

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 5]

**PROCEEDING AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

36th Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Wednesday, 15th December, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

Members of the Government – People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

Prime Minister (1)

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

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Ministers (9)

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.
Minister of Communications

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.
Minister of Finance

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security

The Hon. Miss. S.M. Field – Ridley, (Absent -on Leave)
Minister of Health

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)

The Hon. D.A. Singh
Minister of Trade

The Hon. O. E. Clarke,
Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon. C. V. Mingo
Minister of Local Government

The Hon. W. Haynes (Absent -on Leave)
Minister of State for Co- operative and
Community Development

Appointed Ministers (5)

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S. C. (Absent)
Attorney – General and Minister of State

The Hon. H. Green, (Absent)
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

The Hon. H. O. Jack,
Minister of Mines and Forests

The Hon. E. B. Mc David, (Absent)
Minister of Information and Culture

The Hon. Miss C. L. Baird,
Minister of Education

Parliamentary Secretaries (5)

Mr. J. C. Joaquin, J. P.,
Parliamentary Secretary , Ministry of Finance

Mr. F. Duncan, J. P.,
Parliamentary Secretary , Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretary , Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. J. R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary , Office of the Prime Minister

Mr. C. E. Wright, J. P.
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works, Hydraulic and Supply

Other Members (14)

Mr. J. N. Aaron
Miss M.M. Ackman, Government Whip
Mr. k. Bancroft
Mr. N. J. Bissember
Mr. J. Budhoo, J. P.
Mr. L. I. Chan - A – Sue
Mr. L. I. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E. H. A. Fowler
Mr. J.R. Jordan
Mr. S. M. Saffee
Mr. R. C. Van Sluytman
Mr. M. Zaheeruddeen. J. P.
Mrs. L. E. Willems.

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party (18)

Dr. C. E. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition
Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye, S.C.

Mr. D. C. Jagan, J. P., Deputy Speaker
Mr. E. M. G. Wilson
Mr. A. M. Hamid, J. P., Opposition Whip
Mr. G. H. Lall, J. P.
Mr. N. Y. Ally
Mr. R. D. Persaud, J. P.
Mr. E. M. Stoby, J. P.
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. E. L. Ambrose
Mr. L. M. Branco
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bholu Persaud
Mr. I. R. Remington, J. P.
Mr. L. A. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent – on Leave)

(Absent - on Leave)

United Force (3)

Mrs. E. DaSilva
Mr. M.F. Singh
Mr. J. A. Sutton

Independent (1)

Mr. R. E. Cheeks

OFFICERS

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

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

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**CONGRATULATIONS TO FOUR OPPOSITION MEMBERS**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, yesterday I congratulated the hon. Prime Minister on the seventh anniversary of his election to the office of the Prime Minister. Today I wish on behalf of hon. Members of the Assembly and myself to extend congratulation to four members of the Opposition, that is, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Ram Karran, Mr. Chandisingh and Mr. Wilson on the awards of the Lenin Centenary Medals made to them at the Twenty – first Anniversary Conference of the People’

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following paper was laid:

Tenth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Guyana Electricity Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1970.

[The Minister of Finance]

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS**Publication in Guyana Graphic**

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): Your Honour, I wish to refer to an article appearing in today’s issue of the Guyana Graphic under the caption “Government puts Sterling under Control” and allegedly written by one Rickey Singh. The passage to which I wish to refer reads as follows:

“The explanatory memorandum to Bill differs from the Finance Minister’s statement to Parliament as to the reason for the hurried legislation.”

That is a reference to the statement I made in this honourable House yesterday and to Bill No.25 of, 1971 which appears on today’s Order Paper for consideration. This passage is not only

15.12.71.

National Assembly

2.10 – 2.15 p.m.

inaccurate, but illustrates a profound ignorance of what occurred in this honourable House yesterday and what the Bill No. 25 of 1971 is all about.

In the first place, my distinct recollection is that the writer of this article – and I presume it is the same gentleman who sits at the Press Table – was not in the House when I made my statement. Secondly, newspaper reporters are expected to report accurately what happens in this honourable House and not what is reported elsewhere either orally or in writing.

My statement yesterday, concerning the action which Government was taking, referred to the Order which I advised His Excellency the President to make and which Order, No. 2 of 1971, was made yesterday. That Order removed from the First Schedule to the Exchange Control Ordinance, No. 28 of 1958, all territories which may be termed “the Commonwealth territories”, which were referred to in the substantive legislation.

2.15 p.m.

It is in relation to that Order that I made the statement about Government’s action consequent upon the present international monetary crisis.

The Explanatory Note which appears to Bill No. 25 of 1971 is perfectly accurate. This Bill seeks to make the consequential Amendments which have become necessary as a result of the change in the constitutional status of Guyana. There is absolutely no conflict between what I said is in this hon. House yesterday and the Explanatory Note in the Bill. I would wish to say that newspaper reporters are expected to report accurately, fully and correctly what occurs in this hon. House and they mis – report or misrepresent at their peril.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

15.12.71.

National Assembly

2.15 – 2.25 p.m.

Exchange Control (Amendment) (No. 2). – [The Minister of Finance.]

PUBLIC BUSINESS
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, I beg to move that Standing Order Nos. 46 and 61 (6) be suspended to enable the Second Reading and the remaining stage of the Exchange Control (Amendment) No. 2 Bill, 1971, to be taken at this Sitting through all its stages.

Question put, and agreed to.

BILL – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS
EXCHANGE CONTROL (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL

“A Bill intituled an Act to amend the Exchange Control Ordinance, 1958.
[The Minister of Finance.]

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, during the course of yesterday’s proceedings in this hon. House, with your leave and the leave of the House, I announced that Government had decided to extend the application of the Exchange Control Ordinance (NO.28) OF 1958 to all countries to which it had not hitherto applied. The effect today was to remove from the First Schedule a number of territories which had enjoyed a kind of preferred status in relation to the exchange control as it operated in this country since 1958. Nevertheless, important Amendments were still necessary to the Principal Ordinance.

Under the Principal Ordinance, Sterling and the British West Indian dollar were given a special status within the economy of Guyana and were indeed treated as domestic currency. The definition of foreign currency under Section 3(4) of the Principal ordinance specifically excludes Sterling and the British West Indian dollar. Of course, it also excluded the currencies of the

countries which appeared in the First Schedule. The Order made by His Excellency the President was effective to deal with the countries which appeared in the First Schedule. But Sterling and the British West Indian dollar were entrenched in the legislation itself.

Since 1958 important developments have occurred. First of all, Guyana become independent and sometime later assumed the status of s Republic. Following the attainment of Independence by the larger unit territories which were members of the British West Indian Currency Board, that Board was dissolved and the independent countries, namely Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados issued their Independent currencies. Consequently, the Guyana dollar came into circulation in 1966 and the British West Indian dollar ceased to be legal tender in Guyana in 1967.

In view of the constitutional changes, reference to Sterling and to the British West Indian dollar which appeared throughout the legislation of 1958 are inappropriate and have no meaning within the context of an Independent Guyana. This legislation seeks to remove the anomaly and to ensure that the effect of the President's Order (No.2) of 1971 extends the Ordinance to all currencies – of course other than Guyana currency – without any doubt whatsoever.

