom we have suffered for so many years; breaking the psychological link with the colonialist masters and providing new vistas, new opportunities, for the young people throughout this country.

But, Cde. Speaker, some of us in this Assembly have failed to recognise the importance of the Guyana National Service, and I say both in principle and in practice. We have invited them on several occasions to visit the various centres of the Guyana National Service. They have bluntly refused. And why have they refused? They have refused because they refuse to face the realities of the revolution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and, therefore, the youth of this country cannot take them seriously because when they speak, they don't speak from a position of objective reality, they don't speak from a position of knowledge and sometimes even commonsense. Therefore, there is no basis on many occasions for the arguments put forward by the opposition on the Guyana National Service.

The Guyana National Service continues to make a positive contribution to the economic development of our country. Our young people in the National Service today are involved in so many skills, in so many areas, that we can ill afford to even think of reducing our contribution intended to make the National Service greater and greater. In the National Service today young people in the hinterland are involved in the production of cotton for our mill. They are involved in the production of meat, in the production of eggs, chicken, only to mention a few. They have been involved in many major economic activities in our country from gold mining to quarrying, gaining new and greater experiences in the task of economic development and, in fact, the total development of our society as a whole, making their contribution to the economic development of the society and in the process acquiring relevant training and education. Today the National Service has turned out thousands of young people trained in repairs of agricultural equipment, in driving agricultural equipment and heavy duty equipment generally, trained in drainage and irrigation work, trained in agriculture and, to an extent, veterinary medicine and so on. Indeed, many of them who have come out of the National Service have been making a significant contribution to the process here in Guyana and to the cultural and social development of shaping the Guyanese people, the future of our country.

2.20 p.m.

Another aspect which my friends have criticised, and this is recent, is the introduction of mass games into this country. They sent out pamphlets when the idea of mass games came up and our party worked for mass games. They sent out pamphlets condemning mass games and asking parents to withdraw their children. Today, thousands of young children, thousands of youth are involved in a magnificent cultural expression of the revolutionary process of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. Let them go to the mass games. Here again, I doubt whether they have gone there to feel the deep emotions of the parents and their fellow youths and our comrades when they see those children in absolute co-ordination and discipline. Bring off the mass games with a bang! It is a significant input in the cultural development of our young people and the cultural development of our society as a whole.

There is no doubt that mass games should become an integral part of our schooling system so that our young people will begin to inculcate socialist discipline, revolutionary behaviour and the ability in every possible way to make their contribution

to the process here in Guyana. Let the comrades in the minority go and see. The comrade spoke the other day of half a million dollars or more being spent in mass games when the doctors should have been paid. It appears to me as though these so-called “Marxists” wherever they may be are failing to grapple with the realities of our revolution in this country. I am of the firm conviction that losing touch with these realities in this country is losing touch with the revolutionary process in this country. They are losing touch and that is why the mighty People’s National Congress will have to continue in the challenging task of forwarding this nation and advancing our people in every possible way. There is only one party, I am convinced, that will be able to do that and that is the People’s National Congress under Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham. Let them have no doubt about that.

In every way the introduction of GUYFESTA, the establishment of the National Cultural Centre, the National Sports Hall, the National Park are all factors which will contribute to the over-all cultural development of the young people. I am convinced that given the task the People’s National Congress will make socialism possible in our time. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Harold Singh.

Cde. H. L. B. Singh: Cde. Speaker, as I rise to make my first contribution to this Honourable Assembly, may I take this opportunity of associating myself with the previous speakers in congratulating you on your re-election to the high office of Speaker of the National Assembly and to say that your high sense of dedication to duty coupled with the high standard of your impartiality in the discharge of your duty are worthy of emulation by all new-comers to this House. [Applause]

I also wish to congratulate your very capable and efficient Deputy who, I have learnt, has been able to take the Chair during your absence with grace and dignity.

I propose to speak on nation-building with special emphasis on people’s involvement through their co-operatives and local government units but, before doing so, I wish to commend the learned Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance for presenting such a realistic Budget to this House which can appropriately be described as a “People’s Budget”.

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2.20 – 2.30 p.m.

In spite of the world economic problems and escalating cost in prices of oil and other industrial and consumer goods which must be imported by us, Cde. Hoyte was able to present a Budget without any burden to the small man and I am sure that this National Assembly will have no hesitation in giving it unanimous approval.

Cde. Speaker, I respectfully crave your indulgence to express my gratitude and appreciation to Cde. Oscar Clarke, former Regional Minister of East Berbice/Corentyne Region for having recommended me to be a candidate on the list of the People's National Congress for the general elections of 15th December, 1981, and to the leadership of that party for retaining my name on the list so that I am today speaking in the National Assembly as a grass-root politician. [Applause]

Cde. Speaker, it must be fully recognised and appreciated that the People's National Congress as a political institution, which has its motto "In Service of People", has indeed proven to us all that equal opportunity was given to everyone to elevate himself and I see my election, and the election and the elevation of several of my colleagues to this Honourable Assembly, as a translation of that motto in a very practical way.

The People's National Congress continues to give status and importance to thousands of grass-root people throughout this country as it recognised several years ago that the construction of a socialist state can only be done by involving the masses of the Guyanese people.

2.30 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, I have listened to some statements made by members of the Minority party in connection with the composition of this National Assembly and I wish to advise those members to have a look at their side of the Assembly and see whether their membership in this Assembly truly represents the kind of support which they claim to have within the country. Out of a total of 10 seats two have been allocated to non-Indo Guyanese and eight to Indo Guyanese. I am sure the speakers on that side had really intended to give credit to the People's National Congress for the composition of the Government side of this House which is a demonstration of the membership and support which the People's National Congress enjoys as a mass party – the people's party, the truly vanguard party.

Cde. Speaker, may I further crave your indulgence to say that it is written that whenever a nation, a people, is in disarray, whenever the peace and stability is threatened, whenever incompetence and mismanagement have taken hold of the society, whenever their discipline and integrity are shattered, there will arise from within that nation a leader who will remove the evils of the society and bring the peace, the happiness and the tranquility which the society lacks.

With the advent of the People's National Congress under the astute and dynamic leadership of Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham in 1964, we witnessed the coming of that leader which this country was so badly in need of at that point in time. Within two years of its formation of a government, the People's National Congress under that political genius was able to achieve the political independence for this country and has since been working unceasingly to bring about the socio-economic transformation of our society through socialist strategies.

Cde. Speaker, for a Government to succeed in this respect, emphasis had to be placed on the paramountcy of the people and their duly elected representatives both at the centre and at the level of the Local Democratic Organs.

This Government in pursuance of that objective has indeed provided the necessary leadership and motivation of the people through their local government units, their community development councils and other supportive groups and organisations to become fully involved in community development by self-help and self-reliance, and there is today, Cde. Speaker, ample testimony to this fact where one finds in every community of this country a developmental project which was constructed by the people themselves under the guidance and leadership of this Government and its several agencies for the use and benefit of all the people of Guyana.

Cde. Speaker, since community development is taken to mean the total development of all the various communities of the nation and includes economic, social, cultural and political development, this Government therefore accepts and seeks to expand the United Nations' dictum that community development is the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the Government to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities into the life of the nation and to enable the people to contribute fully to progress.

Cde. Speaker, self-help, or people's involvement, is the core of community development and within the last 15 years "community development", "self-help" and "self-reliance" have become household terms in every community in Guyana. Indeed, these terms are often used synonymously, and quite rightly so, for self-help and self-reliance are the goals and method of community development. The goal, Cde. Speaker, is to help the community to manage its own affairs without having to be pushed or directed from outside and the method leaves the community to do as much for itself as it can on its own initiative. The Government provides the materials and technical supervision for any community development project and the people provide the labour.

Cde. Speaker, in as much as the Government provides the materials, there are a number of communities which initiated, planned and designed the projects on their own as I reflect here this afternoon, I recall that the people of the Hogstye – Lancaster Local Government District recently completed a technical block after having raised by themselves the sum of approximately \$25,000. They then sought the assistance of the Regional Administration, the Central Government and the USAID to complete the project. The cost on completion of the project exceeds \$170,000 and of this sum, the people's contribution in cash and self-help labour amounted to about \$50,000. This serves to remind us, Cde. Speaker, that with good leadership and motivation any community is capable of lifting itself by its own boot-strap.

Cde. Speaker, it is this confidence which the leadership of the People's National Congress has in the masses of the people of this country that in the People's New Constitution more power is given to the people through the Local Democratic Organs. People's participation and people's involvement are therefore essential ingredients for the establishment of socialist democracy, and I hasten to say that this Government has no intention of inhibiting the people from participating in the decision-making process and the development of this nation.

Cde. Speaker, in the light of what I have said, community development could therefore be regarded as a partnership between the Government and the people for the development of their communities. One value of this approach to the provision of community development facilities lies in the fact that a given amount of financial resources will spread over a larger number of projects since, generally, cash disbursements for paid labour will be saved. The other and more important value is the development of self-reliance and a co-operative effort.

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2.30 – 2.40 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, I have already alluded to the fine example of community development through self-help and self-reliance by the people of the Hogstye – Lancaster District and I now wish to bring to the attention of this House that the people of John – Port Mourant Village District have also been awakened to the spirit of, and have become fully involved in, community development by self-help and self-reliance since the introduction of local government in that area over 10 years ago. To date, Cde. Speaker, those people have extended over 22,000 feet of pipe line by self-help and it was the first time in 1976 that the late Mrs. Bachnie Jagan, mother of the Honourable Leader of the Minority Party, was provided with a potable water connection to her home in Ankerville following representation made to the then Regional Minister and the local authority while on a field tour. She was very grateful, for the P.N.C. has done for her what the P.P.P. could not do. [Applause] I should also mention that the late Mrs. Bachnie Jagan and other members of her family were fully involved in self-help activities spear headed by the Local Authority.

2.40 p.m.

May I further inform this Honourable House that the Village Council and people of John-Port Mourant have also been involved in a number of other community development projects by self-help, namely, the extension of Tain Government School, the construction of a new Consumers Co-op Shop, the digging of drainage and irrigation trenches, the construction of drainage boxes and culverts, the rebuilding of streets and the weeding of the burial ground, to name a few.

Local Government administration was brought within the sugar belt of this country by the People's National Congress Government in 1969-1970 and, as a result, we have witnessed a number of significant improvements in the development of those areas and in the quality of life now enjoyed by the people therein.

Permit me, Cde. Speaker, to refer once again to the John-Port Mourant Village District and to say that prior to 1970 the residential area was constantly inundated by flood and irrigation water from the cultivation areas. There was no reliable system of drainage and the streets were impassable and the traditional open markets were a quagmire. The situation today at Port Mourant is such that the people are boasting of having two of the finest markets within that region and perhaps within the country. The pure water supply system has been integrated, linking the four walls, and this has considerably improved the supply of potable water to residents of the district and, indeed,

one sugar worker has remarked that during his 45 years of living at Port Mourant this is the first time he is enjoying the benefit of pure water supply at his door step.

Already we have seen that community development has made a significant contribution to capital formation and savings on national development projects. If, for example, the voluntary labour and free technical supervision and advice were costed and materials and equipment valued, the savings accrued over the last 15 years would surely amount to over \$100 million.

Through community development, projects like schools, houses for teachers, provision of pure water supply, improvement of drainage and irrigation systems, establishment of dispensaries, recreation, health and welfare centres, construction of roads and bridges and other infrastructure works for the economic, social and cultural development of the people were successfully initiated and completed by the people themselves.

It must be noted that with the introduction of Local Government in areas like John-Port Mourant during 1969-1970, the people's involvement and contribution to community development have been very substantial and with the additional power and responsibility given to them under the provisions of the Local Democratic Organs Act, No. 12 of 1980, the people will continue to play a greater and more meaningful role in nation building.

Cde. Speaker, I thank you and this House for permitting me to speak and commend this budget to the National Assembly. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Singh, I wish to thank you for the kind words of congratulations you have said about me and I am sure that if the Deputy were here he too would have wished to thank you. Notwithstanding his absence, I thank you on his behalf. Cde. Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I wish to begin my contribution by quoting from the Budget Speech on page 56 where it is state –

“... there should be income tax relief so as to defend and protect the workers' take-home pay by ensuring nominal increases earned by increased effort are not unduly eroded by taxation.”

I will attempt very carefully to look at the new bands to see whether the workers for whom so many of us in this House undoubtedly have been attempting to show concern, are really going to benefit by these bands. I have worked out every single band. I will not use every one but let me say that a person whose taxable income is \$1500 will have a saving of \$25. Originally he was paying \$100: now he will be paying \$75. Rather, that should have been \$50 and he will now have a saving of \$25.

The person whose taxable income is \$3,000 will have a saving of \$25, paying \$75. What I am concerned with apart from these bands is to give you certain specifics. I have done two examples. A man who, say, works for a salary of \$280 a month, his income would have been \$3,360. Removing all his allowances his taxable income would have been \$2,090. That man would have had to pay under the old scale \$60.70. It would mean that his saving will be a ridiculous sum of \$5.35. So when we are talking about the worker's take home pay and what big concessions he has gotten under the new bands and what the Government is trying to make out as new concessions to the worker, I am saying today without any fear of contradiction that the small man has not, indeed, benefited from the so-called "tax concession" in the Budget Speech of the Vice President. That is why I say let me deal with the specific salary of \$280 a month. Here you can see a man with \$3,360, all he saves is \$5.35.

Let us take a married man with three children, utilising roughly one-fifth of his income for pension, insurance, etc. His salary, say, is \$6,600. N.I.S. would have been \$213. When you give him all his allowances for himself and children and all he is entitled to, his taxable income would have been \$737. What would be the position of this man? Under the old scale he would have been paying a tax of \$36.85; under the new scale he will be paying \$36.85. So he is in the same position. He, in fact, has received no concession.

But if I had gone down and looked at the bottom of the chart which I have drawn, the person, whose cumulative rate would have been \$20,300, is in an ideal position because he would be saying, under the new bands, \$1,965, which is roughly \$2,000.

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2.50 p.m.

The point I make very simply, Cde. Speaker, is that the main in the higher bracket stands to gain substantially from that which, the Government is attempting to convey to the nation, is a concession to the worker. I have attempted, without spending too long on this bearing in mind that my time is limited, to show you that on the other hand, the simple man, the worker, gets no real gain, no real benefit, out of it.

I want, also, to make a proposal, Cde. Speaker, with the objective that it will reach the ear of the Vice President, and that before this debate is concluded he would accede to this request. Chargeable income was fixed since 1973 at over \$500, which would mean that a person earning up to \$500 will not have to pay on that, but if he earns \$501, then he has to pay income tax.

I am asking the Government to increase that sum – that was 1973; we are now eight years after – by a minimum of 100 percent which will take it to \$1,000, bearing in mind the cost of living and so many other constraints under which the ordinary man has to live and make a serious attempt indeed to make two ends meet. I think this is a reasonable proposal and I hope that the Government will accede to it. That will call for a simple amendment for the current legislation that deals with taxation and then let us fix the premium.

Cde. Speaker, there has been a lot of talk about equality of the sexes. I don't want to get too much into the debate, but I want to ask the Government what is delaying the Government from taking action to allow working wives to submit separate income tax returns. They are entitled to that. The legislation has not come before the House. We hear of consideration being given to that. We want to see it as a reality. Some statement to the effect was made by a public servant, but I would like to see it come into Parliament and take effect as early as possible, and I would say from the 1st January, 1981. That again, Mr. Speaker, is a reasonable request.

And then I come to the subject matter which I am to deal with and that is agriculture. Agriculture, Cde. Speaker, is still the backbone of this country's economy. I think we will all concede that agriculture is a dynamic process and those involved in the process of agricultural development must be encouraged, must be inspired and, more than that, they must be specifically encouraged to reside in areas of agricultural development.

We have two kinds of migration in this country – migration out of Guyana and migration to the already crowded urban areas. There can be no doubt that because of the disparity that exists between urban life and rural life, because of the quality of life that obtains in rural Guyana, particularly in agricultural communities, a great number of our producers have been either migrating overseas or to Georgetown because many of these areas are without naked facilities that are vital to the sustenance and existence of man. Many areas, without seeking to identify them but if time permits I will even attempt, that are producing and feeding this nation are without water supply, electricity, health facilities, educational facilities, access roads.

I can pose the question, why is it the access road to Mahaicony Creek or river has not been built? I have gone there umpteen occasions. The community there, they are producing and can produce and indeed do more to push the economy of this country. They are compelled to use primitive means of transport to get out and, moreso, when there are incidents of illness they suffer tremendously, and I have no doubt in my mind that many people die in the process.

I can cite another area. Why is it that at Farm and Ruby on the East Bank Essequibo, the access roads are not being built? There is no light, there is no water, there is no facility whatsoever and when you go to the area to look at the work that the farmers are doing, you can see that they have been making a tremendous contribution to agriculture.

Cde. Speaker, they suffer in many ways; from a personal way, as I have been citing, and in other ways, like prices, transportation of their produce, inputs into the agricultural process. Unless all these factors are examined and positive action taken, there can never be any real development in this country, our economy will continue to stagnate and the people in this country will continue to suffer.

I have said on umpteen occasions and today will be no exception that we have got the resources to feed not only Guyanese but the Caribbean. I think, Cde. Speaker, the statement that Guyana is the food basket is not a new one, but countries within Caricom are importing over one billion dollars in foodstuff from outside of the region and there can be no doubt that Guyana could have got a great share from that one billion dollars, but we have found ourselves on so many occasions unable to feed ourselves. For instance, if I cite rice, we have had the experience where we had shortages of rice on so many occasions in this country.

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Cde. Speaker, if one was to examine all the figures – without citing them; I have got them all – year after year production has fallen considerably and where there is increase, that increase has to be looked at with the number of years and those figures must be equated with the years the Government speakers are trying to convey to this Assembly that were not good in this country. But I will cite a few of those figures in a few seconds.

But why, Cde. Speaker, agriculture is in this depressing state is because the People's National Congress Government in its 1966-1972 Development Programme downgraded agriculture when it provided only 13 percent of its Budget allocation to drainage and irrigation against 30 percent in the People's Progressive Party's 1960-1964 Development Plan. That is a positive point for consideration in that in the People's Progressive Party's Development Programme, agriculture had priority.

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3.00 – 3.10 p.m.

3 p.m.

I have been looking over the speeches of many legislators in this Parliament, including our President, to see what they said about agriculture. One sees that the P.P.P. was criticised. It was a “rice” government; it was this government, that government and the other government, but nobody will deny that the farmers of this country enjoyed a better quality of life under the P.P.P. than at the current time, our production was higher and, indeed, it was because of our clear programme for an agricultural drive and agricultural development.

Talking about drainage and irrigation, I recall the Minister who is in charge of drainage and irrigation – there are so many Ministers I am a bit confused. For the years I have been here I have been accustomed to speaking to one Minister of Agriculture; I think we have about four now taking the various facets. The M.M.A. and Tapakuma were projects that had priority in the P.P.P.’s development programme and both these projects should have commenced since the year 1965. I was looking at an early Budget Speech in which a former Minister of Finance spoke of the increased cost for projects like Tapakuma. But why is this so? It is because the Government shunted it for several years. I recall in the early 70’s moving a motion in this Parliament asking for the immediate implementation of the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Scheme. On that occasion that P.N.C. Government voted against the Motion. I know that I am talking to new members and it is necessary to bring them within the respective of things in Guyana otherwise they will have only limited knowledge of the political realities of this country.

To come and say this project will be completed in 81 and the other in 82 is tantamount to the Government indicting itself for neglecting those projects. The British consultant – I think he was Hutchinson – came here since 1950 and he examined these projects and he made recommendations. These projects were re-examined by two of our engineers. One is now a Vice President. The amended projects were in the hands of the Government since it came into office and it was not until the year 1974, according to the Government’s own admission, and the Minister said it only yesterday, that they started doing something about the projects. Now those projects will cost anything in the vicinity of \$500 million. Probably more. They would have been able to save half of that amount if the projects had been implemented at the proper time.

The fact that the agricultural process has been stultified, the fact that there is no development or growth in this country, the fact that the Government in recent years has been confessing the failure of the various sectors to produce, I am saying the Members of

the Government must blame themselves. They have been in the seat of Government for 16 years and they did nothing to fashion a course by which and through which the people of this country would have been able to live happily and live economically, viable, in Guyana today. I do not think any Minister can offer any excuse for the delay in implementing those projects.

When there was talk about the M.M.A., farmers within the areas started empoldering their lands. They were seeing that that project would have been implemented immediately and for several years no action was taken and one can imagine how frustrated the farmers became. The result is as we have been seeing it, migration – either to the city of Georgetown, out of the country or out of the agricultural sector.

I wish to refer to page 20 of the Budget Speech in which many projects were identified but may I simply say, just citing the page, that these are projects that are long overdue and should have been completed years ago. Farming families need a new deal. Their work has to be made much easier and immediate action taken to devise better systems, provide better facilities and conditions and just remuneration for feeding the nation.