If one looks at the Bill one will see that this is principally what it does. In every case there is a substitution of Guyana dollar for British West Indian dollar of for Sterling. The one sizeable Amendment refers to the Sixth Schedule. This is more apparent than real. The Sixth Schedule has been repeal and there is a substitution which is proposed for the Sixth Schedule.

2.25 p.m.

The Sixth Schedule, as it appears in the Principal Ordinance, that is, the Ordinance of the 1958, is no longer relevant and serves no purpose whatever. What we seek to do is to put in the Sixth Schedule, the regulations which were made in 1959 by the then Governor of British Guiana pursuant to power under subsection (2) of section 38 of the Principal Ordinance; so what appears

as the Sixth Schedule is really the same regulation which formed part of the laws of Guyana since 1959, the minor changes being, of course, substituting “Minister” for “Governor”, and minor consequential changes arising from our present Independent status. Those are the brief comments I should like to make in introducing and commending Bill No. 25 of 1971 to this honourable House.

Question proposed.

Mr. Ram Karran: We, on this side of the House, would be lacking in our duty and responsibility if we did not once again refer to the fact that this Government and its predecessor, the Coalition, had wilfully destroyed the machinery which had been set up for crises of this nature, which the hon. Minister seems to have skirted around very cleverly by dealing with the so – called technical side of the Bill.

The Bill, he claims, is merely to bring legislation up to date, but surely, if it is only a question of bringing the legislation up to date, there would not have been this urgency. It could have been done next week after the Budget Debate is completed. It could have been done last month, long before the Budget proposals were ready, but the Amendment to the Bill arose particularly because of the Order which was issued by His Excellency the President last night which sought to impose, once again, complete control of currency leaving this territory. The hon. Minister cannot deny that. He seems to have skirted around the question of the implications of what is around the corner, the devaluation of the American dollar and the possible devaluation, not tomorrow, because of the floating procedure adopted by the European nations, of the pound, but the hon. Minister knows as well as everyone else that this territory, which has had its navel string tied to United States Imperialism, is most likely to follow in the footsteps of the Americans, in devaluating the Guyana dollar, notwithstanding the present situation.

I make that point particularly with respect to our performances, as related in this Budget Speech of 1972, where there is every indication that the economy of the country is going down. That is what has occurred in the United States. The United States, which sought to pressurise its friends all over the world with its dollar dominance, in 1994, has tied the rate of gold to the American dollar notwithstanding the cost of the commodity, and it goes on willy-nilly to insist on these countries maintaining it. We have warned this Government from the time we were forced into the Opposition by fraud: Why dismantle the Exchange Control Regulations? But the hon. Deputy Prime Minister, when he was Minister of Trade, said that we are hanging our bundle with the United States. He and they used to flaunt all over the streets, even the market women used to say that Yankee dollars will be here in large quantities.

The policy of the United States has been to dominate her partners and more particularly to use this strategy to invade countries which refuse to bow to the dominance of the dollar. And the Vietnam is concerned. They have gone to award \$50,000 to the African Freedom Fighters but not a cent to the Vietnamese. The hon. Prime Minister goes and waves his hand and beats his breast and says he is giving people in Africa assistance, which we support, but, sir, if you support freedom fighters in one parts of the world, why not support them in other parts of the world, or is it that the Government is only supporting freedom fighters who are not fighting the Yankee imperialists? Haiti, the hon. prime Minister goes there, and he goes to Uncle Johnson's and speaks in his ear and he comes back and tells us what is going on in that God – forsaken country. That is why the hon. Minister steered from the real crisis and dealt with this Bill as a technical Amendment only.

Not very far from the Bel Air Hotel, there is a building occupied by a man called, Small. in the 30's, it was occupied by a man named Gooding – the Prime Minister knows the building – and the neighbour used to warn him. They said, Ducky, your foundation is going, you must try and block it up, “ but Gooding came from Barbados and he said, “ Leh ma lone.” And in 1934 after the flood, a very strong breeze started from the Atlantic, and Bucky came down and he

15.12.71.

National Assembly

2.25 – 2.35 p.m.

called for Jaebez and he called for Mary, and he said, “Put your shoulder there”, and he said, “Lord, I am not resisting but this is mine.”

2.35 p.m.

The members of this Government, even though they were warned in 1961 and in 1962, were agitating for people to send money out of the country. Later, they were saying to us “Your friends are sending money out” as if, in 1964 and 1965, the people who had money to send out of Guyana were friends of the P.P.P.

Today these people come and tell us, “Lord, we ain’t resisting, but this is ours.” We are willing to support them. They say, “Let us stop it”, because there is a run on the currency of Guyana. That is why they had to sign the Order so that the drain could stop. There is a run on the currency, because people have no confidence in this Government.

What is more, with the devaluation of the American dollars there is greater pressure. Capitalism, as we have often told our friends across the table, is a “dog bite dog” policy. Trade war will come on. In fact, President Nixon, before he was forced to accept the principle of devaluation, had already imposed a 10 per cent surcharge. I do not know whether it is had already going to be withdrawn as a result of pressure from his European colleagues.

Because of the close relationship with the Americans, because of the shedding of the British master for the American master, the economy of this country, as has been admitted in this document, is not performing properly and is going to perform worse.

Before it is said that we have not warned the members of the Government, I want to warn them not to do as they did on the last occasion when the British pound was devalued. They rushed cap – in – hand and devalued the Guyana dollar to the same extent as the British pound.

We made the point here that even though devaluation was bitter pill to swallow, the Government had an opportunity to make capital out of it by withholding from DEMBA and the sugar industry the excess profits which they would make by the selling of bauxite, alumina and sugar to North American. The Government did not take the advice. It said that it was goods to take 50 per cent from the profits.

That devaluation on and the other things that are going to happen are going to put more burdens on the backs of the Guyanese workers, particularly those who are unemployed or underemployed.

I wish, as I said just now, to warn the members of the Government not to allow this exercise. As I said, their navel strings are tied to American imperialism. They have to be with I.M.F., they have to be with everything that the Yankee build. The Yankee dollar and the Yankee strategy are going to take them down further and further into a morass of helplessness. They must stand on their feet and fight with the Yankee. I do not mean to fight militarily, because they cannot, but they must express opinions that are not only contrary to the American philosophy but opinions that will enlighten the Guyanese people and help the Guyanese economy.

Other people are doing this. The Americans say they have recognised Chile and they are soon going to recognised Cuba. I do not know to what extent this will be done, but other small nations in the Caribbean and in South America, which formerly were dominated by the Yankees, have decided to strike blow for independence and Guyana can certainly fall in line.

I wish to ask the Government not to continue to be the puppet that it has been in the past but to strike out, even at this late stage, so that the Guyanese people may benefit.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, to the extent that this Bill is a cleaning – up operation, as a result of the change in our constitutional status, as is stated in the Explanatory Memorandum, we can have no quarrel with it. However, we are proceeding with this Bill through all its stages today and the hon. Minister has said that this is necessary as a result of the Order made by the President, which Order goes along with this.

This legislation, if it is merely a cleaning – up operation, could have waited. If, on the other hand, it is inextricably tied to the order that was made, then one can perhaps forgive the desire to have it go through all its stages today.

I wish to ask this question: “why this panic, since sterling is likely to be strengthened rather than weakened and Guyana’s currency is tied to the sterling area?” Further, why does the Minister anticipate that there will be a flight of money from this country? Where does he think it will go?

Perhaps the Minister can tell us, in terms of the international situation, what proportion of Guyana’s reserves are in fact in American and Canadian dollars of money from Guyana. Surely there can be no profit for any speculator in exchanging Guyana’s dollars for sterling.

Is it the position, therefore, that the Government thinks that confidence in its economic policies has been so destroyed that it is necessary to cut the last life – line by which people can get their money to safety? Is it the thinking that there is no confidence in the country and therefore the Government wants to stop all money from going out and wants to force people to keep their money in the country? Perhaps that is the reasoning behind this.

If, in the circumstances of the international situation, the Government fears that there will be an enormous flight of capital out of the country, then we agree that it should impose this restriction during this period of international uncertainty, but not for all time. We do not agree

that the order should continue indefinitely as a means of covering up the utter failure of the Government's economic policy and its groping in the dark.

We on the side the House want the hon. Minister to give us an assurance that this Order is only temporary and that it is made in view of the international situation. We wish to be assured that it will not be a permanent fixture to cover up the Government's lack of proper economic planning and its bungling. We wish to know that it is not the result of no confidence by the private sector in the Government's economic policy.

2.45 p.m.

Let the hon. Minister tell us that this is only temporary merely because of the international situation.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye.

Dr. Ramsahoye: Your Honour, in 1958 when the then Legislative Council enacted the Exchange Control Ordinance it was intended primarily to control the dealings between the Guyana dollar and the dollars of the hard – currency areas. Because the Guyana dollar was tied to the sterling at the rate of \$4.80 to the pound there was no question in 1958 of dealings between the Guyana dollar and sterling coming under governmental control.

When Mr. Kaldor came to advise the then P.P.P. Government about fiscal policy he observed that there was a flight of capital and that it was necessary to impose controls over the Sterling area as well, to avoid capital flight from this country. That advice was accepted by the then Government and in 1962 the Exchange Control (Amendment) Ordinance was passed in order to extend the control. The relevant legislation was put into force and remained in force until the 22nd July, 1965 when the Coalition Government removed the controls on convertibility between the Guyana dollars and Sterling.

15.12.71.

National Assembly

2.45 – 2.55 p.m.

We all know why the control was relaxed. We have heard later from the mouths of the members of the P.N.C. that during that period they have had to make deals with the United Force and this was one of the things which was agreed to. I remember the hon. Prime Minister saying all the time that his hands were being tied and the P.N.C. was being hamstrung by the policies of the United Force in this and in other areas, and that is why he was so anxious to have the Government now feel that there is need to re-impose the controls because there is a flight of capital which is detrimental to the economy.

There is no question that the Explanatory Memorandum to this Bill does not tell the truth. There is no need to pass legislation in relation to exchange control and to relate it to this country's constitutional status at this time. The Constitution has provided automatically for this; and the law is that Guyana is a sovereign territory in far as her dollar is concerned and she can impose restrictions. The P.P.P. cannot complain that this Government is imposing restrictions in relation to Sterling convertibility because we did it ourselves. We thought at the time there was need to restrict the flow of capital because it was detrimental to the economy. It was advice tendered and we felt it was good advice. Therefore the P.P.P. is not complaining that the Sterling controls are being re-imposed. I personally do complain, however, that that Explanatory Memorandum should not be given to the Bill because it is not right.

I should like to know from the hon. Minister what the figures are. We were told in the Budget Statement that there was an improvement in the foreign reserve position and in the balance of payments position, and we would like to know what the figures are at the moment which has led to the be converted into Sterling unless the Minister's permission is granted. We have had arrangements whereby the banks have been giving permission to people going on holiday and the Bank of Guyana in relation to hard-currency convertibility has been giving permission to people to convert money on legitimate business. We would wish to know what is the position from today? What machinery has the Government set up in relation to people who are applying for permission to convert money for legitimate purposes?

We agree with the Government that people who live here must try to back this country and its resources. We must try to make sure that the country's resources are kept here to be re-invested for the benefit of the people. But people have to pay expenses, families have to get money and so on and it is very necessary to know whether the machinery has been geared to make sure that from today permissions would be smoothly granted when legitimate business is being dealt with. But it would be more interesting for us to learn what the figures are which must have led to this sudden decision.

I am interested in this position because it would give the House the opportunity to assess what really has been going out and how much more will be remaining in this country for use by the people of the country. Perusing the Bank of Guyana Report it appears that the financial institution in this country which appear to be holding a lot of money to the credit of their bank account for beyond what they need for their day to day requirements and they are not lending it out to people and they are not trying to push the economy. Therefore, it is not only in the area of foreign exchange that this problem exists. There are people who in the area of foreign exchange that this problem exist. There are people who have money in financial institutions in this country which they prefer to keep on the books without lending. As a result there is definitely a contraction of finance for housing in this country. The financial institutions are not giving as much as they can give. Some of them have money on credit and they are not helping. *[Interruption by the hon. Minister of Finance.]* This really should not be. We must try to change these trends. It may involve fighting on more than one front at a time but it definitely has to be done.

If the Minister could help us in these two questions we will be grateful. What will be the average outflow for the year which has led to the imposition of these controls, and what machinery is being set up to ensure that almost simultaneous or on-the-spot permission will be given by the Minister's agencies in order to ensure that legitimate dealing go on smoothly and effectively in the interest of the national economy. It will greatly help us on this side of the House.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hoyte (replying): Your Honour, I am slightly disappointed – perhaps I should not be at the comments made by the hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoys, when he alleges that the explanatory Note to the Bill is incorrect. he is a lawyer of some standing in his community and one would have expected him to follow the reasoning which I have put forward in connection with this matter. I do not recall whether he was in this hon. house yesterday when I made the statement on the Order, but the Oder is to extend the applicability of the ordinance is not going to be an absurdity. Therefore, the Bill today deals with technicalities. It is the Order which is the substantial matter as far as the extension of exchange control is concerned.

We are told that this was hasty legislation, that it arose out of panic, it arose because of a flight of capital; but may I draw attention to the fact that as early as 6th August, 1970, the Governor of Bank of Guyana wrote the Law Revision Officer recommending these very change in the law. These changes would have, un any event, been incorporated into the revised laws which we expect to come into being next year.

2.55 p.m.

Because of the present monetary crisis, it was considered advisable not to wait until the law is revised in 1972 but rather to institute those change now when the time seemed propitious and the occasion convenient.