I want also to briefly look at agricultural inputs. In the Vice President's Budget Speech he admitted that there was, indeed, misdirection from the managerial standpoint dealing with rice specifically. Let me quote those words on page 9:

“the Rice Industry seemed to have suffered more from management shortcomings and an inadequate supply and an unimaginative development of tractors and other machines.”

Here the Government is saying that the real fault in the rice industry is from the managerial shortcomings but it took Members of the Government 16 years to attempt a clean-up of the Rice Marketing Board. I think one of those whose names I would have like to cite has been removed. I don't want to cite him but simply to say that that very person had the temerity, if not the audacity, to accuse the farmers for shortages of rice in this country and I read two statements in the Chronicle contradicting each other: one in which he was saying that the shortage was due to the fact that rice farmers were withholding rice so that they could get the new price and in the other one he said that in any case had they submitted their rice the price was there. So that it was not true to say that the farmers were withholding for price because the price came into effect from the time it was announced.

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But there was a rice shortage because of low production. Last year the projected figure was 200,000 tons but we only produced 168,000 tons. Way back in 1964 and 1965 this country produced 164,000 tons of rice. When we reached the year 1980 all we could add to that was 4,200 – 168,000 tons.

Cde. Speaker, if you look at the Budget Speeches for several years you will see that on each occasion there was a fall in production and I am saying that the reason for the fall is this, that the farmers are not being paid what is justly due to them. I want to ask why the Government is so cagey about the statistics. The last agricultural report that came to this Honourable Assembly was in the year 1969. For 11 years we have no report from the Ministry of Agriculture. Now that we have a new Minister, or Ministers, I sincerely trust that we will have reports coming out.

And then I make the other point that they are withholding figures as to what price the Government is obtaining for rice exported. Why? That should not be a secret. I would feel that if the farmers are to bargain for increased prices for rice they must know what you are getting. That looks to me like simple logic and reason but to place the farmers at a disadvantage by not telling them what you are selling for – this is a Government that is saying that it is for the people; it wants the people's involvement. Why are you afraid to tell the people what you are getting, what are your inputs so that you can work out an equitable price for the farmers of this country?

3.10 p.m.

The Speaker: Five minutes more.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persuad: Some figures were recently published, Cde. Speaker, from Trinidad, and those figures show that the Government is getting roughly \$108 per bag of rice of 180 pounds. I am calling upon the Government, based on that figure, to pay the rice farmers 75 percent of whatever they get for the sale of rice. At the moment Government is retaining some 47-48 percent of what they are getting as profit. When we talk about exploiters and when we talk about sharks and what have you, it is vitally necessary for us to look at ourselves and the Government, I sincerely trust, will not want to be indicted for exploiting the farmers of this country.

There is the question, Cde. Speaker, of land utilisation and land imbalance. We hear all the talk about land to the tiller, but there are many, many areas in which people are living under conditions of serfdom. Why is it action is not being taken to ensure that the little farmers are protected in so many areas in this country?

Cde. Speaker, agriculture is in jeopardy and if agriculture is in jeopardy, it means that the country's economy is in jeopardy and the country as a whole is in jeopardy. I call upon the Government to rethink its approach to agriculture, to give the farmers a fair deal, to restore democracy. If there is mismanagement in the rice industry, I want to make one simple appeal: repeal all the amendments to the Rice Marketing Board Ordinance dating back to May 1965 when it was moved by Mr. Kendall. I told him, "You are striking the death knell to the rice industry." Amend those Acts and revert to the position of 1964 and place the industry under the control of the farmers of this country. That would be real democracy to the people, to the farmers and we would have production of rice not only for home consumption but for the export market. We know that rice is a great foreign-currency earner.

Cde. Speaker, very briefly, let me say a few words about local government. A lot is being said about local government and local democracy, but let us concede that when one examines the Constitution and when one looks at the Local Government Act, one sees an extension of the bureaucracy. Examining the Budget, \$46 million was provided for both capital and current expenditure will eat up for all 10 regions the sum of \$16 million. The evidence is in the recent Order made by the Minister of Regional Development where every Chairman of every region, not dealing with the Vice Chairman, will be paid \$1,500 a month with two allowances of \$200 which will take him to \$1,900 a month.

We are imposing another superstructure on the people. You have to build from the bottom. We have clear evidence both from the Press and from the utterances of members of GALA, as it was known then, and even from Ministers of the Government, that many of the district councils did not even succeed in attracting quorums at their meetings. The People's National Congress Government exhausted all the available names. There was nobody else on the lists to be put on those councils. The law had to be amended. It seems to me, Cde. Speaker, that we are moving back into the same situation.

The whole country has been run down. What is supposed to be garden city is literally garbage city. Roads, water, drainage, all these things affect the people both in

the city and in rural Guyana, rural Guyana worse. In some areas these do not exist. Cde. Speaker, talking about democracy, we know that these councils –

The Speaker: Mr. Persaud, I'm afraid you can't go on to that.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Very well, sir. The last point is that these councils cannot be anything more than appendages of the Government because they are compelled to carry out the directions of the Government under the available legislation. They are saying there are two, but the two make a whole. What I simply say is that those councils are additional linkages, Government agencies, to carry out the Government's directions and to carry out its programmes and policies. True democracy would have meant that the people in the areas would have had greater autonomy, greater democracy and greater freedom.

The Speaker: Cde. Tyndall.

The Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Tyndall): Cde. Speaker, many of my colleagues on this side of the Assembly have spoken on the subject of agriculture. This should not be surprising. Indeed, it is a testimony to the commitment of this Government to the development of agriculture, the importance that this Government, the Government of the People's National Congress, attaches to agricultural development. That this concern has been evident in the programmes and policies pursued by this Government from its very earliest years in an incontrovertible fact. One only has to look at the investment statistics over the years and compare them with the investment statistics in agriculture during the years of the Government of the People's Progressive Party and one would see that under the People's National Congress, as a proportion of total investment, as proportion of total Government expenditure, as a proportion of total gross domestic product, the People's National Congress Government has invested far more in agriculture and will continue to invest more in agriculture.

Cde. Speaker, it is only too logical that this Government should place such emphasis on agriculture, for agriculture caters not only for one of mankind's most basic needs, but for countries such as ours it is a most important employment sector and a leading net foreign exchange earner; and the sector has considerable potential in terms of what it could contribute to the economic development of our country, a potential which this Government is determined to see fully realised.

One of mankind's most basic needs is the need for food and for food security. Food security is one of the most urgent problems on the agenda of the international community. For the second time in less than 10 years the world is experiencing a grave food crisis. A significant number of developing countries are facing severe food shortages. Poor harvests in the developed world, particularly in Eastern Europe, have resulted in a decline in the world food production and in world food stocks.

In developing countries, food production is barely keeping pace with population increases in overall terms, but in 61 developing countries food output per head of population is declining and about 55 developing countries in the world have been recognised as having special food problems. (I am happy to say that as a result of the policies of the Government of the People's National Congress from its assumption of office, Guyana is not and will never be classified among those countries having special food problems). And many of these countries have been experiencing severe localised famine. There are ominous signs that the situation will grow worse unless drastic action is taken to reverse the trend.

Declining food output has come at a time when the developing countries are experiencing severe balance of payments problems and many of these shortfall countries do not have the resources to pay for food imports to meet minimum nutritional needs. Spiralling freight costs have aggravated the problem. Considering the vast amount of food needed beyond what could be produced to meet minimal nutritional requirements, food aid is very far from adequate and there are strong international pressures for it to be expanded significantly. But progress towards the attainment of food aid target of 10 million tons set by the World Food Council in 1974 has been very slow and even this target is now considered to be far below what can be considered adequate. The fact is that current food aid efforts have fallen considerably below levels reached for the 1973-74 crisis.

The message in all this is clear. Developing countries must make a supreme effort to increase food self-sufficiency. They must make every effort to meet more of their food needs from their own production, depend less upon imports, upon foods produced in foreign countries; and Guyana is no exception.

Agriculture is important not only as a means of satisfying the basic need for food; it is also, for most developing countries including Guyana, an important source of foreign exchange and of employment. Our agricultural exports have contributed by far the

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greatest share of our foreign exchange earnings in net terms. We depend heavily on agricultural resources to import those essential items which we cannot ourselves produce and which are necessary for our well being and our development. But many of the major agricultural exports of developing countries are severely hampered by protectionist policies in the markets of developed countries. The difficulties for the agricultural exports of developing countries are intensified by the spiraling freight costs and the spiraling costs of imported agricultural inputs such as machinery and equipment, fertilizers and other supplies.

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Apart from rising production costs, our major export, sugar, now faces some degree of uncertainty in our traditional market in the United Kingdom. The closure of Tate and Lyle's Liverpool refinery means that up to 100,000 tons of ACP sugar may lose the security afforded by political assurances and commercial commitments in our traditional market. The matter has been the subject of discussions between the ACP countries and the United Kingdom Government. As a result of these discussions, we now have cause to feel some degree of optimism, but we cannot yet say that all our fears have been allayed.

We cannot hope to control or even influence many of the factors of our international environment which adversely affect our exports. We cannot control the cost of imported machinery and equipment, the cost of imported supplies. But we can respond to these factors by increasing the efficiency of our operations so as to offset the inexorable rise in the cost of these inputs; and we can increase production to take advantage of better prices. We are in a very good position with our rice, for example. The demand exists. It is up to us to produce. And I must assure this Assembly that we have installed the programme and the policies which will ensure rising production in the future.

Increased production and productivity are in our own hands. It is up to use in sugar industry, and in the rice industry, as workers at every level, to rise to the challenge, to increase our efforts, to apply greater ingenuity, and to avoid waste, to avoid sabotage. By so doing, we will contribute to our welfare as workers and to the development of our country. This is a challenge which is beyond partisan politics.

I have referred to the international situation because we do not and cannot live in isolation from what is going on in the world outside; we cannot develop in isolation. And our efforts in agriculture must reflect an adequate response to the crisis in the international economy – the world food shortage, the need to increase national food security, and to develop exports to help meet the growing food needs.

Our response must be reflected in our agricultural programmes, in an appropriate food and agricultural strategy. I have already indicated some of the things which we ought to do and which in fact have been incorporated in our programmes. Let me restate some of these briefly, some of the things which we ought to do as a government and some of the things which we ought to do as a people and some of the things which we

have been doing as a government and some of the things which we are striving to do as a people, despite those who are trying to divert us and divert those people from the objectives. And I will add some additional elements.

First of all, we must pursue an agricultural programme to reduce our dependence on imported foods. We still import too much milk, too much coffee, too much vegetable oil, too much legumes, to name a few obvious ones, all of which we can either substitute or displace by local production. In so doing, we do not only save scarce foreign exchange resources but we also provide ourselves with the employment opportunities which can be generated from increased production.

I was in Bangladesh not too long ago. In Bangladesh they make excellent dhal from mung. We produce mung in Guyana and we can produce it in adequate quantities to make all the dhal we can consume. And I understand that in South India they make dhal from urid and mung. We can produce enough urid and mung to make all the dhal that we can consume. I have been advised that in terms of nutritional qualities, yellow split peas, to which we seem to have some addiction, have no advantage over mung and urid. I can say, from personal experiences not from advice, that they have no advantage in taste either.

Our agricultural programme provide for increasing or developing the production of all the items I have mentioned. In a world in which food surpluses are shrinking, in which imported food supplies are getting less dependable and the prices of which are skyrocketing, in which foreign exchange resources are being pre-empted by rising oil bills and import costs of other essential items, we cannot afford the luxury of squandering away our scarce resources on the foods we can produce for ourselves or for which we can find equal or even more nutritious of delectable substitutes.

Secondly, we must, as we have been doing, diversify our agricultural production base. Thirdly, we must increase the efficiency of our agricultural production so as to increase our competitiveness in external markets, so as to increase the incomes from farming, and so as to provide a solid base from improving the benefits to workers in the industry.

Finally, we must seek to utilise every inch of arable land that can be brought under beneficial cultivation. This calls for a very careful examination of our system of land holdings so as to be able to introduce whatever changes or measures may be

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considered necessary or desirable for the most efficient utilisation of these resources. I am happy to say that steps have already been taken and a committee has been appointed to look at the question of land holdings and to look at the possibilities and measures that may be necessary for improving the efficiency of their utilisation.

The agricultural policy and programmes of this Government are informed by these four imperatives. And it has now been decided to prepare a comprehensive Food and Agriculture Plan which will provide a framework for on-going and new programmes to meet our policy and programme objectives of food consumption and nutrition, food self-sufficiency, employment and incomes, as well as to further our export drive.

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3.30 – 3.40 p.m.

3.30 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, I now wish to turn to some of the major sectors of the economy. The performance of the sugar industry is an important determinant in relation to the overall performance of the economy. This we must all admit. It follows, therefore, that we must concentrate our efforts in 1981 on removing or neutralising the preventable causes that led to the shortfall in 1980. Unseasonable weather, the coming of rains in the middle of the first crop, and the early coming of the end-of-year rains in the middle of November contributed significantly to the failure to achieve our objectives. We cannot control the elements, but there are other factors which are within our capacity to control whether we are workers – both management and non-management – or persons involved in the industry in so many other ways. If we recognise how crucial the performance of the industry is to the immediate and long term interest of the workers and to the well being of the nation as a whole, we will seek to avoid actions and attitudes within the industry and outside the industry that can adversely affect its overall performance.

The industry's targets in 1981 as stated by the Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance are achievable given normal weather conditions and given relatively peaceful industrial relations. I appeal to the better judgement of all workers in the industry, of all involved, of all who have the industry at heart, or say they have the industry at heart, to give of their best, to work peacefully, to work hard and to do nothing that would jeopardize the achievement of our objectives. The industry will continue to pursue its agricultural diversification programme which it has pursued with significant success so far with special interest in such crops as cassava, palm oil development, black eye, corn, onions, pumpkins, urid and mung.

Rice Production: Although rice production in 1980 was 17 percent above the level of 1979, the achievement was somewhat disappointing in that it failed to reach the targeted figure of 200,000 tons. The figures are there. We give the figures and this much we must admit. Actual production for the year was 166,395 tons. But the year started well. The spring crop of 78,224 tons was the second highest in the history of the industry and exceeded the target of 70,000 tons by 8,224. Only the spring crop of 1977 at 84,672 tons exceeded the 1980 figures.

Favourable weather conditions and a price boost to farmers obviously had the desirable effect. Increased revenue from export sales following price increases effective from 1st January, 1980, was used to raise the prices paid to farmers in October 1979, January 1980 and in March 1980. Thus, for the period of six months the price of

farmers' padi was increased by \$2.50 per bag, white rice by \$5.00 per bag and parboiled rice by \$9.00 per bag. In all farmers enjoyed an increase in their incomes totalling over \$8 million. This is the cumulative increase enjoyed by all farmers who sold their rice to the Guyana Rice Board.

The second crop was hit by unfavourable weather which severely hampered land preparation. The total acreage planted fell below the budgeted target by 22 percent. The consequence was a total production for the second crop which was 17 percent below the planned target. In 1980 farmers were granted further increases of \$3.00 per bag for padi, \$6.00 per bag for white rice and \$7.00 per bag for parboiled rice.

It is hoped that as in the first half of 1980, these price increases will contribute to a bigger spring crop. In fact, things are already looking up. The indications are reasonably favourable and a record spring crop is possible. Acreage planted amounted to 107,000 roughly. Reaping has already begun and the average yield so far is 21.3 bags per acre. This figure exceeds the annual average of all previous years and it has risen from an average of nine bags per acre in 1965 to an average of some 17 bags per acre for the period 1973 to 1979, to 20.1 bags per acre in 1980, and now the spring crop is averaging 21.3 bags per acre.

This is testimony enough that the policies applied by this government are working to improve the performance of the rice industry – performance in terms of yield – and if weather conditions are normal, and provided that the rice farmers respond in their own interest, which I know they will and not to those who try to mislead them, we are sure that we will achieve even greater targets.

Outside of the major crops of sugar and rice, agricultural production in 1980 continued in overall terms the upward trend of 1979. Certain crops such as corn, coconuts and pineapples, for various reasons did not achieve their 1980 targets. This is also true for beef, pork and poultry meat in 1980. Nevertheless there were creditable achievement in crops and livestock production in 1980. Production of table eggs and broiler eggs showed encouraging growth and so did peanuts, plantains and ground provision production.

The cyclical nature of certain industries such as swine and poultry, the disincentive of praedial larceny and the need for better management and more responsive price policies will receive priority attention in 1981. The rehabilitation of the coconut

industry, as well as the institution of a more responsive policy towards all aspects of the industry will coincide with the establishment of a special coconut rehabilitation unit at the Central Agricultural Station with extension staff in the producing areas. An FAO Consultant is expected in the country shortly. These measures are expected to increase production in the 1980's by some 10 to 14 percent.

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The fruit crop programme, along with its supporting staff arrangements, is being completely reorganised in order to broaden the scope of research and development, intensify technology transfer, increase the level of adaptive research and streamline the mechanisms of consultation and liaison necessary for the increase and improvement of local processing capacity and efficiency.

While a project for the processing of fruit is being finalised, for investment purposes, farmers will be encouraged to manage their orchards efficiently, and special measures are being taken to improve the quality and increase the quantity of fruit plants made available. This action represents local preparatory efforts geared to ensure full receptivity when the Fruit Crop Project comes on stream in 1982. This multi-faceted medium-term project is being geared to revolutionise the local fresh fruit, fruit processing and marketing trade. It will deal primarily with citrus, mangoes, avocados and carambola, to name a few of the major ones. The main components of the project will be institutional strengthening, institutional strengthening in the area of extension services, in the area of credit. It will also implement applied research, plant propagation and the establishment of nursery/mother tree centres centrally located in producing areas.

The coffee industry will be the subject of an intensive study in order to rehabilitate the existing acreage and expand and modernise its husbandry practices, its marketing and its processing. While this takes place, intensive work will continue in Regions 1 and 2, (the North West and Pomeroun regions) so as to facilitate the industry's development by promoting programmes to control termites and improve husbandry and plant protection. It is expected that improved germ-plasm from seed and from appropriate sources will have to be introduced and tested later this year. This is the programme of a Government that cares for the farmer.

[Applause]

Ground provision production, which is targeted to increase this year, is expected to begin producing at higher levels as a result of the impact of the major drainage and

irrigation schemes in the Tapakuma and in the Abary areas. These crops are grown mainly in riverain areas which are prone to flooding. The main producing areas are Regins 4 and 6. These are the main producing areas but the largest acreages of pure ... production are in the North West and the Pomeroun areas.

Plantain production is also expected to continue the steady increase. Steps are being taken to alleviate the constraints affecting the production of corn. Within recent years, in fact, production declined somewhat. Production is expected to level off and under the influences of policies being injected, production is expected to show an upturn and to show an appreciable increase. A project will be initiated in March to seek to provide the North West Pomeroun areas with small farm equipment and tools such as shellers and corn cribs so as to prevent losses, especially after production has already taken place, post-harvest losses.

The pineapple production on the Soesdyke/Linden Highway will be given a boost and it is planned that production will benefit this year from a rejuvenation programme and from policies resulting from the dialogue now taking place relative to the establishment of a modern multi-purpose food processing plant.

Cabbage production will also receive a boost. It suffered from the non-availability of seed of the adapted variety and some inputs in 1979/1980, but these have been corrected in 1981 with the major constraints having now been eliminated.

The Speaker: Time! Unless you get an extension, your time is up.

The Minister, Drainage and Irrigation in the Ministry of Agriculture (Cde. Van Sluytman): I move that the Minister of Agriculture be given another 15 minutes to continue his speech.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Tyndall: Cde. Speaker, the appointment of a Minister responsible for Fisheries is an indication of the great importance which this Government attaches to the development of this sector. [Applause] The maximum exploitation of our Fisheries resources will not only provide us with an abundant supply of cheap animal protein but will also contribute significantly, through exports, to our foreign exchange earnings.

Despite setbacks, the industry performed creditably in 1980. Shrimp production surpassed the 1979 level. Fish production fell somewhat. The industry was affected by a drop in the price of shrimp in its overseas market and by the spiralling cost of fuel, but as a result of measures being introduced by this Government, it is expected confidently that there will be an upsurge in the performance of this sector. A number of projects are being implemented in 1981 to develop the industry.

With the assistance of a loan from I.A.D.B. a total of 20 new trawlers will be acquired over the period 1981-83 to augment the capacity of Guyana Fisheries Limited. The loan will also provide finance for the purchase of refrigerated trucks to improve the distribution facilities. Technical assistance and training within Guyana Fisheries Limited will also be covered by this loan. A loan has also been provided, this time by the E.E.C., for the procurement of processing equipment for the industry. The community is also providing technical assistance for the development of the capabilities of the Ministry.

The third phase of the Fish Port Complex at Houston, involving an extension of the wharf facilities and the construction of a dry dock for the repair of ships, will begin shortly and should be completed before March 1982. The project is being financed under a grant from the Government of Japan.