May I deal with one or two points which were raised by the hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye. He asked, first of all, what figures I can give, those figures being an estimated outflow of capital, if we did not apply these measures. That question was premised upon a statement he made at the beginning of his intervention to the effect that there was a flight of capital. There is no flight of capital. What has happened is that Government intends to institute the necessary precautions to prevent a situation from arising which may have detrimental

consequences for the economy of Guyana. The ordinary figures referring to Guyana's external reserves are published, as the hon. Member knows, weekly, I think, in the Official Gazette. These matters are not secret and anybody who reads his Gazette intelligently and carefully will have access to all the figures relating to our external position.

As to the machinery, again the controls will be implemented and the necessary administration carried out by the Central Bank, I can assure hon. Members that all of the necessary forms are already there, because, as I said, this was not something that we decided upon yesterday or today. This was something on the carpet, so to speak, for some time now, It was only the occurrence of the crisis in world monetary affairs which has caused the Government to bring forward this year this legislation. The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran was clearly out of his depth in attempting to deal with this subject and he seems to feel that the question of a re-evaluation of the Guyana dollar is a matter which could be dealt with here and now. Obviously, what happens to the Guyana dollars will depend upon how currencies are re-aligned and how new parties are established, once some kind of settlement is arrived at.

I made the point in the Budget Speech that in this interplay of big powers, the small countries really got no defence. Already, some of the countries of Africa have devalued. Already some of the countries of Africa have linked their currencies with the United States dollar because, obviously, on a consideration of their position they have now come to the conclusion that economic advantage lies in that direction. In the Caribbean, as soon as the United States Government announced the measures which it had taken to protect its economy, exchange control was introduced in America, and hon. Members will recall that there were meetings of Central Bankers in Kingston to consider what line the Caribbean countries should take in the present situation and for the future. The question of what happens to the Guyana dollar is one which will depend upon the final outcome of the discussions among the Group of Ten and we need not fool ourselves that it is otherwise.

This is a very difficult question and it is one which will call for very careful analysis by our technicians. We have to bear in mind that we sell our major exports, bauxite, in terms of United States dollars or outside hard currency areas, the price of bauxite is denominated in U.S. dollars.

Therefore, to the extent that the United States dollars change in value, to that extent the receipts in Guyana dollars will change.

On the other hand we import a large quantity of food stuffs, particularly from sterling areas, and what happens to sterling in relation to U.S. dollars will have an impact upon the prices at which goods will have to be sold in Guyana, assuming the United States dollar depreciates as against sterling and we go with the United States dollars. It means that in terms of sterling, goods from the sterling area will cost us more. It means that debt repayments in sterling will be higher. If we go with sterling our receipts from bauxite will be less, and goods bought from hard currency areas may be cheaper. But one has to balance the pros and cons; one has to see, in the final analysis, where the balance of economic advantage lies.

The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh again in his intervention made on error which is a very common in this country, namely, he alleged that the Guyana currency is tied to sterling.

3.05 p.m.

That is not so. Under the Bank of Guyana Ordinance, Guyana currency is defined in terms of gold and therefore there is no question of Guyana currency being tied to sterling.

In these parts, indeed, the only currency, as far as I know, which was tied to sterling was the currency of Jamaica and as soon as the Americans instituted these measures in August, the Jamaica Parliament hurriedly passed legislation to correct that situation and to untie its currency.

I think we have gone a little way outside of the ambit of this bill. Whenever the international monetary situation is resolved, whenever the Government of this country decides what it will do

15.12.71.

National Assembly

3.05 – 3.15 p.m.

in relation to the Guyana dollar – and I have already explained in the Budget Speech that, for the time being, our dollar is floating and therefore has appreciated against the United States dollar – this honourable House will be informed. I have no doubt that the opportunity will then be available for a debate on whether or not the Government has taken the correct decision.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 7 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill

Clause 8.

Mr. Ram Karran: I beg to move the deletion of paragraph (4) of regulation 3 of the Regulations in the Sixth Schedule. This paragraph reads:

“Any information given by a person in compliance with this regulation may be given in evidence against him notwithstanding that it may tend to incriminate him.”

This is foreign and unusual in legislation of this kind. I cannot see how a person who gives information, possibly in an attempt to help, will have that information used to incriminate him. I think it is contrary to the principles to which we have become accustomed in this country and I strongly urge its deletion.

Dr. Ramsahoye: Your Honour, what this provision is doing is, in effect, reversing the onus of proof. The general principle is that the onus of proof is never reversed in a society regulated by the Rule of Law, as know it, unless there is some substantial reason which would put a prosecutor at a disadvantage in proving an offence. One example is where the matters are within

the personal knowledge the person concerned and there is no other way in which the information can be had.

In this case, the Government is enacting legislation which gives it the power, for example, of conducting an inquisition into the affairs of the banks in order for them to disclose what transactions have been going on. The Government also has a power to ask for information of any other person, or authority, and it would appear, therefore, that since material to support a prosecution is perfectly available *aliunde* and, indeed, most of the transactions of this nature will have to be done through the banking system, there is really no need to reverse the onus of proof which, I agree, one would normally do if the thing is within a man's peculiar knowledge.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye, I just wish to enquire for myself if this is within the substantive legislation of 1958.

Dr. Ramsahoye: I do not think so, but, actually, the Sixth Schedule is being varied substantially.

The principle is that where the information is within a man's peculiar knowledge it can certainly be done, for how else would you be able to prove it? But, where the arrangements are such – and in this case the arrangements are such – that the Minister, through his agents and through the persons to whom he delegates authority, can ask the bank to disclose what transactions have been carried on in relation to this legislation, then there seems to be no need whatever to reverse the onus of proof.

Also, it would appear that there will be no restraint upon the use of the information. Under revenue legislation it is usual for some restraint to be put on the use and the disclosure of the information which people get by using these powers. In other words, there are provisions in relation to secrecy. If Government obtains information, it cannot just use the information and disclose it because it would certainly undermine confidence in dealings. This is an orthodox provision of revenue law and I do not see there is any such restraint in this legislation. It means

that the Government will be free to ask about the private dealings with people and will be free to broadcast it to the world without any restraint.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, we are merely dealing with the deletion of this paragraph.

Dr. Ramsahoye: I support the deletion.

3.15 p.m.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, looking at this Bill as a layman my interpretation is that no citizen is permitted to send one black cent abroad. Further, that the Government has, in fact, informed all the banks in the country not to carry out any transactions for the remittance of currency abroad. Of course, the Government will be issuing certain forms to regulate the operation of this. These are actions that have already been taken by the Government so the law is more or less in effect. What will happen to those students who are studying abroad? I should like to know from the hon. Minister whether permission will have to be granted in all cases for remittances abroad or whether the Government has any intention of fixing a limit. I should also like the hon. Minister to tell us how CARIFTA Countries will be affected by the bringing into force of the extension of the Exchange Control Ordinance.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud raised a number of minutiae. Obviously these are mechanics which will be worked out by the Central Bank and are matters with which I am concerned only peripherally; I am not in a position to answer those detailed questions now. But certainly the original Ordinance and the amending Act are wide enough in scope to deal with all of these problems which the hon. Member has raised what would be the position of CARIFTA Countries; the powers of exemption; and so on. These are matters for the technicians and will be known in due course.