The economics of the deep-sea operations of the industry could be considerably improved if more of the by-catch from the shrimping operations could be landed. This could provide a significant boost to the livestock industry and could save valuable foreign exchange resources. I am happy to say that a programme is being implemented in order to increase the by-catch; and the by-catch will provide not only more cheap fish for the community but will also be an important source of raw material for the livestock industry and will be a boost to the livestock sector.

The artisanal fishing industry will benefit from line of credit facilities provided by the E.E.C. and hopefully by C.I.D.A. The loan will enable the fishermen through their co-operatives, to import engines and other fishing requisites. This should go a far way towards removing the constraint experienced in this area of activity. This and other measures to be introduced by Government should arrest the slow-down in production experienced by the artisanal sector in 1980 and should contribute to a significant increase over 1979.

Five shore facilities are being provided for artisanal fishermen, one in Georgetown, one at No. 66 and one each at Adventure, Charity and Mabaruma in the Essequibo. The facilities will include a wharf, ice making machinery, cold storage facilities, a shop for the sale of fishing requisites, as well as facilities for the sale of fish. Fishermen in Bartica will benefit from a fuel dump or storage facility which should provide convenient access to fuel for their operations; and in keeping with an undertaking given by the President, the Moruca fishermen will be assisted to construct a fishing vessel; they will also be provided with an engine and fishing gear as a donation by this Government.

3.50 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, it should be evident that Government is committed to improving the conditions of life not only of the agricultural worker, but also of life in the rural communities – the life of the agricultural worker and the life of the farmer – and the vast investment in the three major schemes – in the Black Bush Polder Scheme front lands development, the MMA Scheme and the Tapakuma Scheme – is testimony enough of this commitment; and a significant share of the development expenditure has been applied to rural development and to physical improvement, to the provision of roads and the provision of other facilities such as schools.

We cannot deny that agricultural production has grown considerably during the regime of the People's National Congress. Records in sugar and our records in rice have been broken during the period. Admittedly, we have installed and are installing the policies which will ensure that we can restore and can surpass the dynamism which has been shown in the past.

Cde. Speaker, we are also introducing measures to strengthen the various institutions in the agricultural sector so as to be able to provide services more effectively to the farming communities – to the farmers – in order to achieve the objectives of our agricultural programme. To this end, an operation audit was started within the Ministry and the audit is now to be followed by a major study, a baseline study on agricultural research, education and extension which, in fact, has already commenced, and these studies will be used as a basis for designing a more relevant structure for the execution of the tasks necessary for the achievement of our agricultural development objectives. This exercise is expected to be completed by August, 1981.

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3.50 – 3.55 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, Guyanese are among a small minority of nations that are generously favoured with an abundance of land and an abundance of hydrological resources for agricultural development. In a world plagued with food shortages we have the capacity and we have demonstrated the capacity not only to feed ourselves, but to contribute abundantly in the form of exports to the needs of the other nations not so fortunate as we are.

What we need, Cde. Speaker, are the policies and the programmes to realise our potential and we have such policies and we have such programmes. We have implemented such programmes. As a nation, we have a great future in agriculture. We have a great future in agriculture under the Government of the People's National Congress.

The Speaker: Comrades, this may be a convenient time to take the suspension. The Sitting of the Assembly is suspended for 30 minutes.

Sitting suspended at 3.55 p.m.

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4.30 – 4.40 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On resumption –

Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, I feel very pleased today to be a Member of this first National Assembly under the people's new Constitution, coming from very humble parentage from the village of Woodley Park, West Coast Berbice, a worker and farmer. I am very honoured to be able to represent the masses of this country in this the highest forum of the land as a member of the People's National Congress and under the leadership of Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham. [Applause] Indeed, my presence here today alone is a good indication and example of the broad-based support and solidarity which the People's National Congress has throughout the length and breadth of this country.

I feel very pleased to contribute to this debate on the Budget Speech which was delivered to this National Assembly by Cde. Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance on February 20, 1981. The Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance in his Budget Speech outlined in great detail the proper plan which the People's National Congress Government has not only for the recovery of our economy but the plan to ensure that Guyana continues to develop and develop rapidly so that all the people of this country will enjoy a better and higher standard of living.

In his speech the Vice President emphasised the need for workers of this country to play a very meaningful role to produce more to ensure that the economy continues to progress. There is no doubt that if this is to be achieved and achieved successfully the young people of this country have a most significant role to play in this exercise. The P.N.C. Government, since it came into office in 1964 has always recognised this as very important and from the evidence of its work there is sufficient proof of the great emphasis which the Government has placed on the development programmes for young people to play a meaningful role in this development process. [Applause]

Cde. Speaker, in unity there is strength. A house divided cannot stand. Guyana's multi ethnic and cultural make-up stands as a challenge to any leader who is desirous of fostering national unity and understanding among the people. [Applause] In the field of youth development the Guyana National Service is perhaps one of the most significant achievements of the People's National Congress Government in this direction. Indeed, the Guyana National Service stands as a monument for all to see, the emphasis which the Government places on harnessing and training our young people to play a dynamic role

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4.30 – 4.40 p.m.

in the development of this country. In 1974 the Guyana National Service was introduced into this country by the P.N.C. Government. When it was introduced the Guyana National Service was established to satisfy a number of objectives, for example, for promoting national unity, for achieving self-reliance, to increase national defence and for mobilising the youths of the nation for relevant training and development.

Over the years the Guyana National Service has operated in this country, there is no doubt that the Guyana National Service has gone a long way in achieving these objectives notwithstanding the criticism and comments when the Guyana National Service was established. The Guyana National Service is a success. The Guyana National Service is here to stay and the Guyana National Service will continue to play a meaningful role in the development of this country. [Applause]

When the Guyana National Service was established, young people from various communities were given an equal opportunity to come together and work in unison. From Rupununi, from the Corentyne, from the North West district and from all parts of the country, young people were able to come together to know one another, to respect one another and by working and playing together learn more about one another. [Applause] Cde. Speaker, is there any better way of achieving national unity in this country? Surely, the Guyana National Service has contributed in a significant way to fostering national unity in this country. The Guyana National Service has not only assisted in fostering national unity but has been able to satisfy several development objectives.

4.40 p.m.

The first GNS centre was established at Kimbia, 90 miles up the Berbice River on the eastern bank. It was opened in 1974 at the place where our forefathers and ancestors grew cotton. Today, the GNS centre at KIMBA is the backbone of cotton production in this country. It has been able to make a reality of one of the stated objectives of this Government – clothing the nation. Today when we speak of clothing the nation, when we think of the textile mill at the Ruimveldt site, we cannot help but think that the GNS at Kimbia made this possible.

Cde. Speaker, not only at Kimbia was a GNS centre established. GNS centres have been established all over the country. At Papaya in the North West District, now the

Barima-Waini Region, about five miles from Matthews ridge; at Tumatumari, a former Youth Corps location, a GNS centre now exists, and at this centre great emphasis is placed on training in industrial skills. It is at this centre that many items of furniture needed for our schools and our school system have been produced.

In this very Assembly and in this debate a member of the Minority Party mentioned the condition of our schools. I wish to inform him that if he had given more support to the GNS, maybe the GNS would have been able to turn out even more furniture for our school system and while he was in this Parliament speaking about the condition of our schools, he would have been able to say that through his contribution to the GNS he had helped to provide furniture for our schools.

There have been other centres. There is one at Konawaruk, 10 miles from Tumatumari in the middle of vast agricultural and mineral resources. Another centre was declared open in January 1976 at Camp Jaguar, several hundred miles up the Corentyne and in the New River triangle. Another important GNS centre was established at Itabo, situated on the right bank of the Mazauruni River about nine miles from Bartica and is functioning productively. Indeed, Cde. Speaker, the large stone deposits in that area are exploited by the GNS, thus providing very important building material not only for our housing programmes but for our road building and other development programmes.

We have been able to achieve this through the Guyana National Service at Itabo and Teperu, and in a few days' time all Guyana will be able to witness the formal opening of another GNS centre at Koriri in the Canje river. Indeed, Cde. Speaker, these centres, which cater for the development of the Pioneer Corps of the GNS, are tangible proof that the Guyana Government is serious about the development of its youth. In the GNS young people have an opportunity to be trained in many skills – joinery, carpentry, agriculture, mechanical engineering, driving, logging and in many other areas which Guyana needs at this time if the expectations of Cde. Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance are to be realised.

In the GNS not only are skills taught. Political education seminars are organised to give young people a great understanding of the ideology of the Government so that they could appreciate our ideological objectives and work within that framework after a full understanding of the principles of socialism. Young people also enjoy sports and sporting activities, cultural activities, drama workshops, training in financial control and

many other areas. All of these help to make young people better prepared to be able to be considered as the new Guyana man.

There is no doubt that the young people who have been to the GNS in the Pioneer Corps have benefited tremendously and today, throughout the public and private sectors, many young people have been produced from the GNS and are playing a more meaningful role in our efforts at making Guyana a self-reliant country.

Young people also have training in defence where basic military skills are taught, for if we are to win this revolution we need to defend it, and certain military skills as well are taught to our young people so that they would be able to develop themselves and defend the country. Apart from that, we have been able to expose our young people to the hinterland which has great resources and help them to understand and to contribute to the development of the hinterland.

Of course, the GNS functions in many other areas. It is, apart from being self-sufficient in poultry, pigs, cattle and much of its food, involved in a number of other economic undertakings, for example, the publishing centre which engages in the production of books and other literature which can help to develop this country.

In a nutshell, Cde. Speaker, expenditure in the GNS during 1981 is not an expenditure on a social service but an investment in our young people and, indeed, an investment in the future development of this country.

The GNS has other corps as well. There is the Young Brigade and National Cadet Corps that functions in the school system. This corps helps to develop skills in our young people in the school system so that they can be prepared, so that they can be prepared, so that they can understand many things that are important if they are to develop and have pride in this country.

There is, also, the New Opportunity Corps which was recently taken over – the Essequibo Boys' School. The corps specialises in rehabilitating and helping young people who have run into difficulty to be rehabilitated and become useful citizens of the society. That is why, for example, at the Essequibo Boys' School, now absorbed in the GNS, there is productive work going on, including the making of shoes and a number of agricultural pursuits.

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4.40 – 4.50 p.m.

GNS also provides training for young people who are in the highest educational institutions as well as Guyanese youths who will benefit from scholarships. In other words, they will be educated at the expense of the State. The GNS provides a useful opportunity for young people to understand what Guyana is all about so that when they leave Guyana for further studies abroad they will love their country and be committed to it and they would come back to serve this country.

Earlier in the debate in this Assembly a member of the Minority Party made reference to the fact that Guyanese youths are not returning to this country. It is a pity that the Honourable Member is not better informed for since the Guyana National Service was established in 1974 and to date, the students who have gained orientation through the GNS and have completed training have all returned to this country. Thanks to the Guyana National Service. It is quite clear that those who went before and from whom Government is seeking to recover the taxpayers' money are those who were unable to benefit from this new system.

I think, Cde. Speaker, I have said enough in this Assembly to explain to all concerned that the GNS has, since its establishment, worked consistently, as was its guidelines, to promote and prepare young people to play a meaningful role in development. There can be no doubt that the GNS is here to stay. There can be no doubt that the GNS will continue to grow from strength to strength in 1981 because the young people of this country are becoming more aware of the benefits of this institution, and with the full support of the PNC Government, the Guyana National Service will continue to grow. Thanks to the vision of our Cde. Leader and now President – Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham. The young people are proud of his vision, his foresight, and I have no doubt that the young people in this country will show gratitude to the President by working harder and producing more and so ensuring that the expectations pointed out by Cde. Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance in his Budget Speech to this Assembly will be realised during the year 1981.

4.50 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Doobay.

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4.50 – 5.00 p.m.

Cde. Doobay: Cde. Speaker, allow me to make a few remarks before speaking on the Budget. I am very happy to have this opportunity to speak on behalf of the working-class party, the People's National Congress. [Applause] I will not be doing justice to myself and my party if mention is not made of the first genuine sugar work in the history of this land to be offered an opportunity to sit in the highest forum of our land. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Persaud, don't interrupt.

Cde. Doobay: It is clearly the grass-roots policy of this vanguard movement, the People's National Congress. I hope that the minority party will take note of this. I have worked in the sugar industry for 26 years and was cutting cane for 16 years and working as a chain boy. Imagine! "A big man like me they call me a chain boy." [Laughter]

This Government's concern for the safety of sugar workers of the country cannot be questioned. Factory workers are now given safety boots and helmets. Mill workers are given boots, cane cutters, boots, all at 50 percent of cost. Female sugar workers in the manure ground are given gloves. Workers in the spade gang are given free gloves and boots. What does the provision of all this mean? It means that the accident rate after nationalisation of the sugar industry has fallen very much. There is safety for sugar workers. You can now see few sugar workers losing a finger or suffering from pains in the knees. This Government makes sure that sugar workers get all the necessary safety protection and productivity for themselves and family. It is the People's National Congress that made this possible. [Applause] In keeping also with the question of women's equality our women sugar workers are in the drive for nation building and production. For the first time in history women are planting cane in the sugar fields. Their earnings are over \$100 per week. [Applause] There is another area in which female sugar workers are working and that is the mill dock area. They are cleaning and bailing punts, an average of 50 to 60 punts per day. The estate men were paid to clean punts only and their average was 8 to 10 punts per day. What a disgrace! They cannot match the women's performance. It shows that the female sugar workers are working more than the men. [Applause] My party and Government are pleased. To us it is a new achievement. The role of women in the industry in what we need.

In agriculture, both Indo and Afro Guyanese are doing bigger jobs. [Applause] Because of this Government's recognition of sugar workers, those workers who qualified for two crops are now guaranteed out of crop work. The unions operating in the sugar industry are not interested in sugar workers and their welfare. Their intention was, and

still is, to remove the People's National Congress from office by attempting to destroy the economy. We can remember the 135 days' strike called G.A.W.U. What was the result? The People's National Congress was not removed but the sugar workers and other workers of this country suffered a lot. This demonstrates how the innocent sugar workers were misled by that anti-working class trade union called G.A.W.U. Furthermore, these sugar workers were removed by G.A.W.U. It was in 1976 that the then Prime Minister, now Executive President, gave the okay to pay sugar workers an end of the year 10 to 20 to 30 days' pay tax free.

Before nationalisation sugar workers were casuals for 15 to 20 years and still remained as casuals. Thanks to the People's National Congress workers who now qualify after three crops are made permanent workers. [Applause] Permanent workers now receive free medical treatment for themselves and their families and dependant relatives. They are also eligible for loans from the Sugar Welfare Fund.

I remember in the years gone by, before nationalisation, sugar workers had to walk more than 10 miles to cut four tons of cane six days per week. Workers were so tired after this that when they went home they could not even eat or sleep. Today I would not like to remember those of the stale puri days of the past. Thanks to the People's National Congress for making available free transportation from office to field and back. [Applause]

More than ever before so many sugar workers, their families and dependent relatives are receiving free medical treatment at GUYSUCO's dispensary. At these dispensaries the nurses are well trained and many sugar workers go a bit further because this is the field that trains persons to give first-aid treatment.

I would like to remind the P.P.P. that when it was in office, together with the colonial masters it agreed to break down the hospital on the East Bank. The sugar workers suffered very much because of this. I remember when many sugar workers used to go to the Georgetown hospital although the hospital at that time could not take off that number of patients. The workers know that many times the P.P.P. was responsible for the loss of those lives. It was because of the People's National Congress that a diagnostic centre was built at Ogle.

Mention could also be made of the emphasis on proper housing and accommodation for sugar workers. We can remember the logies in which sugar workers once lived. That is now history for there are no more logies. Workers from distant areas

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now live in the hostel, sleeping no longer on bags on the ground but on foam mattresses. There are no longer bushes and trenches for passing of waste matter. Now they have proper toilet facilities.

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5.00 – 5.10 p.m.

5.00 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, gone are the dark days of the past. Gone are the days when we were ruled by masters. Gone are the days when we were misruled by the People's Progressive Party. Thanks to the People's National Congress.

Time is against me in speaking of our social thrust and nation building. In the sugar industry improved production has been taking place. New fields have been planted and reaping is taking place. The fields are field number 53 which is yielding 43.3 and field number 55 with a yield of 43.9 tons per acre. This is very good. In the past we never had this kind of acreage and tonnage.

Guysuco also has at Diamond two machines cutting cane. They are working very well. Steady rain is affecting the harvest. If the weather permits, the harvesting machines will be able to work in the field and Diamond will make her target. Diamond is in a good position. The factory is working well. They have over 600 punts to run their factory. The machinery is in good order. We need more workers for the estate and we will have to get workers to build it up.

Cde. Speaker, "donkey ears big but he can't hear his own story." When the P.P.P. was in office, when the P.N.C. started to campaign we didn't go to the people and talk about sardines and potatoes. We went to the people with a new constitution and the people responded well. The new Constitution was written by the people for the people. We went into every house and the response was very good. We told the people what are our benefits and what is our fate and asked them to contribute to building our country. What was the P.P.P. doing? The Members were fighting for leadership among themselves. Today they are afraid: Who is next to go? My party and Government will make sure that there will be no violence in this country and also that law and order will be maintained.

The Speaker: Cde. Dalchand.

Cde. Dalchand: Mr. Speaker, again the P.N.C. Government has demonstrated its inability to tackle the grave economic problems plaguing this country. The Budget Speech, delivered by the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance on the 20th February last, once again presents this nation with no hopes for survival. Nothing positive has been said about how the ailing economy of this country will be salvaged. Instead, the whole emphasis is being placed on hopeless assumptions. Over the past

years every Budget presented by the P.N.C. Government has failed to achieve their production targets. The prominent features are deficit and growing deficit. Last year Budget deficit estimated to be approximately \$200 million actually ended up being \$270 million, nearly \$78 million more than was projected.

This year the situation will be worse. Farmers cannot get fertilizers. Instead there are long lines on the Corentyne: farmers waiting to get fertilizers. There are tremendous problems. There is no money to purchase fertilizers. Right now there is a strike at Kwakwani where workers are on strike for incentives. Cde. Speaker, you can see clearly even though that was a promise to the workers, it is not being given to them. I am hearing so much about how much is done for workers. If everything is being done for the workers let Government answer why targets cannot be met. Instead of spending money to buy fertilizers, to buy machinery, to buy spare parts to encourage production, we see today in this Budget more money for the army and the police. Where is the production? From \$203 million last year to nearly \$140 million this year.

The P.N.C. Government is blaming everything except itself for its failures. It blames strikes, it blames workers, farmers, the weather, oil, et cetera, but the blame for our dilemma must be put squarely on the shoulders of this incompetent 10 percent fraudulent Government.

Reference is being made to the United Kingdom and the United States about unemployment and those types of situations. We must look at our own situation. Guyana is a land of tremendous resources. Anything you want, we have, yet we are suffering. In the great days of sugar prices last year the Minister admitted that sugar prices soared and yet we have a greater Budget deficit.

Cde. Speaker, what are we saying? Who are we fooling? The P.N.C. can only fool itself. I would just like to quote from the last paragraph of the 1981 Budget Speech on page 11 where the Vice President admitted that the number of man-days lost from strikes fell from 324,473 in 1979 to 67,620 in 1980, a 79 percent drop. Again from this it can be clearly seen that the workers of this country did their utmost. They did not go on strike. This Government is bent on ridiculing workers and farmers and that is why production is falling. Let them answer. If the Minister is right let them answer. With all these saved man days, why is it the target was not achieved?

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5.00 – 5.10 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, the situation of reality: Last year we were told that if we were to survive the so-called modest target set must be achieved, but the three main sectors, sugar, rice and bauxite, have all failed hopelessly. Instead the production fell last year to less than it was in 1979. This Government instead of increasing the production target has been reducing it. It shows clearly that they are going backwards instead of forward.

They have brought this reputable country to shame and disgrace, for example, the Jonestown massacre where over 900 people were murdered, the killing of the world – renowned historian, Dr. Walter Rodney, and the infamous December 15, 1980 rigged and fraudulent general elections. Cde. Speaker, today, there are plenty of mouthings about local development and local government. Let me put the record straight. This 10 percent P.N.C. Government is on record for holding only one set of local government elections in its 16 years of office. This is a fact.

5.10 p.m.

Elections were postponed on several occasions on flimsy excuses to allow the undemocratically nominated councilors to ride on the backs of the taxpayers under the pretext of carrying out development programmes. Where are these development projects? Many of these premature programmes have failed to materialise. Today the whole local government system is in chaos and confusion. Almost all of these local government bodies are not functioning because they cannot find enough members to form a quorum. Yet they unconstitutionally make decisions. Most of their Members resigned in frustration and disgust.

These local government bodies have failed to maintain and provide the elementary services such as cleaning and maintaining drainage and irrigation canals, dams, kokers, bridges, etc. This is also an important factor responsible for the fall in production. They pressured the residents with unrealistic and heavy rates and taxes, most of the money being used up for meeting administrative and pleasure expenses. Heavy local taxation is being placed on the backs of rate payers who cannot afford to pay them, causing huge arrears to pile up and this heartless P.N.C. Government instead of investigating the root cause of the problem is now agreeing with these partly defunct bodies to sell people's properties at execution to recover rates.