But to deal with the more substantial matters raised by the hon. Members Mr. Ram Karren and Dr. Ramsahoys relating to clause 4 of the proposed Sixth Schedule. In the first place, I cannot agree with my learned and hon. Friend that there is any question of onus of proof here. What is repeated is the ordinary law. If a man volunteers information or gives information in response to questions asked him, that information is always admissible in evidence against him. [Mr. Ram Karran: “Why?”] That is the law. He can refuse, he can say. “I will not give this information because it will incriminate me,” and that will be his legal right. Secondly, even if that were not so, I would suggest that Exchange Control laws are peculiar that it is necessary to have the kind of provisions of the legislation. I come to another point which has caused some considerable amusement and that is that this Schedule represents all those Regulations which were promulgated by the People’s Progressive Party Government. If one takes time to look at those regulations one will see that clause 4 is reproduced verbatim without the change of a comma. It is the same laws promulgated by the People’s Progressive Party which this Government has adopted here today and we are being told that it is harsh, it is unconscionable, and it ought not to be on the Statute Books. For these reasons I regret that I cannot concur with the request of hon. Member that the Clause be deleted.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran do you wish to say anything further?

Mr. Ram Karran: We have had on repeated occasions to point out that this Government does not act as the law indicates. The other day the Prime Minister got up and said that certain Members on the Opposition Benches pay only \$6 income tax. [Interruption.] He said so and it was a blatant lie. In any case the Government does not operate the law in the spirit in which it should be done. That is why the Opposition is suspicious of giving powers to the Government with respect to harassment of people in the country. The Prime Minister ought not to have said that because the income tax laws of the country – [An hon. Member: “How do you know that?”] he said so, and that is a lie.

15.12.71.

National Assembly

3.15 – 3.25 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran, are you saying that that statement is untrue?

Mr. Ram Karran: I am saying that that statement is untrue. The Prime Minister has been using it for political purposes.

3.25 p.m.

Hon. Members (Opposition): Division!

Assembly divided: Ayes 15, No's 27, Declined to vote 1, as follows:

Ayes	Noes	Declined to Vote
Mr. Sutton	Mrs. Willems	Mr. Cheeks - 1
Mr. M.F. Singh	Mr. Zaheeruddeen	
Mr. Teekah	Mr. Van Sluytman	
Mr. Durant	Mr. Saffee	
Mr. Balchand Persaud	Mr. Jordan	
Mr. Branco	Mr. Fowler	
Mr. R. Ally	Mr. Corrica	
Mr. Stoby	Mr. Corriea	
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud	Mr. Chan – A - Sue	
Mr. M.Y. Ally	Mr. Budhoo	
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Bissember	
Mr. Jagan	Mr. Bancroft	
Dr. Ramsahoye	Mr. Ackman	
Mr. Chandisigh	Mr. Aaron	
Mr. Ram Karran - 15	Mr. Wright	
	Mr. Salim	
	Mr. Duncan	

15.12.71.

National Assembly

3.25 – 3.35 p.m.

Mr. Thomas
Mr. Joaquin
Mr. Mingo
Mr. Clarke
Mr. D. A. Singh
Mr. Ramsaroop
Mr. Carrington
Mr. Hoyte
Mr. Kasim
Dr. Reid - 27

Amendment negative.

Dr. Ramsahoye: The Hon. Minister has raised a substantial point that the legislation merely repeats in relation to paragraph 4, what was there in 1959. Very well: I would wish to move an Amendment on another principle which would offer some accommodation if accepted. The Amendment I would wish to move is to the effect that the information which is obtained - - -

The Chairman: I will read the Amendment:

“Insertion of the following as paragraph (7) of the regulation 3 of the Regulations in the Sixth Schedule:

‘ (7) No information obtained pursuant to the provision of this regulation may be used otherwise than for purposes of proceedings under this Ordinance, ’”

Dr. Ramsahoye: Mr. Chairman, you may quits anybody, nut whatever information you get must be used only for Exchange Control proceedings. I am sure the hon. Minister will agree with principle because it seems very reasonable in the circumstances, and I would ask him to support it.

The Chairman: I propose the Amendment.

Mr. Hoyte: May I ask the hon. Member a question? If the information requested disclose that a particular institution or individual has been defrauding the inland revenue, that information ought not to be used for the purposes of proceedings under the income tax laws? If that is his proposal, then I would be in a better position to make up my mind on the Amendment.

Dr. Ramsahoye: The Income Tax Ordinance itself has provisions whereby the Commissioner of Inland Revenue may ask for information from any person or authority in relation to inland revenue proceedings and so, therefore, the inland revenue is at no disadvantage in relation to that.

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, I have effected a compromise with my hon. and learned Friend and I wonder if, with your permission, I may seek leave to interpose the following words between the words, “him” and “notwithstanding,” “in proceeding under this Ordinance.”

The Chairman: The regulation would now read: “ Any information given by a person in compliance with this regulation may be given in evidence against him in proceedings under this Ordinance notwithstanding that it may tend to incriminate him.”

Hon. Members, is it acceptable? Hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye, do you withdraw your Amendment?

Dr. Ramsahoye: I will withdraw that one and I propose this new Amendment that we insert the words, “in proceedings under this Ordinance.”

The Chairman: The Amendment is proposed in respect of paragraph (4) of regulation 3.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

15.12.71.

National Assembly

3.25 – 3.35 p.m.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported with an Amendment to Clause 8: as

Amended, considered: read the Third time and passed.

3.35 p.m.

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE, 1972

BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed debate on the Motion on moved by the Minister of Finance on 7th December, 1971, for the approval of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1972, totalling \$197,846.560.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member, Mr. Stoby.

Mr. Stoby: Mr. Speaker, the Budget Speech, which was presented on the 7th December, states that 1971 was the Year of Consolidation. With the passing of the years we have seen a steep increase in the cost of living due to the steep increase in taxes. All over the country, the cost of living has been greatly increased.

I have read an article – I think it was in the *Guyana Graphic* –, which was written by one Mrs. Kathleen Drayton, who, I think, is a lecturer at the University of Guyana. She has made an analysis of the cost of living over the last few years and she listed some items which are considered as consumer goods. She pointed out that prices have increased over 50 per cent.

Although prices have increased by 50 per cent, we have seen that the Government has not increased the minimum wages. The prices of our products have also been at a standstill and when

15.12.71.

National Assembly

3.35 – 3.45 p.m.

one compares the prices of imported consumer goods with prices of local produce, one sees that there is a very great difference.

The closure of many sawmills in this country has caused the unemployment situation to worsen. It appears that the Government has not done anything to solve the problems that face persons in the lumber industry and in the sawmill industry, which are important to the economy of our country.

We have been told by the hon. Minister that we have to be self – sufficient, that we have to produce. What is the position when we produce? What will happen to the surplus we obtain? Will the Government guarantee markets abroad or will all the things produce be consumed locally?