Here I have a notice for Rates and Taxes for the municipality of Georgetown. There is a rise from 19.75 percent to 23 percent on general rates and from 17.25 to 21.7 on water rates and sewerage rates. Most of the ratepayers cannot afford to meet the expenses of a non-productive nature. For example, last year, 1980, the servicing of loans cost the Council \$89,000. It is estimated that this year it will cost \$812,000. It is a 900 percent increase to service loans and pay debts; Administration and Management from \$608,000 to \$722,000 an increase of \$114,000; City Police from \$671,000 last year to \$777,000 this year, an increase of \$106,000. You can see that the increase to pay these non-productive expenses is nearly one million dollars. How are we going to get increased production?

It is no wonder that today this once garden city of ours is now spilled with filth. On more than one occasion the Police and Security Forces had to be used to clear the menacing pile of refuse in the city, which was causing a serious threat to health in our country.

These are some of the heavy burdens that ratepayers in many local government areas have to meet. Let some of those who are mouthing about local government learn and know that it was during the regime of the P.P.P. Government in 1961 that universal adult suffrage was extended to local government when all the councillors who sat on councils were elected by the people. There were no more nominated seats. [Cde. Campbell: “No. There were no local government elections in 1961”.]

The Speaker: No argument.

Cde. Dalchand: No more nominated members on local government bodies. I am elected a member of the Canals Polder Local Authority in 1961 – for the benefit of the Minister.

The Speaker: You see, the minority when they sit and heckle people, they don't take the heckling when they get it back.

Cde. Dalchand: The Minister --

The Speaker: I am not listening to the Minister. I am listening to you. The Minister sat down and spoke. When you sit down and talk nobody tells you anything.

Cde. Dalchand: Mr. Speaker much is being said about the new Constitution and people's involvement. Let it be known that many of these elected to serve on the village councils were serving members and chairman of many of the defunct local authorities. They have failed in the past where they served and they are doomed to fail again. They are just old wine in new bottles. The P.N.C. cannot find people to serve on councils. Let me make reference to an Amerindian settlement in the Demerara River. Santa Mission. I went there during elections. One man was the Captain, the Headmaster, he is priest and he is all in charge. One man, they failed to mobilise people. This is the situation. One man holding all the positions. When I spoke to him he ended up in frustration. He said "I don't know what to do. All the people are leaving. They have gone to Suriname." The P.N.C. is causing people to get out of this place. We have 40,000 workers seeking jobs in Suriname. We have a big majority from North West working in Venezuela. They go to the Rupununi to work on the Brazil side. This is a fact. This is the situation. The call is being made for more production and productivity.

Agriculture is one of the most important sectors of our economy but the P.N.C. Government has willfully neglected the sector resulting every year in falling production. Between 1967 and 1978, a period of 12 years, over 33,000 acres were discontinued under rice cultivation. The result of this is direct ruin of 16,000 or 35 percent of the small rice farmers, the rate of bankruptcy being more than 1,000 families per annum. Nothing practical is done to save the situation. The situation is getting worse, farmers being cheated at every level. The G.R.B. and the Government have failed to mobilise rice farmers into the activities of the industry. Previously my colleague spoke of how they are hiding prices from farmers. They are afraid to put genuine rice farmers on the Board. They are afraid they will know what prices they are receiving. The Government through the Daily Chronicle stated clearly the Government is now receiving \$525 (U.S.) per ton or \$1,344 G. Last year they received \$420 (U.S.) or \$1,075.20 G.

Last year when they received that fantastic price, they gave the rice farmers an average of \$47. Now they are receiving an average of \$108, they pay the rice farmers an average of \$53.54. Last year when they were receiving an average of \$86 the farmers got \$47 or 54.4 percent of the price. This year when they got more, instead of getting the simultaneous increase, the farmers' price went down percentage wise. The farmers are now getting 49.7 percent of this new price. The higher the price the G.R.B. gets, the bigger profit it takes, and passes the remnant to the farmers. We are demanding the G.R.B. should pay the farmers not less than 75 percent of the export price. Instead of encouraging farmers, the Government and the G.R.B. issued a statement in the Guyana

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Chronicle of Tuesday, 6th January. This is the release: “FARMERS BLAMED FOR RICE SHORTAGES”. Let us get the facts straight.

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The Government is the sole buyer of rice of its silos. The Government buys like water – during that period over 75 percent of the present rice crop. Twenty five percent remained with the farmers and of that 25 percent, 15 percent was milled and shipped to the Board. At the time when this statement was released the Board had in its control over 90 percent of the rice. But what happened? The Government is in dire need of foreign exchange. It failed to secure sufficient rice for the Guyanese public. It shipped the rice to earn foreign exchange and then tried to use rice farmers as scapegoats.

Cde. Speaker, the farmers were told that they were hoarding rice. I wish to set the record straight. It was Government that was hoarding the rice because it had in its possession 90 percent of the crops when there was no rice in the supermarkets, not even the KSIs, but as soon as the price was increased the same Board released rice for the Guyanese public to buy. Rice price was increased for the Guyanese public from \$47 to \$56.20 and the next morning there was sufficient rice in the supermarkets and the shops.

The Government did that to consumers, Cde. Speaker. The Government is not interested, as I said in reserving sufficient stocks of rice for local consumption. Cheating of rice farmer – and I would like to refer here with facts. This is a farmer who got paid on the 27th February, 1981. This farmer shipped 20 bags of rice to the Board. After all deductions, the farmer got \$151.72. This is what the farmer got.

Rice on the local market is being sold, as I said, at \$56.20 per bag. This farmer could have got \$55 in the mill but he wanted to be law abiding. Realising that the rice must be shipped to the Board and after incurring more expenses in shipping the rice from Leguan to the Guyana Rice Board he found out that he got \$39 a bag. Don't worry with the fantastic price being advertised in the pricelist. This is the reality of what rice farmers are getting. When the farmer went for the rice he asked them, “Give me back my rice or give me some of my sample, I want to appeal.” They said, “The rice is already disposed of and we don't have any samples.” This is the standard being set by the board. Cde. Speaker, how are we going to have any increased production? Cheating; barefaced cheating of the farmers.

We have a statement here from the miller which clearly shows that something is wrong. The farmer said she got 35 bags of rice. We are seeing here where the millers of this country are holding the farmers to ransom. The Government set the price of the milling fees for the various categories of rice but the millers are now charging the farmers \$10 and \$12 a bag for milling rice. Nothing is being done. No officer is examining these rice factories so the poor rice farmers are again at the mercy of even the rice millers. No protection.

And that is not all. Let the Minister deny this. The last crop just before the elections, and this is very shameful. One can understand. The rice farmers were being paid by cheque and all the cheques taken to the Co-operative Bank – G.R.B. cheques taken to the Co-operative Bank at Anna Regina – flew up high in the air! Rubber was too much; too much rubber. How will you get production?

Comrades, shortages of fertilizers and other machinery, spare parts, lack proper maintenance. We have been telling this Government that something is wrong at the top. The farmers have been trying their best year after year. Something is wrong at the top but Government never paid heed. Only a few weeks ago the whole set of officials were shifted. They were given long leave – I'm sorry, forced leave. But I want to tell this House that they not only got the "leaf", they got the whole tree. It is everything they have gone with; the whole tree, no more leave.

We are interested in increased production and we want to demand from this Government the restoration of democracy at all levels. Don't be afraid to put the rice farmers on the Board. Let the farmers be there. Once the farmers are satisfied that they are being given a fair share of the prices, they will produce. But don't hide it from them.

We are asking that you scrap the Rice Action Committees. They have failed hopelessly. Millions of dollars are being wasted as has been admitted by high officials of the G.R.B. In August 1978, they admitted that over \$80 million worth of machinery in less than five years has been lying idle around the place. These are some of the ills that have caused the rice industry to be dying. We are interested, as I said, increased production, but we are also interested in fair deals and respect for the farmers. Stop ridiculing them, stop cheating them, recognise the R.P.A. and restore its annual grant.

We note with concern the many reports of incidents of serious malfunctioning and mismanagement of the G.R.B. and we call on the Minister concerned to set up an

impartial commission of enquiry, including representatives recommended by the Rice Producers' Association, to investigate the following allegations:-

1. The non-operation of more than \$80 million worth of equipment less than five years old lying around various sites.
2. A report of financial non-accountability of over 11,000 tons of rice.
3. The destruction of MARDS rice mill and the Springlands G.R.B. bond fire.
4. The burning of padi at Ruimzigt silo.
5. The smuggling of fertilizers from Springlands to Suriname when sales of fertilizers to farmers are controlled by the G.R.B.

Farmers do not get fertilizers at their whim and fancy. The distribution is controlled. The point I want to make here is that the people smuggling the fertilizers to Suriname are the officials and not the farmers. This is a fact again, Cde. Speaker. Just to complete my point on fertilizers, in January of this year 8,000 bags fertilizers were shipped to the Corentyne. Four thousand bags went to Black Bush Polder and according to our information the remaining 4,000 bags which were supposed to go to Springlands disappeared somewhere and never reached their destination. May I enquire whether this amount was smuggled to Suriname by the official bandits? The Minister of Agriculture must give an answer, Cde. Speaker.

I would like to move away a little from rice and move on to the cane farmers. Much has been said about cane farmers. Much has been said about cane farming. Over 4,000 people earn their livelihood by peasant cane farming. They help the Government to find employment for those people. They contribute to the economy to a great extent. Fifteen percent of the sugar produced in this country is produced by peasant cane farmers. But what is their position?

In 1979, the Government paid them \$565 per ton of sugar. Last year when the Minister of State in the Office of the President admitted in his speech that the sugar price was soaring – soaring high- the minimum we were paid was \$2,800 per ton. Do you know what the cane farmers have got so far? They got \$567 per ton, when the price on

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the world market soared about \$3,000 per ton, one-sixth, and they had to bear within that all the costs which include the price of molasses. How on earth we are going to get increased production I cannot see. Where is the imagination of these people.

5.30 p.m.

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Dalchand.

Cde. Dalchand: The National Cane Farming Committee has a set of selected people. These people are not doing anything in the interest of the industry. We are saying: Let genuine farmers serve in these organisations where you can have development.

I now wish to say something short about the people, some tobacco families, at Laluni. There are over 45,000 families planting.

The Speaker: 45,000 families!

Cde. Dalchand: I am sorry, 45 families. Do you know what these people are getting per pound of tobacco? They are getting from \$1.70 to \$5.22. They got seven cents per pound increase on the price of tobacco last year when the cost of production rose fantastically.

The Vice President in his Budget Speech claimed that the Government is collecting \$16 per pound consumption tax on cigarettes and people who produce the tobacco are getting between \$1.70 and \$5.22. The monopoly DEMTOCO, Demerara Tobacco Company, is creating havoc for those poor families. There are no roads. One cannot get into the area easily. What happened during the elections? The P.N.C. went in and tried to mobilise these people. Everybody has gotten them now. Nobody is there. That is their dilemma. The people are getting leases. Some leases are about to be executed by Government and the Demerara Tobacco Company is making it abundantly clear that conditions suitable to Demtoco are put in the lease. The Constitution says: “Land to the Tiller”, not “Land to the Bandits”. I am asking that better judgement prevail with respect to farmers of this country, and let us have more production.

In winding up I wish to say that Regional Ministries have failed in the past. Co-operative societies are failing now. The Rice Action Committees have failed the P.N.C. Government and have failed hopelessly. The so-called “People’s” Constitution --

The Speaker: Cde. Dalchand, what do you mean by “so-called People’s Constitution?” We have a Constitution in this country. It is not “so-called”. It is that Constitution that makes you sit where you are.

Cde. Dalchand: I wish to say that Guyana can only be salvaged through a National Patriotic Front Government in which the vanguard P.P.P. will play the leading role. [Applause]

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Cde. Jackson): Cde. Speaker, when the Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance, Cde. Desmond Hoyte, my colleague, my comrade and my friend, presented the Budget and initiated the general debate on the 20th February, 1981, he rather succinctly dealt with the world context in matters economic, the context against which and within which the economy operated in 1980, and a context against which the Budget was planned for 1981 and beyond. I wish to say that the situation in matters political were no less difficult. The decade of the 80s began generally on a note of turbulence, of crisis and of dissonance. It is a complexity which the Heads of State and Governments of Non-Aligned countries meeting in Havana in September 1979 had forecast, and had done so with great clarity and great maturity.

Whatever the reason for those political problems, whether they result from internal changes of a political nature within societies, or whether they result from new perceptions within others, there can be no doubt that international tension has increased the dangers of confrontation between major powers have become more acute. We have witnessed within recent months the return to the language and the postures of the cold war. There is talk about the expansion and development of nuclear weapons, and the possibilities of nuclear escalation are real.

There are other categories of political problems against which we must seek to frame our analyses of the economic and potential possibilities of Guyana. Some of them

arise from difficulties among countries like our own, conflicts between developing countries, between Third World countries, between countries of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Cde. Speaker, if I were to return to the economic questions I would, with your permission, like to remind this Assembly of what Cde. Hoyte said in his statement. He said:

“...we have to recognise the implications for us and take account of the international situation. In 1980 the world economic crisis deepened as was generally predicted. The price of oil escalated; inflation continued its rampage; and unemployment in the industrial countries reached unprecedented high numbers.”

Cde. Hoyte went on in his characteristic manner of clear analysis to indicate – and I quote:

“The North-South dialogue intended to advance the New International Economic Order has been fruitful of many words, but barren of concrete action. The predictions for 1981 are pessimistic; oil prices will rise; inflation will continue to gallop; high interest rates will persist; unemployment in the industrialised countries of the world will get worse; economic output will stagnate; world trade will not improve and the North-South dialogue is unlikely to get beyond the state of ‘dialogue’.”

In the circumstances of that analysis I think it would be wise for this Assembly to reflect, and to reflect deeply, on the general nature of the state of international economic relations and for this Assembly to make a prognosis of the capabilities for us to come out of the present situation of no movement, indeed, of intransigence by some developed countries. For countries like ours the goal in international economic relations must continue to be the restructuring of those relations to ensure that justice and equity prevail.

There is thus, I suggest, direct correspondence between the external circumstances of the international economic system and the domestic capacity of our economy, domestically to respond to those realities. In fact, in so far as official development assistance has a significant input into the domestic effort for economic development, we cannot ignore the fact that in some countries now there are pressures of one kind or another to reduce even further, transfers of resources reflected in official development assistance.

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Perhaps, however, we need to cast our minds back some years ago when, in the wake of the oil catalyst of 1973 and 1974, the Third World countries were united in their desire and their endeavour to establish a New International Economic Order. That was the period of the early and mid 70s of many pious declarations adopted by the international organisations – the charter on Economic Rights and Duties of States, etcetera, and holding of several sessions of UNCTAD, in 1976 in Nairobi and later in 1979, in Manila, among other meetings. We are therefore entitled to ask ourselves the question: What has been achieved?

5.40 p.m.

And in answering the question, we should also consider: Have we done anything wrong? And if we have, what can we do in the future? And if we haven't what must we do in order to induce change in the international economic system? Let me say very quickly, however, that if there has been any movement at all, it has been slow and it has been halting. What is not in doubt is that we have failed to adopt measures which will render easier the attainment of the New International Economic Order.

Every analysis now indicates that the international economy is in crisis. The Vice President in his own statement dealt with some of the manifestations of this crisis in the developed non-socialist countries. We are witness to a manipulation of the market forces through the use of quotas and voluntary restraints in an effort to protect the uncompetitive industries within those societies. We have also witnessed the continuation of the export of inflation to countries such as ours. The impact of these two tendencies – the tendency towards protectionism and the tendency towards the export of inflation – has had deleterious effects on other areas of economic activity, for example, manufactures and semi-manufactures. When we come to the heart of economic activity – money and finance – we are constrained to observe that there has been a great reluctance to share positions of privilege, to democratise decision-making with the institutions that deal with these subjects.

Cde. Speaker, among the developing countries, there are countries like ours – non-oil producing countries – which have the burden of increasing oil prices as well as receiving the ailments and the weaknesses of the developed countries.

In an attempt to deal with this situation we need to look at the progress of the conclusion of co-operation agreements with developed socialist countries. If we take

their positions, Cde. Speaker, we find that there is increasing interaction between these societies and the capitalist world. Poland, for instance, is heavily indebted to the West. The socialist developed countries are not only concluding agreements with CMEA countries, that is, among themselves, but also with developed non-socialist countries. So today one finds that the developed socialist countries have more co-operation agreements with the West than they have among themselves. Yet, in spite of the reality of their growing involvement in the International Economic System we are still met in international forums by an assertion on their part that they lack historic responsibility for our underdevelopment, a position which, of course, is historically correct but which ignores the fact that the more they are drawn into the capitalist economic system the more they are helping to maintain our underdevelopment.

Cde. Speaker, I believe that despite these difficulties, despite the setbacks, despite the slow movement in the international economic dialogue, we must hold firm to our objective, that is, the democratisation of international economic relations. There may be, perhaps, on the horizon some glimmer of hope for I think it was in June, 1980, that there was an agreement after many years of argument to establish a Common Fund – a Common Fund for stabilising the prices of a number of commodities, eighteen in all, including some that we produce like sugar and bauxite – a fund which, it has been agreed that we capitalise at \$400 million (US) for the fund and \$350 million (US) for the so-called second facility.

It is true that these amounts fell well short of the targets set by the Group of 77 many years ago, a target of \$1.6 billion. However, it seems to us that we must now, along with other developing countries, seek to make a reality of the Common Fund which itself is dependent upon the conclusion of a number of other international commodity agreements. Guyana, for its part, will continue to work resolutely in this regard.

One particular advantage which I need to bring to the attention of this Assembly in relation to the Common Fund is that although the voting pattern agreed upon is not exactly on the basis of one country, one vote, there is a better provision for the developing countries acting as a group to influence the decisions of the Fund.

Cde. Speaker, in the field of international economic relations as well, we have sought through the Group of 77, the Group now comprising over 110 developing countries, and through the Non-aligned Movement, the ninety-six countries which are members of that movement, to promote last year a special session of the General

Assembly devoted to two ideas. The first was the launching of a new global round of negotiations because we found that in the interim, in the period between 1976 and 1979, there appeared to be a studied policy on the part of many developed countries – developed countries of the West, (and I have already described to you the attitude of the developed countries of the East) there appeared to be a studied policy, as the Vice President said, to indulge in words and to be short on action.

We believe that as the recession begins to bite, particularly in the West, that perhaps the realisation may come as a result of a proper analysis, that it is in the interest of those countries to help to so re-order international economic relations as to be able to attend to the true interests of their peoples, that they would have agreed upon a new global round of negotiations. Unfortunately, Cde. Speaker, three countries – the United States of America, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany – stood aside from the consensus and so today the effort to launch a new global round of negotiations languishes.

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The problem is really one of power because, as Cde. Leader observed in one of his more recent addresses, logic is not the basis for decision-making in inter-state relations. The basis for decision-making is power. Those discussions to initiate the negotiations on the global round foundered on whether the substantive negotiations should take place in a universal body like, for instance, the United Nations, or in so far as negotiations take place in specific agencies like the I.M.F., what should be the relationship between these two bodies. Suffice it to say that we are still at a stage where the launching of the new global round is uncertain. However, at least in terms of the philosophy, of co-operation or of rhetoric, one needs to note that a new international development strategy has been adopted. It repeats certain pledges like, for instance, the pledge individually and collectively to fulfil commitments to establish a New International Economic Order, but it is so circumscribed with reservations and clauses of interpretation as to render it virtually meaningless.

I would say, therefore, that in so far as the global discussions are concerned – the effort to introduce a New International Economic Order – the expectations of the developing countries are largely unfulfilled. Yet it seems that we need to see whether the opportunity to evolve a new set of relationships should not now be addressed and forged.

I think we should continue to work for the initiation of a global round of negotiations including the acceptance of the positive aspects of the Report of the Brandt Commission on which the distinguished Guyanese, Cde. Shridath Ramphal, the Secretary General of the Commonwealth, served with such distinction as well as the positive elements of the Report of the Commonwealth experts which group had been established after the Lusaka Commonwealth experts which group had been established after the Lusaka Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference.

I think we should pursue these efforts. But I think we need to do more. We need to look at specific international conferences that will deal with limited areas of activity and try to maximise the input which we can make into those conferences, as for example, the Conference of New and Renewable Sources of Energy which is scheduled to be held in Nairobi in August of this year. But, over and above all of this, it is evident to us that what is required at this stage is renewed vigour in terms of the application of the principle and the concept of self-reliance and to promote not only self-reliance within our society but self-reliance between our societies through encouraging greater economic co-operation among developing countries.