I have here a bulletin, the Guyana Marketing Corporation's New Sheet for August, 1971. It quotes a lecture given by the Marketing Manager of the Guyana Marketing Corporation, Mr. Saul. He was addressing a group of school children from secondary school and this is what he said:

“On Monday, 28th June, 1971, the Guyana Graphic published a release from Washington and I quote:

‘The U.S. Agriculture Department's Economic Research Service said U.S. agriculture exports to the Caribbean region totalled more than U.S. \$500 m for consumption by both the region's population and the ever increasing number of American visitors.

The report said that since 1968, inter – Caribbean trade has been developing stimulated by the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA) U.S. exports to the CARIFTA Area had more than doubled since this trade group came into being three years ago.”

This is a very important statement.

15.12.71.

National Assembly

3.35 – 3.45 p.m.

In the same bulletin there was set forth a list of 22 items which we can produce locally but, according to the Protocol Agreement with CARIFTA, it was arranged that these island should buy our surplus produce, and if the United States has dominated the Caribbean area by increasing its trade exports what is the position in Guyana? The Government is telling us to produce for ourselves, for our own consumption, but what is the position with regard to exports?

In the Budget Speech it was stated that “over 900,000 lbs. of pork . . . will be supplied by co – operatives to the Guyana Marketing Corporation.” It appears that our products cannot be sold in the Caribbean. It is very regrettable to know that in the long list given here there are things which we could produce. I am afraid that we would not be able to get market overseas.

3.45 p.m.

He told the children that in the developed countries of the world it is the farmers drive big cars and it is the farmers who have surpluses to invest in industry. The farmers does not grow an acres of corn or peanuts or one cow and a sheep; he has hundreds of thousands of acres of corn and tens of thousands of sheep or cows. He is like this because he has the knowledge; he plans, he understands trade, he knows that all development comes from agriculture will solve our unemployment situation, but when people do go to agriculture and they produce what will happen to the things that they produce when the Government is incapable of giving guarantees for the production. We have seen in certain parts of this country that there are many surpluses and on several occasions many of the farmers produce have been rejected. Despite heavy expenditure for farming we still ass that no real encouragement has been given to farmers. In the North West District the Guyana Marketing Corporation has been purchasing on a weekly credit basis, and we feel that that is not good enough.

The Government has been telling a certain section of the people of Guyana to take up lands on the Waini Coast. It is true that the Waini Coast can be very fertile; you get large amount of ground provision, coconut can also be produced on a very large scale. But here again there is the problem of drainage. Who will foot the Bill? Farmers must be encouraged to settle in areas

that are fertile and must be given all the necessary assistance. The Government must not continue to do what it is doing, only giving its supporters fertilisers and insecticides, like in the Matthews Ridge area. When the Manganese Company was closing down its business, the people were told to leave the area but to go into agriculture. They were told that their produce will be exported to the West Indies. The matter is quite different now. Despite the fact that millions and millions of dollars have been spent in the Matthew Ridge area people still have to depend on the people from the Rivers like the Barima, the Kaituma and certain branches like the Aruka to get food. Ground provisions, for instance, have to be taken up Matthews Ridge to be sold to settlers on whom the Government has been spending millions of dollars or otherwise they would certainly starve.

The coconut industry is a very important industry and there has been no significant improvement whether in acreage or in production, But if Government gives the necessary assistance in drainage to help farmers, the coconut industry will be improved and it must not be done on a party basis.

3.55 p.m.

Only on Monday, my hon. Friend Mr. Van Sluytman was talking about handouts by the P.P.P. He was speaking about crop bonuses, that the farmers in those days were just being given handouts. I would like to make a correction. The Pomeroon area is a coconut – producing area and my experience is that there were the Van Sluytmans, the Robeiros, the Stolls. They are no friends of the P.P.P. They have big cultivations. They received crop bonuses. They received loans from the Credit Corporation to improve their farms. It is incorrect for my friend to say that the P.P.P was only giving handouts to its friends.

I should like to speak also on coffee. It is another very important item in agriculture. According to our agriculture report for 1969, from which I have made notes, I have seen where

our exports of coffee fell in pounds and in money value. In 1969, our export were 405,104 pounds value at \$193,963 and this has been reduced in 1969 to 157,800 value at only \$88,452. There is a shortfall of over \$105,511. This occurred because from 1969 to 1970 the Government had not been giving licences for coffee beans to be exported. I was trying to make the point that we cannot just produce and consume. We have to sell our surpluses, otherwise we would only be doing subsistence farming, like the Amerindians, who just produce for their own consumption. It is therefore necessary for the Government to give exporters in Guyana licences to export coffee. I understand the Government is interested in giving licences to these exporters, but those foreign buyers have already made arrangements to buy their coffee in other countries and it is useless to give the people licences to export coffee.

I remember making a speech in this very Parliament Chamber when I called on the then Minister of Trade to review the conditions of the issue of licences for exporting coffee but has been done. It is very regrettable because such a large amount of money, \$105,511, could have been in circulation in Guyana.

Yesterday, the hon. Member Mr. Corrica spoke about discrimination. I have some examples, which I noted here, to show the discrimination in the rice industry. Although the Government is trying to crush the rice industry, presently, The Government is encouraging its party supporters to grow rice in the Pomeroon region. Those supporters have been given combines, tractors; they were told to prepare 100 acres and they would reap 32 bags of padi per acre, but they have reaped only 900 bags of padi, with the assistance of Government with fertilisers and all the necessary materials. There is another group that was discriminated against. Those people prepared 75 acres, and without Government's assistance, reaped 1,100 bags of padi. My hon. Friend was saying that there is no discrimination. This is a case of one group backed by the P.N.C., and another group, which was severely discriminated against because its members were not members of the P.N.C.

I have a little note for the benefit of my hon. Friend Mr. Van Sluytman. This could be considered as favouritism, because these are the policies of the Government, discrimination, bribery, and corruption. The Government is arranging to send a vessel from Georgetown up the Waini River, 260 miles, to take some school feeding supplies. It will cost the Government \$500 sending the things this way rather than by the Transport and Harbours Department. The hon. Member is connected, one of his families is the owner of the sloop, but here is where the Government favours its supporters, where it can make its contacts and they can have a good spree afterwards. These are reliable statements which are at my disposal and I would make them clearly to this House.

It appears that nothing has been said regarding the Amerindians of Guyana. Apparently these people have been forgotten. No real programme. The Government year after year is allocating millions for the Matthews' Ridge area. There is the Quebana Land Development Scheme and it is important that even a small sum should have been allocated. They have heavy forest to clear, no machinery, and no assistance. I have noticed in the Budget Speech that cassava starch will be used in the bauxite industry - - -

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps, hon. Member this may be a convenient time for us to suspend. Before I leave, I should like to make an announcement.

Hon. Members, we have with us this afternoon Mr. Kwame A. Boaitey, a member of the National Assembly of Parliament of Ghana and a member of the Ghana Branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. Mr. Boaitey is a member of the Progressive Party, the ruling party in the Assembly. He is a practising barrister and arrived in Guyana two days ago. He is on a Human Rights fellowship of the United Nations and he will be here for about six weeks studying the role of the Ombudsman. On behalf of the Members and myself. I extend a hearty welcome to him and wish him a happy and successful stay here.

The Sitting is suspended for half an hour.