I think when our Heads met in Havana they made a significant contribution towards this concept when they adopted a Resolution and Policy Guidelines for the reinforcement of collective self-reliance between developing countries. It is a Resolution with which Guyana had a lot to do. It is a Resolution which seeks to encourage in concrete ways co-operation in areas of trade, in areas of technology exchanges etc., to encourage these exchanges between developing countries.

That is why at the recently concluded Non-Aligned Conference in New Delhi, about which I will have something to say a little later, we placed a lot of emphasis on the question of economic co-operation among developing countries. We are happy to have initiated a proposal last year, which has been accepted by the Group of 77 for the convening of a Conference on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries at a high political level. This Conference will take place in Caracas in May of this year. We – and when I say “we” I mean the Members of the Group of 77 in general and Guyana in particular – are well prepared for this Conference. It is a Conference which will concentrate on the issues of raw materials and energy, finance, technology and industrialisation, food and agriculture, and trade.

We see the intensification of economic co-operation among developing countries as having essentially two important considerations. The first lies in the intrinsic merit of the activity itself. The more we co-operate with each other, the more we break the relationship of dependence between ourselves and our former masters – between developing countries and the metropolises that have controlled and dominated the international economy, more especially since the end of the Second European Civil War in 1945. But it seems that it can also be important in that it will enable us to build complementary ties among ourselves so that when the global round of negotiations does commence we would have increased our strength to deal with the countries of the North. I want to stress, however, that economic co-operation among developing countries must be seen not as an alternative to the New International Economic order but as a complement to it. It is an essential part of it.

In seeking to understand the activities that we engage in beyond our borders to promote the economic, the national development of Guyana, I can say that we intend to maintain and to expand our bilateral contacts as well as our other multilateral contacts.

We have, over the years, laid a second foundation for our relations with socialist countries and we have concluded a number of co-operation agreements with several of these countries. We intend to build on these relations during this year. We intend as well to build on our relations with the countries of the world which share with us perceptions in both the Group of 77 and in the Non-Aligned Movement; and we intend, both in keeping with our commitment to economic co-operation among developing countries and in pursuit of our foreign policy objectives for maintaining friendly relations with States that respect our territorial integrity and deal with us on the basis of sovereign equality to extend our relations with other Third World countries. Already for this year, in both the bilateral and the multilateral fields we have had many significant exchanges. We have had the visit of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme in January which overlapped with the friendly visit by my comrade and friend, the Foreign Minister of the Socialist Republic of Cuba, Cde. Malmierca Peoli. More recently we have had visits from the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, visits from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and a special envoy from the President of Mexico.

I mention these to indicate the determination of this Government to pursue these contacts, not in any vain-glorious search for prestige but in a serious effort to have

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foremost in our minds, the national development and the survival and security of the State of Guyana and the development of its people.

6.00 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, if I may come nearer home it would be to make a few remarks on our Caricom relations. As we have said over and over, Caricom for us is part of a security zone. I must say that despite some of the fulminations that one comes across in some of the media of the region, whether done on their own or inspired and instigated by those from outside who clearly, do not have our interests at heart, Caricom has generally functioned well over the last year.

Functional meetings are continuing. We have had meetings on Transport, and there is to be a meeting on Legal Affairs later this year. Ministers of Information have met and will meet again. The Standing Committee of Foreign Ministers met in Saint Lucia last year. We dealt with some of the banalities that have been peddled in the region seeking to pose ideological pluralism as a source of conflict within the region. One such meeting has been due for some time now, Cde. Speaker. I must readily acknowledge that obstacles exist, but I only hope that they can be overcome. Of great importance to us, Cde. Speaker, and this relates to our security perceptions, is that there is likely to be a special meeting shortly on the question of Belize.

Meanwhile, Cde. Speaker, the Council has been meeting as usual. It last met in Jamaica in January of this year. On the functional field in the area of technical assistance on which Guyana has always been ready to participate within our means and of which we can without any immodesty or modesty acknowledge that we have a proud record, we have received in our institutions at Kuru Kuru, at Mon Repos and other places, students from other Caribbean countries. We will hope to continue and to expand these facilities, if possible, within the limits of our resources.

More generally, Cde. Speaker, we hope that this year we can receive the report of the group of experts which was appointed to make recommendations for improving Caricom relations and, hopefully, we can have that long postponed and long awaited Heads of Government meeting.

Outside the region of the immediate Caribbean, Cde. Speaker, Caricom has sought to deepen its arrangement with Mexico, Canada and the E.E.C. and Guyana will be contributing towards the development of these relations.

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Jackson.

Cde. Jackson: Cde. Speaker, if I may turn to relations with our neighbours I would like to repeat a remark I made elsewhere that whilst one can chose a friend one cannot choose a neighbour. In our case we are willing to work for friendly relations with our neighbours, but it must be friendship with integrity and a friendship with honour.

Our relations with Brazil have developed consistently over the years. This year we intend to intensify our contact in various functional fields in health, education, geology, science and technology, etc.

We are hoping that we can advance even further our co-operation in establishing more permanent communication links whether of telephone, of road, or of air. We have put together, Local Standing Committee that will monitor the implementation of the programme. I would hope, Cde. Speaker, that during this year and beyond the relations of friendship between ourselves and Brazil will be manifested by ever increasing contact between our peoples and our institutions.

Cde. Speaker, in relation to Suriname, this Assembly will recall that at a summit meeting in Barbados in April, 1979, there were certain agreements which were cardinal in normalising the state of relations as then existed between our two countries. Since then there have been changes in Suriname. A coup took place there on 25th February, 1980. Yet, even in those early days, in March, 1980, we sought to reaffirm that the policy of the Government of Guyana was for the progressive development of friendly and harmonious relations with all neighbours. We said that Guyana's relations with Suriname have been characterised by a spirit of amity and co-operation at many levels and we said that we were committed to preserving and deepening this friendship and would continue to be guided by this objective in the conduct of our relations with Suriname.

Since then, Cde. Speaker, we have sought at the level of Minister of Foreign Affairs to operate within that framework and with those principles, we have dealt with President Chin-A-Sen when he carried on the portfolio of Foreign Minister, with Dr.

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Andre Hacknat when he held the portfolio of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and now Dr. Harvey Naredorp/ Narerdops with whom I held discussions in New Delhi.

We do have areas of tension. Fishing is one of the major causes of tension. However, I believe that the agreement which we signed in April, 1979, and subsequently, if ratified – and we have ratified them – will go a long way towards removing existing areas of potential friction. But I would say, Cde. Speaker, that we intend to collaborate with Suriname once there is an equal and matching response on their side on the basis of the principles that I earlier outlined.

The Speaker: I think, Cde. Jackson, you had better get an extension of time.

The Vice President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations (Cde. Ramsaroop): I move that the Minister of Foreign Affairs be given an additional 15 minutes to continue his presentation.

Question put and agreed to.

Cde. Jackson: Cde. Speaker, in so far as Venezuela is concerned, pivotal to our relations with that country is, of course, the Protocol of Port-of-Spain, the initial twelve year period of which comes to an end in June next year. I would like at this stage, even though it may be repetitious, to reaffirm that it is our firm policy to work for the progressive development of friendly and harmonious relations with all neighbours on the basis of universally recognised principles. This policy applies equally to Brazil, Suriname and to Venezuela and it is our hope that during this year – 1981 – there will be an intensification of contacts between our two Governments and our two peoples, including contacts at high political levels.

Cde. Speaker, I had made reference earlier to our participation in the New Delhi meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Non-aligned Movement. I don't think I need to repeat in this Assembly the importance of non-alignment for our national policy.

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6.10 p.m.

I know that there were some years ago, when the party which is now the minority party of this Assembly, some doubts about the purpose, the principles and the value of non-alignment. But I think that that party has now come around to agree that non-alignment offers a strategic alternative in a world which can be dominated by imperialism, hegemony and bloc politics. I think that if we are right in our earlier presentation about the alarums which are being sounded, and if we are correct in our analysis that there are grave dangers of confrontation between major powers, it would seem to me that non-alignment needs to play at this particular juncture of history an even more mature role in terms of saving the world from ultimate destruction. Non-alignment must remain the vehicle or one of the vehicles through which we can assert, maintain and protect our independence.

The New Delhi meeting was a well attended one. From our own region the Foreign Ministers of Jamaica, of Trinidad and Tobago, of St. Lucia, the acting Foreign Minister of Grenada and, of course, the Foreign Minister of Guyana attended. It was the first time for a long time that this has happened. I think all in all, it would be correct for me to report to this Assembly that Guyana maintained a high profile throughout the Conference. [Applause] Along with Suriname we served as Vice Presidents of the Conference and served on the Bureau of that Conference. I myself initiated the general debate of that Conference – [Applause] – and additionally our delegation was most active in the political and economic committees and in the various and several drafting groups which were set up.

Before the Conference there were many detractors and cynics who sought to forecast that our Conference would end in failure. The results have disproved their pessimism. If I may briefly report that, in my view, the Conference was helpful. Several of the contentious issues such as, for instance, the South East Asia question, issues on which the positions of the Government of Guyana are absolutely clear and on the question of the Middle East and on the burning and very relevant today questions of apartheid in South Africa were dealt with successfully.

If I may dwell for a moment on the last subject it would be to say that we have agreed in New Delhi for an intensified political programme of action, as well as on the necessity to support to the fullest the Freedom Fighters of Namibia and of South Africa, SWAPO, ANC, PAC, so that they might be better able to prosecute their struggle by all means at their disposal for the victory which must inevitably be theirs. That is why we

were heartened by the public response that met our correct and proper decision to take action against the errant member of the English Cricket team who sought by his actions to violate an agreement which was solemnly reached by our Heads of Government in Gleneagles in 1977. Incidentally, I understand that some American tennis players were refused landing in Nigeria because they have played tennis in South Africa. [Applause] I think this Assembly would like to know that we are at one with Nigeria.

On the economic side, we, of course discussed the questions which I have raised before – the question of the new global round of negotiations and, as I indicated, we made substantial contributions to the preparation for the Conference which will take place in Caracas on Economic Co-operation among developing countries.

It happened as well that the New Delhi meeting was taking place in the twentieth year of the formal meeting of the Movement of Non-aligned countries. We held a commemorative session. Among other things, we decided that the first day of September each year should be celebrated throughout the countries of the Non-aligned Movement as the day of Non-Alignment. [Applause]

We have sought to pursue and we have projected a foreign policy which will seek to achieve the goals as set out in the Budget Statement. We are conscious of the fact that the external environment impacts on the domestic one and that one of the prime objectives of our foreign policy must be the creation of external circumstances and conditions which will aid our national objectives, including our national development. We are fortified not only by the correctness of our analysis but by the new psychological thrust which the People's New Constitution commands us to take, to chart an independent course of development in conformity with our historical experiences as contained in the sixth preambular paragraph in the Preamble to the Constitution.

The pursuit of an independent national policy sometimes has to be done in difficult and novel circumstances. I have sought to indicate some of these circumstances of an international character, the crisis and breakdown of international political systems, the recrudescence of policies aimed at creating sphere of influence, the use of force or the threat of its use, to resolve crisis situations, blatant and veiled attempts at interference in the affairs of States, efforts to impose hegemonic policies thus creating a climate of destabilisation and the arms race. With the support that our party, the People's National Congress, has had from the people of Guyana under the banner of the People's New Constitution we go forward to the future with confidence. [Applause]

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6.20 – 6.30 p.m.

6.20 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Fredericks.

The Minister of State for Youth and Sport, in the Ministry of National Development (Cde. R. C. Fredericks): Cde. Speaker, please afford me this opportunity to say how extremely proud I feel to be able to speak in this great Assembly about youth and sports and to thank the People's National Congress for electing me to this high office. Sports in the world today is so important that it occupies a place of importance in every nation. It is so powerful that it is used as a political weapon whenever the circumstances present themselves, as has been evident at the last international Olympics. It is also an area of activity which, when successful, generates pride in a nation. On a national level, it contributes to the physical growth of the young people and the promotion of sports provides opportunities for others to develop their skills.

Cde. Speaker, if there is one activity which supports the promotion of unity among people of a nation sports stands out as the greatest force which develops pride, joy, support and unity of purpose, and being ever so conscious of this power of sports, my department will vigorously promote programmes of sports that will reach out to every individual in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Cde. Speaker, a very progressive development in this country is the People's New Constitution. I feel extremely proud to be governed by a set of laws which guarantee a set of fundamental rights, one of which is the right to leisure. Permit me, Cde. Speaker, to quote from the People New Constitution Chapter II Article 23 –

“23. Every citizen has the right to rest, creation and leisure. The State in co-operation with co-operatives, trade unions and other socio-economic organisations will guarantee this right by prescribing hours and conditions of work and by establishing holiday arrangements for workers, including a complex of cultural, educational and health institutions.”

It is in this context of this fundamental law and its commitment to sports by the People's National Congress and this Government that the programme of sports involves every neighbourhood and co-operative, and every region will be organised.

The Constitution seeks to ensure the involvement of every organisation in the society. It restricts no one on account of political affiliation, race or religion and I hope

that no one nor no organisation will restrict itself from actively supporting and participating in the organisation of sports programming in Guyana.

During 1981 our efforts will be devoted to the organisation of sporting activities that will not only reach out to every Guyanese but will satisfy aspirations of every athlete or player. One of such programmes will be the Guyana Games which will be held in August.

Cde. Speaker, as I have remarked before, our overriding principle is to provide opportunity for every citizen to participate in sports or games. The regional system which gives power to the people to organise the economic, social and cultural life provides an opportunity for organising sports in order to satisfy their own needs and involve the young people in meaningful organised activities. In addition, the time has come when a more serious attempt must be made to have the best of our athletes properly trained so that they can qualify to represent Guyana in international competition.

The Games, therefore, will really be our national sports championship competition which will be organised every two years with the following objectives:-

1. To provide opportunities for every Guyanese regardless of his area of residence to participate in some sport of his choice either as a spectator or a competitor.
2. To bring together the most talented athletes in a national competition so as to establish their degree of performance, and
3. To select the best of our athletes for advanced training in preparation for international competition.

The Games will be at the regional level and all competitors must compete at regional level in order to be selected to represent their region at the national level. Ten teams will therefore represent the regions at the finals.

Cde. Speaker, in the field of sports there are many achievements of which we can be justly proud, one of which is the construction of the National Sports Hall in which many of our teams are trained and in which many international events are organised. The Sports Hall, among other things, provides ample opportunities for over boxers to be

trained with the result that for the first time in the history of this country Guyana won a bronze medal at the last international Olympics. In addition, we have been the first country in the Commonwealth Caribbean to enter a boxing context for a world title.

Training in sports will be intensified during the year so as to improve the physical quality and skill of our athletes. Within the administration of the regional system facilities for sporting activities will be improved, such as grounds and community centres, for we realise that the success of our training and improvement will depend to a very large extent on the upgrading of our facilities, especially in the rural areas.

Cde. Speaker, it has been the practice for our association, with Government's assistance, to send teams of athletes to represent Guyana at international events. Whenever possible and within the financial constraints of this country this assistance will continue, but the National Sports Development Council has been advised to ensure that organisations seeking financial assistance must conduct the affairs of their associations efficiently, effectively and in the best interest of the athletes they serve, keeping within the general policy of the Government.

Financial accountability by sports associations must be observed. Sending of athletes overseas will not be regarded as a routine exercise, but assistance will be given after due consideration as to the merit and competence of the teams to perform creditably. More emphasis will therefore be placed on developing the ability of our athletes locally than on overseas representation. It is not to say that teams will not be assisted to go overseas, but more emphasis will be placed on training our athletes at home.

Cde. Speaker, if our sports programmes are to be successful, then we must have the necessary skill –the necessary manpower – to run the necessary service. The best use, therefore, must be made of our available manpower resources so as to achieve the best results.

In the overall approach to youth work it is not possible to organise the activity of youth work without including sports. It is therefore proposed that the Department of Youth and the Department of Sports will come together as one department in the Ministry of National Development.

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6.20 – 6.30 p.m.

The staff of both the Youth Division and the Sports Division will be better utilised as they will be able to collectively and individually organise activities of both a sport and cultural nature. In other words, there the responsibility will be multiplied by rendering support to all aspects of work among youths. Scarce staff resources will therefore be better utilised, the limited financial resources will have a greater spread effect in terms of activities, and more young people will be able to benefit by a broader application of an integrated programme.

The department will be headed by a Director who will be responsible to the Minister for the general administration of the department. He will be assisted by other professional and supporting staff. As I see it with a well co-ordinated staff and with a programme that reaches out to every Guyanese, the opportunity to ensure the right to leisure will be an accomplished fact.

It is my belief that the youth without pride in his country is a youth without a future. The promotion of sports can provide that great opportunity whereby he can develop pride in himself and in his country. The People's New Constitution gives us that opportunity to develop in him that sense of pride. Let us therefore in unity walk the road of progress and through sports make Guyana great. [Applause]

Sitting suspended at 6.30 p.m.

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8.04 – 8.10 p.m.

8.04 p.m.

On resumption –

The Speaker: Cde. Abraham.

Cde. D. Abraham: Cde. Speaker, it is more than an act of courtesy. It is my duty and privilege to address Parliament today.

My being here is yet another indication of my Government's democratic attitude. If you are elected as a representative, regardless of your ethnic origin, cultural and social background or economic status you can be in the highest forum of the land. This was made possible under the leadership of the People's National Congress.

Under the present Government, the Amerindians are enjoying the rights and privileges of citizens of Guyana as never before. Of course, facilities differ because of geographic locations. Nevertheless the facilities are there.

In region 8, which the P.N.C. saw it necessary to develop, there have been great improvements in the economic, social, cultural and political development and I must let it be placed on record that women sometimes out do the men in some of these fields. In agriculture you will find that people are turning to commercial farming in greater numbers than before and that they have realised the importance of community self-reliance. So it will not be long before greater production will result. Region 8 has great potential to produce peanuts, tomatoes, onions and white potatoes and with inputs in command we will surely surpass the 1980 level of production.

Mining is also an important factor in the economic life in Region 8. More people are getting involved and with greater control and penalties for breaking the mining regulations, this important resource will lead to greater development.

Since the People's National Congress took over the reins of leadership, more particularly in the past eleven years, Region 8 has seen several developmental achievements. We have seen construction of several school buildings, health stations at Paramakatoi and Kato, an airstrip at Kato and at Paramakatoi, and a bond at Kato airstrip. We have also seen the hinterland scholarship award which total 35 to date. They were awarded as follows: To Secondary Schools – 10; Nurse/Midwives – 2; Medex – 1; Carneige School of Home Economics – 4; Government Technical Institute – 8; Guyana

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8.04 – 8.10 p.m.

School of Agriculture – 3; Guyana Industrial Training Centre – 7. I am happy to report that those awarded scholarships return to work in their area and contribute in one way or the other towards its development.

8.10 p.m.

And speaking of scholarships brings to mind the first person awarded one. Her name at that time was Kathleen Williams. The first, a woman and then there was the first Amerindian pilot in the People's Army whose name is Cde. Ovid Williams, another shining example.

To continue on development, Cde. Speaker, land title was given to Amerindians in 1976 and in 1980 two projects were started – at Waipa, improvements of primary school to include nursery school, the allocation of \$30,000, and at Paramakatoi, the construction of a nursery school, the allocation of \$35,000 and 60 percent of the work has been done. Cde. Speaker, these difficult names of the Amerindian villages I know, may have you puzzled, but these are found in the North Pakaraimas of the Rupununi which is the Potaro – Siparuni Region.

In the political field, we are doing well. The December 15 elections results are ample proof. The comrades of Region 8 are convinced more than ever that the People's National Congress is the only party that cares and that it is truly the people's party. Of course, with the establishment of the Local Democratic Organs, no doubt the P.N.C. will be stronger than ever.

Cde. Speaker, I did mention earlier the role of women. Women are indeed awakening and are having a greater say in decision-making. There is need, however, for them to be more organised and let me assure this Honourable Assembly that sooner or later the women of Region 8, and indeed the whole country, will be properly organised.

The record of the P.N.C. stands for scrutiny by all. The achievements and successes are there and I am quite sure when all is said and done, with the co-operation of all we will make the motto of our country, Guyana – “One People, One Nation, One Destiny” – a reality under our President, Cde. L.F.S. Burham.

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8.10 – 8.20 p.m.

8.10 p.m.

The Speaker: Comrades, that was the maiden speech by the youngest Member of the National Assembly, Cde. Tiwari.

Cde. Tiwari: Cde. Speaker, may I, like some of my colleagues, express my dignified honour for being able to be a Member of this August Assembly, the highest forum of the land, and, moreso, to be a Member of the vanguard side of this Assembly, the side which really and truly represents the entire Guyanese nation, the People's National Congress. Truly, Cde. Speaker, one can witness democracy in practice and action, for on our side there is amalgamation of a truly representative force, representing a wide cross section of the people of Guyana. It is on this basis that I would make reference to the role of the People's National Congress in the promotion of women's rights within the framework of the People's New Constitution.