15.12.71.

National Assembly

3. 55 – 4. p.m.

Sitting Suspended at 4 p.m.

4.27 p.m.

On resumption - -

Mr. Speaker: When the suspension was taken, the hon. Member Mr. Stoby was speaking.

Mr. Stoby: I was making reference to the bitter cassava at the Quebana land Development Scheme because I have been in the Budget Speech where large amount of cassava starch would be bought by the Government for the bauxite industry. It would be impossible for these people to go into large plantations of bitter cassava – although it is their staple diet – and to produce in a commercial way unless the Government decides to give them mechanical devices, tractors and bulldozers. Also in the agricultural policy for the Amerindians, I have noticed where the Guyana School of Agriculture for a period of two years. I have noticed that the experience they have got during that time is very limited and I think that further education in the field of agriculture science should be swen them so that they could be of more help to the Amerindian community.

There is no real encouragement given to the extension officers sponsored by the Interior Development Department and it can hardly bring any development to the people on that land development scheme.

4.30 p.m.

I would also like to make reference to some problems, relating to education , which Amerindians face, especially in the river districts. When I visited the North West District

recently people complained that they were told by Government officers to cut their lumber to build their own structures and to build primary schools.

The Government's policy is self – help. It is trying to project, on a country – wide scale, the philosophy of self – help. Self – help, indeed, is part of the Amerindian way of life, but in modern days people cannot survive by self – help alone.

During the regime of the P.P.P., people were taught self – help methods. They were encouraged in self – help programmes, but they were assisted by the Government with building materials and they supplied the labour. Now, it is completely different.

Self – help could possibly work with those who are in high offices, people who hold high position in the Government. They have an opportunity to do many things by self – help because many of them are drawing large salaries, but the poor fellow who lives in the interior is out of a job. As I said earlier, the closure of the sawmills has affected them, because it is one of the industries on which they depend. Those people rely on subsistence farming. How will they survive? Does the Government want the people in remote areas to continue to live in ignorance, in hunger and nakedness?

We have noticed that the Government now has good relations with its neighbour Brazil, and an Agreement of the people in Brazil, the masses, live in ignorance, poverty and nakedness. It is the duty of the Government to investigate the allegations which I am making and to correct the situation so that the Amerindian may help in the development of Guyana.

I have noted that the Government has a secondary school at Mabaruma. We have been informed that the school is well staffed but that there is a problem since the children live in the rivers and creeks and cannot get to the school. I think that in its Development Plan the Government should provide a boarding school at Mabaruma to cater for the children in those outlying areas. The standard of education for the people of that region would then be improved.

15.12.71.

National Assembly

4.30 – 4.40 p.m.

I see that large sums of money have been allocated to the Ministry of works, Hydraulics and Supply. We have seen that the policy of the Government is to concentrate on the construction of roads and airstrips. We must not forget that the 1966 – 1972 Development Plan for \$300 million failed in a few years on account of the fact that too much emphasis was placed on infrastructure – roads, airstrips and public buildings.

There is an example of this in the North West district. According to the agriculture report, one Mr. Khan chartered the Government's bulldozer to build an airstrip in the North West district. Which was being used not only by the Guyana Airways Corporation but by the owners of the private aeroplanes. Large sums of money have been used to construct another airstrip not far from Mabaruma. This will bring no development to Guyana.

We cannot see the economics of this. Why build another airstrip when some sort of compromise could have been made with Mr. Khan? The airstrip could have been taken over. He was hiring the bulldozer at \$12 per hour and one can see that he has paid a fantastic sum of money on that airstrip.

The Government has been embarking on the construction of many airstrips throughout the country. It has been telling the nation that these airstrips are for the purpose of bringing products from the interior to the city. That is nonsense because transportation by steamer is costly and much less transportation by air.

Recently the Commissioner told me that the airstrip at Moruca would be extended in order to bring produce to Georgetown. That is all nonsense. You cannot transport produce by air and compete with the local markets. It is impossible, unless the Government gives subsidies, which is another problem that will face the nation.

We think that the Government's major aim is to prepare the way, but the people will catch up with them one day. People are becoming worried and one day they may lose control. That is

15.12.71.

National Assembly

4.30 – 4.40 p.m.

why the Government is building airstrip in strategic position. In the area where the airstrip is under construction at Mabaruma, barracks are situated. Soldiers are drilling right there.

Our problem is that there is a large army and a large police force. The country is big; its economy is poor since most of the people in the country are poor. Yet we have to foot the bill for a large army and Police Force. If you go into the river districts you will see that the Police have large cruisers, some of which have twin cylinder engines and burn a lot of gasoline. These boats travel up and down wasting public funds.

If the Government were trying to provide better services for the people, for instance, to transport a doctor from one point to another quickly, we would have no say, but officers are travelling around just wasting precious funds.

I should like to refer also to the increase in air fares from \$25 to \$40. Government does not wish people to come from the interior districts to Georgetown. Its own supporters cannot come from Matthews Ridge to Georgetown by air; they have to come by steamer. Seats in the aeroplane are empty. If you were to make a check you would find that the service is used by the Commissioner of Police, by Inspectors of Police and by big officials. The public cannot use air services. They have to travel on the crowded North West steamer.

4.40 p.m.

I cannot understand up to now why the Government does not want to improve the steamer services. People have to lie on the wet deck when the rain falls. Why does the Government not get a modern vessel so that it can make the trips faster and passengers could be comfortable? These are some of the problems which the people of the remote areas are suffering.

I wish to deal now with this matter of Amerindian lands which is very important although it might be stale in this Parliament. What is the position? In October the People's National

Congress hastened to hold an election for Amerindian Captains. The reason is to get out those who were not supporting the People's National Congress. It is a disgrace to know that even some Members of Parliament took part in corrupting these Amerindians, in trying to bias them. The chief person was the Chief Interior Development Officer who took on the job of subverting the minds of the people. I think that the Government ought to be ashamed of itself. These Amerindians are intelligent enough to realise what was going on, They were actually forced to vote for somebody whom they were not really interested in. This was in preparation for the Amerindians' Conference which was held in October. What did the Prime Minister say? The Prime Minister told these Amerindian Captain that it is no use shouting for their lands. I do not know what the hon. Parliamentary Secretary for Amerindian Affairs had to say, but the Prime Minister said he is no magician. He has promised these people that they will get titles for the lands. But we believe that the Government would deny the people this privilege.

The major problem which faces the Amerindians is the marketing of their produce. People complain to us that they get a little over a cent, for their oranges in certain parts of the North West District. They showed me the bill. I took the opportunity also in a public meeting to explain the figures from the G.M.C. officers, when you calculated all the deductions they get just over a cent for the oranges. Because they are told that they are paid five cents a pound and it works out to little or nothing at all. The Amerindians do not know to do it, so I worked it out for them and realised that they were only getting one cent for the oranges. High transportation coast is another problem facing the Amerindians.

This Government has said that it is a Socialist Government, that its philosophy is socialism but where is this socialism? According to what we have seen and according to the trend of the Government's policies today, for instance, I think the hon. Minister Mr. David Singh when he was speaking yesterday said that the Opposition should be ignored. The hon. Member Mr. Singh should be thankful for the People's Progressive Party which has worked and is working hard to

15.12.71.