Since International Women's Year in 1975, there has been an increased consciousness about the role women can and must play in the development of society. Guyana was represented at the International Women's Year Conference held in Mexico city and a subscriber to the World Plan of Action which was formulated for the advancement of women in the political, social and economic life of their country.

Guyana was further represented at conferences held in Cuba in 1977 and in Venezuela in 1979 for the Latin American and Caribbean Group of the United Nations, and subscribed to regional plans of action which circumscribed the actions that the Economic Commission for Latin America and governments of countries within this group pursue to advance women's contribution in all areas of national life. These various actions were to have taken place within the context of the national plan of each country, but taking account of the recommendations in the World Plan and regional plans of action.

More recently, Cde. Speaker, this Government once more sent a delegation to the United Nations Mid-Decade Conference for Women held in Copenhagen in July of 1980. Guyana had in fact at all these forums presented its achievements for women long before 1975 and its continuing programme within the decade.

The plan of action for the 10 year period identified some minimal objectives that countries were to achieve by 1980. I will refer, briefly, to some of these short, medium and long term targets that were envisaged.

1. Co-educational, technical and vocational training should be available in both industrial and rural areas.
2. Equal access at every level of education, including compulsory primary school education, should be ensured.
3. Employment opportunities should be increased, unemployment reduced and discriminatory employment conditions should be eliminated.
4. Infrastructural services should be established and increased where necessary in both rural and urban areas.
5. Legislation should be introduced where necessary to ensure women of voting and electoral rights, equal legal capacity and equal employment opportunities and conditions.
6. There should be more women in policy-making positions locally, nationally and internationally.
7. Modern rural technology, that is, cottage industries, pre-school day centres, time and energy saving devices which reduce the heavy workload of women, particularly rural women, should be developed.
8. A body should be established at the Government level to accelerate and oversee progress towards achieving equality and integration of women in national life. These objectives were to be achieved by action taken at governmental level and at the non-governmental level through agencies interested in promoting women's development such as governmental and non-governmental women's organisations.

From a perusal of these objectives one finds that this Government – working in conjunction with women's organisations, but more particularly with organisations concerned about larger groups of women, such as the Council on the Affairs and Status of Women in Guyana, Women's Institutes, the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement, just to mention a few – has achieved all of these objectives. Those which stand out are free and co-education, enhanced legal status of women, the exercise of civil,

social and political rights and the professionalism of women in a number of areas hitherto closed to them.

8.20 p.m.

In relation to the minimum target of modern rural technology and the move towards reducing time and energy spent by women on housework, the Government has supported appropriate technology programmes and projects by way of financial and technical contribution and Guyana through its women has had its name put on the map in the area of pioneering relevant appropriate technology, not only for women but technology which could be applied in society at large. All this was made possible because of the People's National Congress.

The minimum objectives identified that there should be established a body at the governmental level to accelerate and oversee progress towards achieving equality and the integration of women in national life.

In keeping with this recommendation and even before 1980, Caswig, with other women's organisations, has discussed and put up a proposal to Government which was accepted for the establishment of a Women's Bureau. It is this kind of interaction between Government and organisations seriously interested in promoting women's development that has made reality the statement of Cde. Desmond Hoyte, Vice President for Economic Planning and Finance, who said in the Budget Speech to this Assembly:

“This Government takes with the utmost seriousness the various mandates in the People's New Constitution. We are commanded not merely to remove discrimination against women and children from our statute books and administrative practices, but to provide all the necessary facilities and mechanisms to ensure that this equality is substantive and not merely declaratory. To give effect to these directions, the Government has created a Women's Bureau under the aegis of the Ministry of Public Welfare to monitor and expedite the work which has to be done to give substance and meaning to the constitutional provisions”.

The establishment of this Bureau will accelerate the development process of this country because no country could be conceived of being developed if its women folk are not given equal opportunity in the educational, employment, political, social and economic spheres.

There is talk that there is no woman front bencher on this side, but let it be known that it is the Government through the W.R.S.M. who gave equal rights to our women. That is why we are grateful to this Government and we the women pledge to work even

harder for this new system to be successful for our Party and Government believe in action, not words.

The sensitivity which this Government has shown in promoting the development of women is because of its commitment to the development of people and the creation of a socialist society. This People's National Congress Government will continue in this direction for the interests and well-being of all its citizens are paramount. We are confident that progress nationwide will continue under the banner of the People's National Congress. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. London.

Cde. London: Cde. Speaker, it is not often that a voice from West Berbice is heard within these hallowed walls which have reverberated with debate from 16 years of Sittings of Parliament under the rule of the P.N.C.

This opportunity for my voice to be heard here this evening as a representative of the Mahaica/Berbice Region No. 5 is therefore greeted with delight and gratification. Yesterday those of us who were fortunate to be here were moved to punctuate with resounding cheers the superb presentation made by a voice of Hopetown, West Berbice from the person of Cde. Elaine Davidson, now a resident of Linden. The members of the minority were spellbound by the matter, form and style of the address and this evening we also heard from another Comrade from West Berbice, Cde. Ally who is now a resident of Melanie Damishana.

I refer to these matters not out of narrow parochial interest but because I wish to highlight the role of the first woman from West Berbice to address this Assembly in such an impressive manner. It is my responsibility under the Constitution because in doing so I am raising the level of civic consciousness – article 74 (3) of the People's Constitution.

I also want to join Hon. Members in congratulating you, Cde. Speaker, not only on your unanimous election as Speaker of this Honourable Assembly but on your performance demonstrated so far. Certainly you have upheld the decorum of this Assembly. When we read of the rowdy standards of the British House of Commons cheers and jeers debates, we come to the conclusion that we can teach our erstwhile masters not only how to play cricket but how to manage the highest forum of the land. [Applause]

This is an occasion to be truly grateful to the bodies and things that made this possible – the People’s National Congress, its dynamic Leader, Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham and the profound people’s New Constitution. From this trinity have come the 1981 budget proposals – an evidence of remarkable consistency and sincerity.

In 1969 the slogan of the P.N.C. was ‘Local Power’. In 1971 the Leader of the ruling party, on the occasion of a Caribbean Seminar in March spoke of diffusing power to release the energies of the people and nine years after the People’s New Constitution was promulgated.

Permit me, Cde. Speaker, to thank and congratulate the designers and builders of this great structure that will be the El Dorado of the dreams of genuine politicians, the first servants of the people, throughout the world and the ages to come.

The Vice President alluded to this epochal stage of our history. I do not only share this point of view but I go further and say that I see this period as a watershed not only for Guyana but also for the world’s millions of people whose energies have been suppressed by outmoded institutions still being embraced by static Governments and irrelevant and moribund leaders.

I do not for one moment feel that this stage in our history was reached by accident. Here I wish to quote from the State Paper on the Re-organisation of the Local Government System in Guyana.

“This Constitution, the first to be fashioned by the Guyanese people for themselves, was intended to be consistent with and reflect the prevailing ethos, the social objectives and the aspirations of the Guyanese people.”

In that paper there is a reference to the role of the GALA delegation in shaping the provisions of the Constitutions. Footnote 5, page 2:

“As was to be expected the Constituent Assembly spent a great deal of time considering and debating memoranda, oral submissions and other evidence submitted on the question of Local Government re-organisation as an aspect of the New Constitution. The Guyana Association of Local Authorities delegation on the Advisory Panel intervened vigorously on this issue and helped considerably to shape the outcome of the provisions in the constitution relating to the Local Government system.”

Thus we see that the Constitution which gave the direction for our Budget proposals is truly a people's Constitution. And further I say, with humility, that although I was in the vanguard of the struggle for the last decade – to the displeasure and chagrin of so many functionaries some of whom to this day hold me as their sworn enemy – history will not be complete without acknowledging that GALA's outstanding living leaders – among them being Hulbert McGowan, Edmund Wills and George Younge – were no doubt inspired by the courageous and intelligent stand of those stalwarts of the Local Government Movement. Mc Farlane Corry, Jackson, Farnum, Paul Slowe, C. P. Melbourne, Straughn, Sultan Khan, Sudin, Shivrattan and Schultz have gone before, but surely they must be present in spirit here exultant, because their gallant efforts have borne fruit as could be illustrated in these Budget proposals which delineate perspectives in local government.

8.30 p.m.

The philosophical basis of these perspectives is power to the people as can be noted in Chapter VII article 71 (1) and (2) of the People's Constitution, not power to parade with authority as was so sadly displayed a decade ago by misguided leaders of the Minority Party who only succeeded in destroying themselves, but power to manage and develop the community. The emphasis is on people. The Honourable Cde. Vice President referred to the era of the people. The Honourable Prime Minister in winding up the debate on the President's Address made to this Honourable Assembly on February 9, appealed to members of the Minority Party to contribute to the development of the country.

These Budget proposals deserve the support of all the people of Guyana because of the following reasons:-

1. For the first time in the long history of this country, and that is over 350 years of colonial rule and nearly 15 years of rule under the P.N.C. local government will span the entire country without discrimination.

We want the world to know this. Where else in this world has the indigenous population of Amerindians been accorded equal rights as citizens? And Cde. Speaker, we did not have to nationalise heaven to achieve this. We as a party are merely in tune with the heavenly hosts. Guyana champions human rights in the highest forums of the

world. The chief delegate to the meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Non-aligned Nations, Mr. Kabuka Nyirends, said:

“Although Guyana is a small and fairly new state, it has earned itself the well deserved status of international recognition as a giant of wisdom and humanism both within and outside the framework of the movement of non-alignment.”

Now Guyana has demonstrated through these budget proposals that it is a genuine performer and not a masquerader, as have been so many of our leading nations of the world.

2. The emphasis will be on the development of every facet of people’s lives; moreover, to quote from the State Paper – it

“... will provide opportunity for massive, direct involvement of citizens in the decision-making, management and development processes; and will be the major institution for creating self-reliant, productive communities possessed of the confidence and political awareness to organise and manage their own affairs.”

We have seen in the Budget the direction –

“This presentation of the Estimates is not cosmetic. The Local Democratic Organs will be responsible for the achievement of the regional programme and objectives. Consequently, they will control not only regional personnel but the many allocated for regional activities”.

One member of a minority party referred to bureaucracy when he looked at the Estimates and saw that money was allocated for the regions, but I recommend that he should go back to the Budget and re-read the statement made by the Honourable Vice President. Thus, we see, Cde. Speaker, this Government is addressing itself not to the shadow of power or paper power, but real power to the people; money power.

3. As you know, Cde. Speaker, some of the mechanisms have already been set into gear. The country has already been divided into 10 regions in accord with the rationally conceived characteristics to ensure economic development of the community. Regional Democratic councillors have already been elected and Councils established. The elections of the Members to the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs have already been held in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, article 80 (1) and (2). The presence of twelve Parliamentarians here elected by the various Regional Councils is living

testimony of the seriousness and genuineness of this Government to involve as many people as possible in the task of nation building. [Chapter VII article 71(1) of the Constitution]

Some of the Regional Councils in their efforts to diffuse power have already assigned their councillors specific tasks in accordance with the provisions of the State Paper. The people in the various communities will thus be able to deal with complaints against those who are not performing their tasks efficiently and thoroughly. In the past it was fashionable for local government leaders to lead delegations to the Head of State or Ministers of the Government. This new order in the local government affairs will make such excursions unnecessary or rare since power will be in the hands of the people to –

“take decisions which are binding upon their agencies and institutions, and upon the communities and citizens of their areas.” [Page 35 article 75 of the People’s Constitution]

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, a Member of the Minority Party, referred to mismanagement in the corporations and delinquent councillors. Now, this is exactly what the provisions of the State Paper seek to do in the Local Democratic Organs Act because if we wish to correct the mistakes of the past we cannot hold on to the old Constitutions of 1961 and 1964 that we have been hearing about from the other side. I sincerely hope that all managers, damned or otherwise, will be very much aware of this. My association, GALA, had been pressing for the right of enquiry to be instituted.

Cde. Speaker, please permit me to quote from a book Elected by the People by Malik Yants –

“Among the rights which enable the deputy to discharge his duties most effectively, of particular importance is his right to raise in the Soviet and its organ the question of checking upon the work of State bodies – plants, factories, institutions and organisations. The deputy has the right to check on what is being done in response to complaints and proposals he had sent to organisations that come under the jurisdiction of the Soviet. He can also directly take part in going into these complaints and proposals. He has the right to demand that he be received at once by leaders of State bodies and officials that come under the control of the Soviet. If necessary, the deputy can demand that the respective bodies and officials put a stop to violations of social legality. This must be done at once by the proper functionary and the militia and the offenders must be brought to account.”

I have no doubt that under the present leadership of the NCLDO they will play a useful part in consolidating socialist legality and safeguard the rights of citizens through a

comprehensive training programme. It must not be forgotten that Parliament may make provisions for duties, functions and responsibilities of members of Democratic Organs to be prescribed. This presupposes accountability and the right of recall.

4. The Budget satisfies article 77 of Chapter VII of the Constitution which says that:

“The development programme of each region shall be integrated into the national development plans, and the Government shall allocate funds to each region to enable it to implement its development programme.”

This means, Cde. Speaker, that the economy of each region will be given a stimulation never before possible.

5. Cde. Speaker, it is said in the scriptures that a little child shall lead them. Guyana with under one million people, occupying 89,000 square miles, bids fair to world leadership by the kind of perspective its system of government delineates. Its concern for people is paramount. In a recent issue of Time magazine, February 23rd, it was stated as follows of the United States:-

“Opinion polls, the nation’s favourite medium of public confession, document the erosion of American’s faith in their system. Pollster Louis Harris has been asking over the years how many citizens believe in a series of statements like, ‘The people running the country don’t really care what happens to you.’ The number who subscribe to this ‘index of alienation’ has climbed steadily from 20 percent in 1966 to 44 percent in 1972 to 58 percent today.”

8.40 p.m.

Guyana, on the other hand, is making provision to involve as many people as possible in the process of development, thus lowering the index of alienation. Cde. McRae, the Hon. Member from GUYMINE, showed that involvement of the people is a meaningful way contributed to increased production in the bauxite industry and therein may lie the key to increased production in the battered economy of the world.

From the remarks made by representatives of the Minority Party, it is clear that people are anathema to its leader and to them, but Cde. Speaker, I rather suspect that it is the story of the fox and the grapes all over again. Anyone with a modicum of intelligence

can see that to achieve socialist objectives many people will have to be involved in development. As leaders in the Regional Democratic Councils in this Assembly we have no illusions about the tremendous tasks ahead of us. Our position is not honorific. We cannot abandon our responsibilities to the electorate by being absent from the National Assembly with reckless regularity. And for the benefit of the minority party and this nation I would like to give an outline of the tasks of a single councillor and/or parliamentarian of the R.D.C. charged with, say, one discipline – Education and Training.

To understand his role one must go back to the people's Constitution article 74 (1), (2) and (3) and article 75. In my region that councillor will have to be in touch with 36 Primary Schools, 6 Secondary Schools, 37 nursery schools, 12 Home Economics departments and centres, 14 Industrial Art Centres and a minimum of 75 Parent/Teacher Associations situated between the right bank of Mahaica Creek and Fearn on the left bank of the Berbice River, a distance of 28 miles or 44 kilometres by road and 134½ miles or 214 kilometres by river. Because of the fact that there is accountability, proper and up-to-date records of pupils, teachers and heads will have to be kept. These long overdue technique in education will be introduced faithfully. They will enhance educational thought and practice and bring rich rewards to all concerned.

Cde. Speaker, I acknowledge my ex-pupil Cde. Feroze Mohamed who, in a spirited presentation, referred to the education priorities particularly those adumbrated on page 11 of the President's address to this House. In doing so, Cde. Feroze played into our hands because in our safe hands lies the question of rehabilitation, improvement and expansion of the physical facilities for education and we have to ensure that education of our children is related to the requirements of the community and that hardships are removed or eliminated.

To give another example, Cde. Speaker, of the extent of the work ahead of the Local Democratic Organs, I want to explain about the role we are expected to play in the Guyana Games to be held in August 1981. The setting and standards of these Games must be those of the Olympics. There will be several disciplines which include Track and Field Events, Softball cricket, and so on. The competition will be run on a regional basis. For this exercise to be done efficiently and effectively several clubs will have to be properly organised. Training courses will have to be mounted. We have to ensure that we get in touch with all the bodies involved in sporting games and do everything possible to help and encourage them. This is a full-time job for a councillor as I see it.

All these things show that we are certainly on our way to making Guyana and her people the best in the world.

Since I introduced myself as a West Berbician I wish to conclude in parlance typical of West Berbicians so I quote from the popular calypsonian, The Mighty Chief, “Don’t make sport. Leh we support” these Budget proposals. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. London, may I thank you for your kind references made to me. Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: (The Deputy Speaker) rose – [Interruption]

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran behaved himself. Let us give him an opportunity to have his say. He has 30 minutes.

Cde. Ram Karran: May I commence by congratulating all those speakers on the Government benches – including the school master – who read their speeches so well.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, they did not read. They referred to notes.

Cde. Ram Karran: Thank you for the correction, Your Honour. I also wish to congratulate my friend and the Hon. Vice President who delivered the Budget Speech and to observe that it would appear to me that there was some considerable material drawn from a booklet I have in my hand.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, I do not want to interrupt you any more but you are on the air for the full thirty minutes. Be careful what you say.

Cde. Ramkarran: I was saying that a great deal seems to have been copied from this book including the slogan in the speech “Safe Hands” which seems to have some reference to the President’s address to this Chamber. There is absolutely nothing wrong in getting ideas from other means, other material, but to go down to the question of obtaining the slogan or theme is, to my mind, supported by the speeches made by my friends on the other side as if this Government or this P.N.C. is still electioneering rather than getting down to the task of carrying on the Government.

I say that because from the tenor of the speeches one gets the impression that this fiasco of December 15 – I have a booklet here named Something to Remember, Report of the International Team of Observers, Elections in Guyana December, 1980 – that this stunning event on December 15th is not even believed by those who spoke in this debate. So it would seem that it is perhaps right that they should start campaigning for elections because they have not won any elections and I say “won” in inverted commas.

Judging from the various situations – or, rather, judging from the Vice President’s speech in which the end seems to forget the beginning, one starts off reading about the philosophical side of things and at the bottom of the Report one gets down to the deep crisis which this country faces at the moment and yet we hear all these speeches. In fact, one lady member – I understand she is from West Berbice and now she is from Linden – was referring to the splendour in this Assembly. Well, perhaps the ladies have caused a great deal of splendour here but the worker in the field and people generally do not see much splendour. What they see is emptiness; what they see is hunger; what they see is nakedness and difficulty in getting on with life.

But perhaps she can be reminded of the story of the bad Shah. I do not know if Your Honour knows the story of the bad Shah, one of the Mogul princess who, in order to find out what the people thought of him, sent his Minister after he had given him a very high salary saying, “Will you please go out and find out how the crowds are getting on.” The messenger came back and said, “Everything is so well.” But after a few months, he caused a reduction in the salary and he asked him again to go and see. His reply in that case was that the people were very poorly fed, the people were unhappy and, perhaps, that is what is happening in this Assembly where the Members are well taken care of by the situation here and they are able to report that there is so much splendour all around them. I have no doubt that is the case here.

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Besides that, sir, I want to comment on the immorality of the P.N.C. in letting through the back door members whose names had appeared on the P.N.C.’s electoral list, coming in as technocrats. One gets the impression that they do not have the competence among the members on their list to form a government, but we see that these very names, even though they are on the list, have entered this Chamber through the back door, bloating it to its present size, allowing it to be what it is – a monstrosity. In fact, one would think, looking at the situation in the United States of America, one of the richest

countries in the Western World, thinking of the United Kingdom, our former masters, as one Minister described it, aren't we showing them up tremendously with five Vice Presidents and thirty-one Ministers? I do not think they can afford that splendour which we have described or which we are enjoying here in this country in the midst of poverty, nakedness, hunger, disease and everything else that you can find.

I remember my friend, Mr. Nascimento, the Hon. Minister, was trying to give us an indication of what the unemployment situation is. He did not say what it is now. He said what it was in the P.P.P.'s time and my friend, the Vice President, dealt very well with the unemployment figures, the percentages of the situation in the United Kingdom and the United States, but God forbid, he would not dare say what the unemployment situation is in this country, what is the percentage and what is the number. But that is how it is.

The inability of the economy is borne out more clearly by my friend – forgive me, sir, when he was speaking, I could not forget the immortal character created by Cervantes in Don Quixote. In fact, as I glanced across there I wanted to smile because it is not often these days that you see a moustache like the handlebar of a bicycle. However, what my friend said was that in the P.P.P.'s time the farmers were paid a certain sum of money and today they are paid double, treble and quadruple that amount. Are they getting enough? It is my contention that they are not. The whole thing has gone upside down because my friends who spoke on rice, for instance, showed that even though the Government has given recent increases, the increases cannot take care of the cost of production.

And that brings me to another question. Before you begin shouting from the house-top you must ask whether those increases that have been given to the farmers have not depressed the situation among the urban working class. Everything needs to be adjusted scientifically, fairly, not to jump on the house-top and to say that in the P.P.P.'s time we had a penny a pound for plantains and now we are getting 70 percent. You were getting a penny a pound for plantains, but what was then the cost of living compared with what it is today?

One cannot argue on one side of the ledger. One has to think in terms of a double entry, and my friend who sought to give us the joke or who sought to tilt with the windmill as Cervantes sought to do in the 14th century – I do not remember now – is not giving the whole story because it was a big joke, according to Cervantes.

More particularly, sir, I wish to draw the attention of the Assembly to the contribution made by my friend, Mr. Nascimento. I particularly want to deal with his observations because he sought, I would say deliberately, to mislead the members of this Assembly. It is a very serious thing to do. He does not seem to have learnt anything since his association with this Chamber, nor has he forgotten anything.

What did he say? To have recalled the failure of the Del Conte contract on the Parika – Makouria Road is for him to forget the part that he, the P.N.C. and the U.F., particularly by Mr. D’Aguiar, the former Minister of Finance, played in stabbing the Guyanese people in their backs by their deal with the Security and Exchange Commission in the United States of America which caused that contract to founder. He also seemed to have forgotten the part played by the P.N.C. and the United Force in that period when, as the Government was trying to develop the country, millions of dollars worth of property were burnt to the ground and dozens of people were killed during the riots during that period of 1962-1964.

That is history. You cannot change it no matter how much the P.N.C. and its new found friends try to do. They cannot rewrite history that is indelibly printed in the minds of those people who lived in those days. Everyone remembers printed in the minds of those people who lived in those days. Everyone remembers the “X13 Plan”, don’t they? In fact, what I understand in 1962 was that they were trying to re-enact the “cent bread riot of 1862”, one hundred years before; the “cent bread riot” or they used to call it “the Putagee riot”. That is what they were trying to re-enact, but what happened in 1862 was that members of the urban working class were shot down by the police and many of them who survived were beaten with the cat-o-nine tails and had every rough treatment. But the ruling class as in 1862 saw a threat to their position, and in 1962 saw the godless communism in the air, sought to put a stop to it and that is why they tried to re-enact the 1862 incident in this country. We cannot forget these things.

There is a saying, sir, that you can fool some of the people all the time, and you can fool all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time. And that is what my friends across the Table here seem to want to do, but they cannot succeed. They can’t fool all the people all the time.

It’s a great pity that the young people have given up the dance we called “the twist” for if anyone here remembers what the twist was like, they would have seen it enacted in the performance of my friend, Mr. Kit Nascimento, who, unfortunately, is not

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here. He seems to be an exponent of that art. This is how he tries to extricate the P.N.C. from its blunder – and everyone regards that as a massive blunder – in abandoning the railways. As an old railway man, I hope that my friend, Cde. Green, is going to support this position; I know he tells me so privately. I want to know if he is going to support it publicly. We have got to be careful these days because Mr. Burnham is a man who makes God cry.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, you can't say that.

Cde. Ram Karran: I am quoting the calypsonian, sir.

The Speaker: You don't worry with any calypsonian because you might be behaving like a calypsonian too.

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Cde. Ram Karran: My friend says that there was no rolling stock. My friend says there were no engines and so on and so forth but a railway man will know that engines and carriages are all called rolling stock. We had just come through a war, the 1939-1945 war. We were unable to replace many items of the rolling stock and other things required but despite the fact that the Government was unable, as he said, to anticipate the increase in the price of oil, did the Government not read the Smodlaka Report? Smodlaka said very, very clearly that a part of the railway might be abandoned because it was definitely not paying but he recommended very strongly the retention of the railway from Mahaica to Georgetown.

More than that. The Government was unaware of the increases that would have come about in the price of oil but was the Government unaware – All these economists were there. My friend the Hon. Prime Minister, my friend the Minister of Economic Development and several others have acted as Minister of Finance. Surely they must have known that after that period where capitalism over-produces, a slump will come. That has been drawn to the attention of this Government umpteen times in the past. "It is coming. Look out!" But, like the foolish virgins they did not light their lamps when the bridegroom came.

The crisis came and what did they do? They scrapped the railway. Not only did they scrap it, but within months all the rails were sent out of this country and they have

not accounted for them yet in the Auditor's reports that come before this Chamber. With what speed they disposed of these assets one would have thought that the devil was behind their tails to get rid of them. A future Government will have to rebuild that railway and perhaps future generations – when I say “future” not too far in the future – will ask them to bring them back. What did they do with the money? It has not been accounted for in this Chamber as far as I know.

My friend the Minister of Economic Development has said that the backwardness which we lived through in the past, that the Public Accounts Committee must be brought up to date. I hope so and I hope when it is brought up to date a full account will be given for the assets of the Transport and Harbours Department. That is how they work and they fool the people and they continue to fool the people. They did not know that oil prices would have gone up. Nobody knew. They did not know that Smodlaka had said that that would have been the position.

As a railway man I remember that during the time of the railway we used to have one death a year on the railways. Today what is the record? With everybody being hauled by trucks and buses and so on, the number of people killed on the roads amounts to nearly 300. That alone warrants the retention of the railway but I hope that they will get up here and, as they tell me privately, say publicly that it is a mistake and it cannot be helped now. You have all told me.

My friend again attempted to mislead the Assembly when he compared figures. He said that the traffic handled by the Transport and Harbours Department in 1964 has been quadrupled and he gave the figures. But my friend must learn to understand that you cannot compare unlike things. Whereas the railway operated from Rosignol to Georgetown, the traffic from the Corentyne to New Amsterdam was handled by road transport and any figures he seeks to give would be unrealistic because it would be comparing the limited transportation by the trains from Rosignol to Georgetown and from Vreed-en-Hoop to Parika, leaving out the hauling by buses on the Corentyne Coast and on the East Bank, Demerara.

Today the figure he gives about the bus transport is an omnibus one and includes the entire country.

In another respect the Demerara Ferry Service which used to haul passengers is now virtually obsolete and most of the passengers are travelling by road through the

bridge. So my friend – I am sorry that he is not here – ought not to mislead this Assembly by giving figures that do not really relate to what we were talking about.

I can go on talking about Mr. Nascimento's contribution for the entire time at my disposal but let us leave him. Let us deal with one more matter, the Jacob Report of 1964 in which the Colonial Office sought to make out that the Government of British Guiana was insolvent, was bankrupt. Those were the words used by Duncan Sandys and Duncan Sandys is not my papa. Duncan Sandys is the papa for the people over on the other side and he is the papa for Mr. Nascimento. But, sir, I want to refer to another Report, the Wilson Snell Report of 1926 which preceded the suspension of the Constitution of this country when – not the identical words for English has a way of changing but words very nearly like those put up by Mr. Jacob for a specific purpose because the British wanted to suspend the Constitution, the Combined Court, and they set up a Legislative Council with nominated members which my friends glory in; they have so many nominated members in this Chamber and that is why they put up such a Report.

And I am amazed at my friend who poses to be a socialist, who has had some of the jargon rubbed on him from the P.N.C. I looked at his face, sir. I looked at the glow on his face when he referred to the Jacob Report. What a patriot he is! I remember when the Constitution was suspended in 1926 – I don't remember, I read of the action taken by the men. And they were not socialists and they were not communists. Who were they? Eustace Gordon Woolford, Nelson Cannon, A.R.F. Webber, Seeram, and those people. But they denounced the British Government in no uncertain way. But here we have patriots, socialists, praising the British Government. We had another one in 1953 when some of the chaps who were very near to the border – one of them is an Ambassador – they flew to London to thank the British Government for suspending the Constitution. That sort of patriot we have in the ranks of the P.N.C.? They cannot separate principles; they cannot separate wrong from right. If something is done against the Guyanese people, whether the P.N.C. or the P.P.P. or the U.F. or whoever is there, it is a wrong done against the people and they should be able to separate that from the bitterness they have in their minds against other Guyanese regardless of the party.

So our friends must remember these things. The Wilson Snell Report was in the same strain and in the same vein as the Jacobs Report which sought to and did suspend the Constitution, shortening its life by a year in order to put their brothers –

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The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, Cde. Nascimento was referring to Dr. Jacob's Budget Speech you know.

Cde. Ram Karran: I beg your pardon. He was referring to Mr. Jacobs' Report.

The Speaker: Dr. Jacob's speech, the Budget Speech.

Cde. Ram Karran: I know he was referring to that, Your Honour, but I am telling you that I sat here and I listened to him and he was referring to the Jacobs Report. He referred to it in the terms that Guyana Government was bankrupt. There probably was some confusion in Your Honour's mind. The Minister was Dr. Jacob but the economist who came from England was Mr. K. Jacobs. I cannot forget these things. Nascimento can.

One must turn to the situation here today. All this splendour and all these wonderful words that come from the other side! Have any of my friends, man or woman, taken the trouble to look into this gnawing problem of crime that affects our fatherland. Perhaps they can sleep in peace because they have policemen to watch their homes. They have them as servants to protect them but can you think of the lot of the ordinary man who after a hard day's work finds that empty stomach people are forced to attack him? What is the Government doing about it? We have not heard any comments by our friends on the other side. On the West Demerara there were two cases. Thieves armed with dangerous weapons broke into people's houses, murdered them, took away all their belongings. That goes on every day and every night. What is the solution? Has the Government thought of some solution? They tell us we must join in partnership for production and productivity. We will come to that but you putting some thought to how people are going to live in peace?

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My friend, the Vice President, did make some comments about that in his speech, but how is it going to be done practically? What are you going to do? Are you going to take away all these weapons from these people, stolen from the Government, or given to them by the Government or certain people in the Government? How is it going to be stopped? Are people going to be able to walk the roads without being molested?

This cannot continue, and if it continues other people are going to take in their own hands the right to defend themselves if the police and the law enforcing agencies are unable to protect them. They have a right to be protected. They pay to be protected and if the Government is going to abandon its responsibility then other crimes are going to develop. I don't want to appeal to the Government to put an end to it. It is the Government's responsibility. High sounding words resounding in this document ought to be taken into account seriously by the Government to ensure that these things do not occur.

But while my friend, Mr. Nascimento, was talking, he was not talking about what the P.N.C. will do. What he was talking about was what the P.P.P. did not do and we have many people living in the past. We are not examining today the programme of the P.P.P. The people who are on trial in the eyes of the Guyanese people are those who have misled them for the past 14 years and who continue to mislead them by trick and by deceit. Those are the one who should be tried.

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

Cde. Ram Karran: Let us examine, sir, the situation in so far as public funds – security of public funds – are concerned. You go back to the period 1957-1964 and if you had four assaults against public funds in those days of a few dollars here or there you had enough. Today it goes into millions of dollars – millions of dollars every day.

I wanted to touch on some of the points my friend, the Hon. Vice President Mr. Green dealt with and I hope I will have the time to show that when the Ministers talk about strikes – and I like to talk about strikes – they are talking through their hats. The system of negotiations in the sugar industry, I have often said, requires negotiations at least once a week, in many cases twice a week, because the majority of those people are job rated and if in the course of negotiations agreement is not struck between the worker and the foreman, then a very long drawn out procedure which takes 48 hours has to be gone through before, in some instances, a settlement is affected. But day after day the industry changes conditions of work requiring protest – vigorous protest – on the part of the people.

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Let me give you, sir, in a nutshell that the wages and salaries for the year 1978 amounted to \$133.3 million and the year after that, in 1979, wages dropped to \$124.9 million. It is unfair to ask the Minister to explain that in such bald terms, but if he would answer his correspondence like my friend the other Vice President – you keep writing him, I don't know if his letters go into the waste paper basket, but they never reply, perhaps it would be giving him an opportunity to defend this production.

What has happened there? They blame the workers and this Government has the temerity in every instance to blame the workers. Twelve and a half tons of cane normally produces a ton of sugar. Last year in the last crop – the big crop, the crop that has a higher yield than the spring crop – it required 14½ tons of cane to produce a ton of sugar. Now, who are you going to blame, the workers?

You talk about strikes. My friend referred to some strike figures in 1977 and 1978 and he did say that in one year the number of strikes had been reduced – or was it 1980? Well, if you look at the total wages for those years you will have the answer to the question asked.

In my hand I have a document which needs examination. Our friends had such glowing tribute to pay to the P.N.C. Look what the P.N.C. stoops to. I have three vouchers here and this is what is written: “Campaigning, LBI Polling Station \$6.30, \$1.25.” The foreman signs. I have here another: “Working at regional office \$15.13 basic.” This is the sugar industry. They used the people to campaign for them and paid them from the sugar funds. I have two more: “Preparing meals for polling station, allowance \$8.00, \$22.21,” and this other one: “Working at polling station \$23.03” and they say the elections are free and fair. They say that. I must remind you of this.

The situation in this country is not going to improve. I remember during the last Assembly my friend across the Table, Mr. Rashid, the young comrade, was talking about getting together. You cannot get together with crooks. You cannot get together with people who do things like these. You have got to get together with people who are honest. You cannot indulge in that sort of thing and expect honest politicians to work with you.

The situation is very serious, Cde. Speaker. I think we all recognise that and the Hon. Vice President has so declared in his Budget Speech. If you want to produce, you

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want to increase production and increase productivity, you have got to pay the people a decent wage. The T.U.C. said that today, one for Parry and one for Knight. “We support the Government, but we do not agree with you with wages,” and the Minister – they told us the last time and they are telling us today – ‘We will consult with the T.U.C.’ It is even recorded in this document. It was recorded in 1978 by the Hon. Frank Hope that “We gon consult the T.U.C.” What consultation did you have with the T.U.C. in so far as these rates of pay are concerned? None. The members were called to the Ministry –

The Speaker: Time, Cde. Ram Karran.

The Prime Minister (Cde. Dr. Reid): Cde. Speaker, it is my privilege to wind up this Budget general debate and it has happened that just when my good friend was continuing to mislead, he nearly lost his voice. But, Cde. Speaker, I wish first to congratulate the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, for presenting this Assembly at this time with a Budget that is so relevant to our present circumstances.

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I wish too to express my joy listening to those who have spoken in this Assembly for the first time. [Applause] I think that this Assembly has really changed and I agree with those who said there is great splendour and this splendour is even outside the Assembly for the recent celebrations which are not yet concluded gave every indication to this country and beyond of a certain measure of happiness among people in all walks of life and from every corner of this country of ours. And it is strange where the last speaker indicated about subversion. I am almost certain he himself must have been taken back when he learnt that his own leader, not so long ago, was in our neighbouring country of Venezuela seeking their assistance to intervene in the affairs of this country to the detriment of the people of our dear land of Guyana. In some places I am certain he would have been charged with treason but we are a patient people. The People’s National Congress is patient.

I do not need to go over some of the things he has spoken about including the Del Conte Road. It is common knowledge what happened there. This is the first time he is coming with this new kind of explanation. As far as the destruction of people in this country in those difficult days is concerned, we know and they know, because some of the evidence is still there for all to see. Some have lost parts of their bodies and are still alive – great activity of the P.P.P. Some who were blown up to bits and pieces by their

own deeds were part of the organisation of the P.P.P. As a matter of fact, even from the car of the leader shots were fired on the populace in this country. One would have thought, however, that in dealing – [Interruption by Cde. Ram Karran.]

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, nobody interrupted you.

The Prime Minister: We would have got from my friend Cde. Ram Karran, who is now acting leader of the minority Party, some analysis of this Budget, some in-depth discussions of the Budget but you listened and you heard the usual picking here and picking there, giving a joke here and a joke there and wanting people to believe how honest a man he is, beyond every reproach. I wonder if he remembers about his pants. I see him walk out now. He cannot take that. The truth hurts.

I want also to congratulate Cde. Basir with no hard feelings for the great attempt he made to do some work so that he could contribute to the debate. [Applause] I am grateful for his intervention. Of course, in the 1981 Budget the format is different. The entire presentation is different and I am wondering whether that has caused some difficulties in understanding this new form of the Budget. Some of my friends on the other side thought that shouting and manifesting strong vocal cords would be enough to carry the day and I refer especially to Cde. Narbada Persaud, who made so much noise in this Chamber about the national debt, which I will come to later, that I am of a mind that he was convinced that by loud noise he had a strong argument. He took what I can describe as a little pin-head of a fact and shrouded it all over with dry rice straw and, if I were outside of this Assembly, I would have seen all that as “lies” but we do not use that kind of word in this Chamber. [Laughter] It was a mere distortion of the facts but I wish him to know for the future, and probably he should take a careful note of this, that great strength of vocal cords is not a sign of powerful grey matter. Strong arguments emanate from grey matter.

Cde. Speaker, some of the changes in this 1981 Budget, as we come to the end of the general debate, are worth noting and emphasising because the Budget now encompasses the entire public sector. Unlike other Budgets that dealt with only a section of our economy, this Budget has dealt with the entire public sector including our corporations and the total financial operations in them all. I thought reference would have been made to that.

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The Budget is presented in a sectional way so that it could be understood more easily and for the first time the public sector financial balance was presented in Table II.1. Note should be taken of that. There is still time to study the Budget well as we come to the Estimates tomorrow. Then the Current and Capital Expenditures of the regions for the first time have been included in the regional part of the Budget. So that these changes will help and make for greater efficiency in the management of our country.

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Also, because of the identification of the regions with the power that Cde. London spoke about, it is our belief that much more can be done. Then as you look through the Budget you see socialist construction at work. Pensions for the aged have been increased by some 50 percent to give priority to the needs of the poor. It is good to note that this can help in releasing our energies for the work of development because more and more people would see that the Government of the day is interested in their welfare and is making provision for them, when they have grown too old to perform, and to contribute to the society. The society and the State would then take care of them. That has another advantage to prevent people, especially when they are getting to the end of their work life from grabbing and grabbing because of sheer insecurity.

We take note, too, of the co-operative being given its own ministry so that more work can be done in this area and the entire regional system is now linked with the co-operative development of this country. As a matter of fact, years ago, people did not appreciate what was meant by using the co-operative as the mechanism for the development of this country. The Budget in the presentation has shown how this is practical. In our work in regionalism the people's co-operative unit, that base of our structure, will become so important in what we do that people will understand how practical it is to use co-operativism as the mechanism to transform our society from the old to the new.

Then notice has to be taken of the monitoring of the economy in a particular way for the first time and the levels of monitoring, and you begin from the regional level with the regional councils. You have listened to the massive amount of work that is expected from these councils.

You come to the corporations where the State Planning Secretariat will be involved in monitoring what has been planned. Then you have the financial institutions and already we have got some work started on that. As we have read in the newspapers, they have started to examine. I interpret this inspection exercise as keeping with what has been described as the need for strict financial discipline, and a programme of inspection of financial systems in Government departments begins tomorrow under the supervision of the Accountant General's Office.

So it is not a matter merely of talking. We see the deeds following on very, very swiftly. All the central agencies – State Planning, Ministry of Finance, Bank of Guyana –

will be reporting to the monitoring sub-committee and to Cabinet so that swift action can be taken, for in a changing society, especially when the changes are fundamental, there are usually irregularities. Those who have studied the development of the first socialist society would have known what happened in the old Russia during those changes.

But coming back to my friend, Cde. Narbada Persaud, he made quite a stir and spent all his time emphasising about the national debt. I wish this Assembly to know that if this economy is no good at all, then we would not get the kind of co-operation from the international financial organisations that we now get from the I.B.R.D., I.D.A., C.D.B., OPEC Special Fund, C.D.F. and all sorts of organisations. There is confidence in our assets. People are impressed, when they visit, with the seriousness as far as development is concerned.

Because he talks about the national debt, Cde. Speaker, let us look back a little. In the year 1960, our national debt was \$78.9 million. In 1964, it was \$104.6 million. In 1980, it was \$1,425.6 million. But let us put that in perspective against the capital expenditure in this country for the development of the infrastructure of this country so that more and more development can be realised by the people of this country. In 1960, \$15.8 million was expended, in 1964, \$9.57 million for capital expenditure. In 1980 (that is last year) it was \$285 million.

If we look at the relationship between that 1964 capital expenditure and 1980 capital expenditure percentage wise, the increase is 2,878 percent. And so as our development moves on in these early stages it is no crime, it is not bad management that will cause our country to have that kind national debt and it is interesting to note that in housing, construction moved ahead by a percentage of 3,278 – that is compared with earlier years. Our health facilities moved forward with a percentage of 1,650 and the only area, Cde. Speaker, in which I think the P.P.P. Government could claim a first is the high percentage of wilful and senseless destruction of human beings that took place in this country during their regime.

And as we examine our own national debt, we also must examine what is happening in the world. There is not time to bring that fact of national debt from all the countries of the world, but I have selected one country. It is not an underdeveloped country. It is not a poor country. It is not a country with a mere agricultural economy. As a matter of fact, it is the most powerful country in this world.

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At present, this country has some 8 million people out of work but the interest on public debt for this year is over \$90 billion. Their inflation figure has gone to double digits and they have claimed that it is the first time it has happened for over 60 years. As to the national debt itself, it is approaching one trillion dollars. That is difficult even to comprehend – this trillion dollars. But they try to help us by explaining in a more understandable way what one trillion dollars would be. If you put one-thousand dollar bills one upon the other, when you get four inches in thickness you have a million dollars. You are a millionaire then when you have four inches in thickness. When you have a trillion dollars that stack is 67 miles high. That is the kind of debt and the country I have been giving these facts about is the mighty and powerful United States of America, the most powerful country in the world.

In our struggle to transform this country it is not the level of national debt that should be frightening; it is what kind of development that has taken place in the country and here in Guyana when we think of the big projects which have already been implemented and those that are in the process of construction like the M.M.A., Tapacuma, Black Bush, sea defences, West Demerara Road, and the whole set of them, then we understand how the assets of our country are becoming greater and greater.

In that Budget one would have thought that our friends would have been going through the present economic challenge as set out in the Budget but you do not hear anything about that. You heard about Cde. Nascimento all the time. You have half an hour to talk and you spend that time just talking about Cde. Nascimento.

We had some economic challenges. We do not claim that we have made no mistakes. What we know and what we are certain about is that when we make a proposal and we proceed to implement that, we believe at the time that it is right, that it is correct. We do not put into implementation a plan that we know is not right, is not good for the benefit of the people of this country. Now, with hindsight, we too would say it was a mistake to remove the railroad. We are not ashamed to say that. We have told that to the Assembly. But that is hindsight. In the days of cheap oil, cheap petroleum, it was a different matter. So that is now hindsight. Whether the railroad will come again is another matter. I know that all the rolling stock has not left this country. I know that none has been given away and I know that the income earnings from that have gone into the Treasury to be used properly in our economy. [Applause]

Even if this world was not in economic crisis, small developing countries would have had economic challenges because outside of the change in the price of petroleum we have the iniquitous old economic order in this world to wrestle with. We face serious economic challenges, so serious and so severe that we, on this side, dare not use this time to make jokes and I am glad to note that all through this debate there is that kind of serious intent and a kind of purpose on this side of the House, because of the difficulties posed by the present economic situation. This situation can be overcome to a great extent by increased production. Every effort is being made to ensure that production increases but we must not believe that this is the only country that this is happening, and that this is happening because this is Guyana. In the Soviet Union itself, only last week it was published in their own newspaper a report of the fall in production, of the failure to reach targets.

What we need in Guyana is for all of us to understand and appreciate our present economic challenges and instead of undermining the direction we should go, join hands and help to carry the programme. We need to develop this society with team work so that we may establish true communities. It is my belief that the people's co-operativism will help to do just this so that we can reach out one to the other. Co-operativism has the mechanism to contribute greatly to that.

We have hope in this country for in times past we did not see the self-reliance that we see now. In this present challenge we have to encourage people to rely on their resources, to use our own materials for production and to develop our own technology. Members have heard some of that from our side in this debate. I would wish that we accept these challenges and, since we are men and women and not merely creatures, that we overcome those challenges by releasing our energies.

Members have heard about some of the fruits that at one time were destroyed, were fed to pigs, were not used at all, were left to rot. Today, through the G.P.C. some of those fruits are reaching as far as the German Democratic Republic as an export commodity. [Applause] We need to use our resources.

Let us for one moment look outside of our country. What is being done by our own Foreign Affairs section where it is recognised that in this difficult world if we are to really experience the betterment that we are striving for, then the Third World countries have a special role to play. Members have listened to something on that. I just want to re-emphasise that fact.

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The world in which we live is organised by the industrialised world – finances, trade, technology, the means of communication and information. It was only Saturday, because of what the world is, the Ministry of Information launched its own Guyana News Agency, because the developed world has such powerful means of communication that we need to do something to safeguard our people from total destruction and to give them some truth when they listen to the news. The finances of the world are controlled by the developed world, the trade is controlled by them and the technology as well, and when we come to trade, all the Third World is asking for is to have fair play, to be reasonable with trade so that goods that we produce are not under-priced and goods produced in that developed world are not overpriced. If we can get the old Economic Order to change even to allow for that, then we are certain we would do much better than we are doing now.

It is not a matter of begging. It is a matter of endeavouring to get a new kind of Order and I have great hope that this would become a reality. The struggle is hard, but the historical development of the world should help us to have confidence that this new thing would come so that in any arrangement in the world there will be reason and fair play; so that even in the transfer of technology we will not be exploited by the high cost of consultancy and things of that kind.

Technology, as a matter of fact, is organised to the advantage of the already rich countries and so here in Guyana I think we have seen the beginnings of use of some technology that can benefit us. It was good to read only a day or so ago that at Linden at their exhibition a stall that was selling coal-pots sold out all in short time. It is a sign of the new consciousness of our people, the new learning of our people, for those who have developed early in the history of this world have found good sense for their benefit to distort the development of countries that are lagging and I believe if this economic crisis should help us to concentrate on using what we have, we would come out all the better when the crisis comes to an end.

Yes, I said the world financial control is in the hands of European and North American bankers. Even the large amounts of revenue earned by the oil-producing countries – those small, poor Third World countries – are not being utilised to the full advantage of those countries because they, in turn, invest in the developed world. As a matter of fact, I was taken back in talking to a Minister from one of the oil-producing countries to find out that they have no refinery in their own country that can refine

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enough crude so that they could have an export product of refined petroleum. Those refineries are owned by the developed world.

And so the manipulation goes on. When you look today at the high rates of interest for money, the money market is flourishing for those who have invested capital. And so unemployment, even in those new rich countries is evident. We in Guyana, because of how we have organised this country at this time, have not suffered from retrenchment that can make an impact on what we are doing for, as I said not so long ago in this House, Guymine has not retrenched, Guysuco has extended into other crops and is providing employment for more people. Hence we in Guyana have something to be thankful for notwithstanding the difficulties in the world.

Even when business is done with that developed world, unless you are firm - and our firmness in this matter of development is always manifested in all sorts of ways. You have seen the recent issue on the apartheid in cricket how firm this little country has stood. Not many small countries can take that principled stand. We have been able to do that because of the foresight in ensuring that we can feed ourselves. Some countries that cannot feed themselves, however sympathetic they are, it would be difficult for them to take that kind of stand. For example if your industry is tourism, then you are in great difficulty to take a principled position in the interest of your own country, for many of the developed countries would prefer to send out food packages to poor countries, to build hotels to stimulate the tourist trade than to give tools and implements for people to produce and to construct by themselves.

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I can never forget an incident with some members of a team that came from one of the developed countries and were very anxious to do something for the people in the hinterland. In the discussions the team said they had come to investigate how many thousand pounds of food packages we needed for the people in the hinterland. I raised the question with that team if it would not be better to give us agricultural implements. Strange enough, even though the cost would have been less, they did not accept the idea of a gift of agricultural implements for the people in the hinterland. When you present food especially as a gift to people you destroy their dignity and their self-respect. [Applause] You are marketing not only food packages but also the culture that is intimately bound up with those food packages.

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We in Guyana are on a good road and I would urge repeatedly that our friends from the other side seek to do all they can so that they can be meaningfully involved in development. I want to admit, as all of us on this side would, that we have a long way to go in production.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 9(1)

The Speaker: Cde. Prime Minister, it is one minute to 10 o'clock. The Vice President will have to move a suspension of the Standing Order if you are to continue after.

The Vice President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde. Speaker, may I move, first of all, the suspension of Standing Order 9 (1) to enable us to go beyond the statutory 10 o'clock to complete the general debate.

Question put, and agreed to.

RESUMPTION OF THE BUDGET DEBATE

The Speaker: The Assembly will continue after 10 o'clock.

Cde. Ramsaroop: I now move for the Prime Minister to continue his presentation for an additional 15 minutes.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Speaker, I heard some whispers but for us on this side this is a serious business and even if it means staying here until after midnight, we are prepared for that.

I was on the issue of production. We have not fared well. In our country we have some built-in difficulties we know, especially in the area of agriculture. Since it is a poor, developing country, where a shower of rain in Guyana does much more damage to our production, much more interference to our production, than a shower of rain in a developed country. We must appreciate that fact. That is why we keep building more roads and better roads. We do it so that we can overcome some of these natural problems. For instance, in these days of mechanised agriculture to a great extent, when

the rain falls and the tractors and combines cannot move because we have mud dams, then it is difficult for work to go on even though we set targets and we think of the historical weather conditions, there is no way how we can be very certain of what will happen. In rice we were able to get above the 1979 actual production which is recorded in the Budget Speech but in sugar we have not been able to do so. In some types of bauxite we have been able to move above 1979 figures. We must not, however, lose hope because in the fundamental changes that are taking place in our country we must concede that there are enemies within and without.

Many opinion leaders in our country for all sorts of reasons – sometimes selfishness, sometimes greed, sometimes covetousness, would not want to encourage people to release their energies in the production thrust. As a matter of fact, sometimes the rumours are so much in abundance and evil is poured on the people so much that they believe as they have heard in this House that everybody is doing something irregular, and they will rationalise their behaviour by joining to do irregular acts.

This happens when you are going through the kind of transformation that we are experiencing in this country and that is why efforts are being made to monitor this economy in a new way as set out in the Budget. We hope however, that in facing up to these difficulties, these challenges, that we will ensure that we increase and improve the stock that we have, whatever that stock may be.

Infrastructure investment in Guyana that is used for drainage and irrigation is 7 percent of the G.N.P. and drainage and irrigation and sea defences alone take some 30 percent of the capital budget. Some countries do not have that to worry about. When you talk about sea defences that is sometimes a strange term to some of our visitors because they do not understand that we have to defend ourselves against the sea. Our erstwhile masters left us with the sea-wall just about the time when it was breaking up. Sometimes I wonder. Just about the time when it was breaking we became independent. One of our first tasks, which is still going on, is to rebuild our sea defences and you have heard of the tremendous expenditure in that area. But it has to be done. If it is not done then there will be no place to live.

We, therefore, have some of these serious tasks in facing up to the challenges. Even our marketing system has to be improved more and more. I am satisfied that the Ministry of Trade has been attacking this. As a matter of fact, in this new system it is

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planned to have the Ministry of Trade overseeing all the marketing activities because there are some people who would wish to do export trade because they have plans how they can keep the revenue overseas. We must attend to these matters.

We must also ensure that the Ministry of Trade is deeply involved so that proper arrangements can be made. It is not unusual for some people to report that we have nothing, just as how they report that we are starving and there is no food. Whenever visitors come they are surprised to see our market places. Just so in the marketing of lumber and things of that kind, charcoal, we find that some people will not make proper arrangements and so the Minister of Trade must be fully involved. Moreover, they now have a unit called the Export Promotion Unit. It was started a little while ago and is now being developed. But outside of all that, we have not got sometimes enough knowledge about marketing and so the learning exercise has to go on. We need to do more marketing research.

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I remember some years ago an attempt was made by the Guyana Marketing Corporation to export some eggs and even though they had some men who had been doing marketing for years, they didn't really understand what it meant to export eggs. So when we sent the first shipment, we had the eggs rejected and then, then we questioned the whole exercise, we found out that the eggs must be of the same size, the eggs must be of the same shape, the eggs must be of the same colour and no water must touch the eggs, but the eggs must be very clean.

There you go. That is the kind of sophisticated markets you have to deal with overseas and we have to learn all about that. But it is good that we are beginning to learn properly because, as I said a while ago, we sent our carambola to the German Democratic Republic not as a raw product but as a finished product, and we are also exporting to the G.D.R. an alcoholic drink known as Heritage. I don't want to tell you in this Chamber what Heritage is made of. I hope if you don't know, when you leave here your first task will be to find out what fruit in Guyana is used to make Heritage. It is a wine. That is all the help I will give you. Find out about it.

Cde. Speaker, I cannot conclude, even though the time is short, without touching on our programme for 1981. Of course, even though the Vice President has taken such pains to analyse and to set out in the Budget presentation the programme, we are still

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being asked about a programme. I want to give a little hint about the programme for 1981 and to urge my friends to look at the Budget again because, unless you can teach yourselves and learn for yourselves, then the development would not be part of you.

We have first to diagnose and assess our weakness. We have been going through that and you have heard some of it. Then we are formulating action plans on the basis of our analyses at all levels – the Party, the district, the village, the region, the Ministry, the Corporation, the sub-committee of the Cabinet itself. With the New Local Democratic Organs at work, we are involving people in deciding how to draw up programmes and level their implementation. You have to monitor and take corrective action this year. There must be the political will necessary for giving effect to the programmes, hence you find this enlarged group of people who will be doing political work that some of us do not yet appreciate and accept. But in a developing country that is bent on genuine development, unless there is the political will you are not going to get any worthwhile results at all.

My mind goes back to 1980 when we were to have the Mass Games for the first time. When all those technicians and professionals decided that it could not be done, it was impossible, impractical and all sorts of explanations, what they had decided was the final meeting against the Mass Games didn't turn out to be that. So the next morning Cde. Leader made the decision that we must have the Mass Games. He called them again and it has happened, and it has been so useful as a method of learning that this time people who were resisting and objecting last year have all come to agreement that the Mass Games must be a continuing exercise in this country for all time.

We need that political will and so we need this expanded Government, reaching out to the smallest community with the hope that those who are elected by the people – and all these have been elected notwithstanding what my friend has said. He doesn't understand. All these have been elected. You ask them if they weren't elected. And they had to campaign hard, too. They are all elected. Because they have been elected by the people and because they know the people can recall them, we hope that they will manifest the kind of political will that will cause development to take place so that they will be in step with the People's New Constitution.

Further to our programme, we have the rehabilitation of our capital stock and you have heard some of that from all the speakers, I am trying to put the thing together – plant and machinery, the roads, drainage and irrigation system, building, upgrading transport

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services, new housing programmes, so to speak, upgrading our educational facilities, improving medical facilities. For instance, way out in the hinterland at Aishalton a hospital is being constructed, and not by people from the coastland – sometimes when we live on the coastland we believe we know all but people from Aishalton itself. They themselves are constructing it. As a matter of fact, they were able to cause improvements to be made on the plan itself. Medical facilities are being improved.

You have heard about “rest” a while ago. Well, holiday facilities are being provided and, good for us the first organised one will be at Mainstay Anna Regina. It is now under construction. You have the bicycle project, the leather tannery, vegetable oil mill and a whole list. I cannot go through all here, but even if you look at the 1980 Budget you will see a good list.

I just want to say, however, a word about the housing programme because some people, even though there are housing projects outside of Georgetown I want to believe that all the housing projects are constructed in Georgetown or very near to Georgetown. This housing project that I am going to mention at this time is one at the Demerara Forestry Complex township, that is, at Mabura. It is many, many miles far up the Demerara River and it is good for some of us, who do not know where that place is, to make a journey to Mabura. Organise a visit even if it is an excursion with a jeep. You can drive from Georgetown to that far distance up the Demerara River to Mabura Hill. There is being established at this time a housing complex so that there will be a township. This is a new way of development so that people will see themselves as belonging to the community up there and wouldn't be going back and forth as they have done at Linden for generations, spending their week-ends some place else. People will see that as their community (and I think we will take good care that we put a cemetery as well) because in some places, when you don't provide for a cemetery, people don't see it as permanent residence.

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(Cde. Reid continues)

With the new arrangements all the banks will be involved, all the insurance companies. The Vice President has already organised them so that people will be able to get funds for the new – I call it ‘new’ – housing programme. That is part of our 1981 programme. We see it tied up with forestry which we are promoting all the time for we have a lot of wealth, great riches, in the forestry in this country. All we need to do is to exploit this resource, using the best possible technology.

But away from that material side, in our 1981 programme there is opportunity for culture and sports. I think that this is also an aid to development, because people will learn in culture and sports how to work together as a team. If you are not too sure what sports can do, games can do, then see the children at the mass games. Those little ones will teach you what it is to work co-operatively. But we need some physical facilities and so in that programme funding is available for a national stadium and also for the Co-operative Youth Palace. Nowadays all our children will learn some measure of physical training. Some years ago when I was a young man a teacher who had been to the War and had gained training in teaching physical exercises and had a degree in Physical Training applied to the Government of the day and indicated his skill and expertise. The then Director of Education at that time sent back to tell him, “Why did you study that We have no use for that.” He did not understand. Today we have people trained to help in training our young people so that as you go around the areas and the streets and roads in the countryside you see the young people taking greater interest in their bodies. I am certain they will take greater interest in the kind of food they eat and will reject some of the things like sweet drinks that are sold and that cause a certain amount of exploitation in the communities. They will learn better.

But we move on to the public corporations, for this Budget, as I said in the very beginning, includes the entire public sector and so we have the 1981 investments that must be implemented by the public sector to the tune of \$195 million. Of course, when we think of the public corporations the first one that we talked about was the Electricity Corporation but I am satisfied that in recent months, certainly in recent weeks, the G.E.C. has demonstrated a new kind of confidence in the community. Nowadays when there is a blackout it is like a strange thing happening. That is a sign that this Government is determined to make concrete its commitment to the welfare of the people of this country.

Further, in the 1981 programme we have some targets again. We have a target for sugar, rice, bauxite in all its sectors – calcined, metal grade, chemical, alumina and other grades. In the Budget Speech you will find that kind of detail. You can examine that and make your own notes. For sugar, it is 310,000 tons, calcined bauxite 735,000 tons. All of that is recorded in the presentation.

We need to note two investments. One is the GUYSUICO for \$25 million and the other in the Guyana Rice Board for \$21 million. Fisheries, too, should be included where there is an investment of some \$16 million and at GUYMINE the investment is some \$60 million, so that there is a programme for 1981.

I must not forget G.P.C., the exporter of “Heritage” and Carambola \$4 million; Guyana Liquor Corporation is doing some other exercises as well so that they are now in the construction of a Seals and Packaging Complex involving some \$10 million. Along with all of this, the Budget is insisting that as part of the programme must be strict financial discipline. That work has begun. The checking must go on. The inspection unit must be strengthened if necessary during this 1981 budget year.

In conclusion I wish to say that in this development we see our country in a socio-economic system where we deal not only with economic development but also with social development, where we deal with the whole man, not only his material side, but his cultural and spiritual side as well. There must be that harmonious balance so that proper development can take place. Of course, for us this is an elementary truth but new ways are being sought and that is why we speak today of co-operativism. New methods have been applied and if I am permitted to use the words of Marx I quote:

“... the creation of a community of free individuals carrying on their work with the means of production in common in which the labour power of all different individuals is consciously applied as a combined labour power of the community.”

We have instituted the organs not only to identify people’s power but to give people a chance to release that power and so we believe that the time is right when these new things will happen in 1981.

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I want to mention land to the tiller because this is an agricultural country and this is a fundamental question. It has become so urgent that the people's new Constitution has a special article, article 18, about this land to the tiller and that article in part reads:

“Land is for social use and must go to the tiller.”

There has been organised a committee, as you have read in the newspaper and as you have heard over the radio and that committee is captained by Cde. Gavin Kennard whose life has been that of reaching out to the tillers of this country. Of course, today he is the Agricultural Adviser to the President.

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I had some years ago and in recent times to work with Cde. Kennard as a colleague. I do not need this forum to say anything more about him for it is said in our creole words, “Truth doesn’t need any fork-stick to brace am.”

There are many other members of the committee, all properly chosen, because the fundamental question has to be tackled with urgency during 1981, and as we cultivate new attitudes and new patterns of behaviour, we will come to realise that changes have come upon us – changes that have stamped out slavery, indentureship and even master servant relationship – for co-operativism is bringing to our entire country a new type of partnership.

I trust that all of us will therefore accept this new discipline where we will not wait for watchmen to make us work – for overseers and superintendents to make us work – but/will work because it is a moral duty to work, and we will accept the socialist discipline; for the organisation of work for production demands discipline. Hence, managers, trade unions, work-team heads, politicians, must all release their energies and their talents to do the task ahead.

Of course, there will always be some who will misguide people due to envy and malice. I hope even those will be rectified in time, for production relationships have changed, and I will end by urging all of us here in this new type of National Assembly to carry this same kind of discipline to our communities so that the spirit will be all over our country and all the people will be in step with the People’s National Congress.

[Applause]

The Speaker: Comrades, this concludes the general debate on the Motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure of 1981. 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.

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64 of the Business Sub-Committee met on Friday, 27th February 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 Proceedings of the meeting of the Business Sub-Committee and of the resolution passed by the Sub-Committees were circulated to members yesterday. The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, may, therefore, 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.

The Chairman: In accordance with the resolution, the Committee of Supply will commence consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure tomorrow. I also wish to remind you that a list of corrections to the Estimates was supplied to you earlier on today and you will observe that they are merely changing the code numbers. Due to some printing errors one or two other corrections have been also made. In addition to that, a list of how the business will proceed has also been circulated for the information of members. Let the Assembly resume.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Wednesday, 4th March, 1981, at 2 p.m." [Cde. Ramsaroop]

Adjourned accordingly at 10.35 p.m.