National Assembly

4.40 – 4.50 p.m.

labour in this country. It it were not for the P.P.P. probably he would not be in that seat to make that remark; he might have been somewhere else I cannot say. *[Interruption]*

The same hon. Minister of Trade has said that the Opposition supported the nationalization of DEMBA and a few weeks after tried in some conniving way to go against it. The P.P.P. is in full support of the nationalization. We have been agitating for nationalization not only for the bauxite industry but the main aim is for the commanding heights of the country, sugar, bauxite and rice. What is the position with Guybau? It is only a change of hands. It was reported in yesterday's newspaper on the front page that the Yugoslavian said it is a waste of time to export the bauxite we all know this. But in the Budget Speech the Minister of Finance has stated that the ships came in very regularly, but it is the same old tune. Formerly then Canadians has control of the Demerara Bauxite Company; they have put their puppets here to fill their packets. What we should have, he said, is the necessary technical assistance – hydroelectricity power to turn the bauxite into aluminium.

4.50 p.m.

Previous Budget statements made reference to hydro – electricity and the Tiboku Falls. What is the position today? Nothing is mentioned. A paltry sum of \$30,000 is shown in the Estimates for hydro – investigation. One day the people will catch up with them. They are catching up with them. I remember seeing the Gallery crowded with people. Formerly, when the Budget was presented, invitees used to be present. Now it is presented in a cool and calm way, nobody is interested because they understand what kind of Government is ruling and they do not expect anything. I do not know what is wrong with the fellows on the Government side. All are yes men. An important ex – Lord Mayor has resigned from the P.N.C. and from the City Council. He is a brave man. All are yes men. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Codrington for his bravery.

Everyone should have a conscience, but it appears that some of them, because they are on the Government side, they remain very quiet and agree with all the corrupt practices. I was making some reference about corruption. The Government should change its policy if we are to develop our economy, if we are to nationalise our industries. The members of the Government must think of more radical changes. They have not the guts to make any. They call it progressive legislation to make these industries generate wealth so as to have better social services in the country. When the Government takes these radical steps, but it cannot, because it is strictly under the control of the United States. Although the leadership is Marxist in Chile, under the leadership of Salvadori Allende - - -

Mr. Speaker: I wish to remind you, hon. Member Mr. Stoby, that you have about 7 minutes more.

Mr. Stoby: But the C.I.A. is trying to subvert the Government as it tried to do in our country, to upset the Government that had progressive ideas. If anyone wants to see the Government come out of there, let the Government decide to make some radical changes. The only solution to help Guyana is for the Government to change its policies and it is the duty of the Opposition to keep telling the Government that it should change its policy, make radical changes, not to continue the same operation that has been going on with the Canadians. There should be some factories, as the Yugoslava delegation was advising, instead of exporting raw materials and turning back and buying them again, which is a burden.

The Government has been telling us about import substitution. We must produce for our own consumption but there is an important matter where our natural resources should be processed right here and save the dollars going out of this country. We feel the whole Guyanese nation would live a better and a happier life.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I wonder what type of debate we are having in this House, especially when we are debating a very important subject, the Budget of our country. Not one

going to answer the questions posed by members of the Opposition? The Government produces a Budget, the public is wondering to know what is ---

Mr. Speaker: We have been advised there is an emergency Cabinet meeting.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Well then, let us suspend the sitting until another time, if the Government has important business I think the Government should show the House courtesy and inform the House that the Ministers will not be available in their seats. Nobody is here to listen to the comments of the Opposition and to be in a position to give answers. The Speaker should have advised the House that the Ministers are a Cabinet Meeting.

Mr. Speaker: I do not follow that, surely the Parliamentary Secretaries are in their seats.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Sir, the Parliamentary Secretaries do not speak in this House. The House should be given additional time if the Ministers have to be elsewhere. *[Interruption.]*

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Leader of the House would have to agree to an extension of time.

Dr. Jagan: If the Government has to steal the time of the Parliament, we should have additional time for the debate. If the Ministers cannot be here to carry on the debate, I would advise my members to walk out. The Government is discourteous to the House.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition, you are entitled to advise yourself and your members as you wish.

Dr. Jagan: I think the Parliament should be run properly. It is not a question of Junior Ministers being here to answer. They do not answer anyhow. This is an important debate and the Government Ministers should be in their seats to hear what the Opposition says. I am not saying you cannot have Cabinet meeting. You can have it but let the House adjourn for the time being.

15.12.71.

National Assembly

4.50 – 5. p.m.

Mr. Speaker: If I adjourn the Sitting, you will say that the time is not made up.

Dr. Jagan: They will have to give us additional time,

Mr. Speaker: That would mean that the Standing Orders will have to be amended. [**Dr.**

Jagan: “They can do anything.”]

Mr. M.F. Singh: I went very strongly to support the hon. Leader of the Opposition. It is wrong for us to be told in passing while a Member of House is speaking that the Ministers are in a Cabinet meeting. We were never treated to the courtesy of being told until incidentally it is brought out. The whole of the Front Bench is out. Mr. Speaker, you said that the Parliamentary Secretaries are here, but there are not Parliamentary Secretaries to every Ministry. Who is answerable in respect of a Ministry where there is no Parliamentary Secretary? This is a farce.

5 p.m.

We have from experience that there are persons on the other side who have never opened their mouths to speak in this House and one sometimes wonders whether, in fact, they can speak. But that is not really relevant. I think that the Opposition is being grossly insulted. This Sitting is now a farce because there can be no proper answers to the contributions that we make, and they cannot be properly noted. I would suggest - - -

Mr. Speaker: Are you suggesting, hon. Member Mr. Singh, that the note takers are not doing their work?

Mr. M.F. Singh: I am not suggesting that,

Mr. Speaker: You said that a record is not being taken.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Perhaps I should elucidate what I was attempting to say. I was not casting any aspersions on the note takers, but when questions are asked and it comes to the point of answering, will the note takers provide copies of the proceedings before the Minister gets up to answer so that he will be able to read all that has taken place? Parliament is becoming more and more of a farce and we must object to this. It would be better for us to clear out of here than spend taxpayers' money in this manner.

Mr. Speaker: Hon Member Mr. Balchand Persaud, please proceed.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Mr. Speaker, while I do not want to question your wisdom, I am terribly surprised that we have to continue discussing the Budget when the Ministers of the Government are not in their seats.

Mr. Speaker: You made that point already. Please proceed.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: The 1972 Budget culminates the Government's seven – year Development Programme, 1966 to 1972. We have been able to make an assessment of the situation and to come to the conclusion that the Government has not fulfilled the Development programme which it set out in 1966.

The Government, in its Seven – Year Development Programme, wanted to spend \$516,658,348 on capital development, but over the years it has been able to spend only \$338,1010,793. This shows that there has been a shortfall in the Capital Development Programme to an amount of \$166,334,078, which is nearly 32 per cent of the Government's overall allocations for its Seven – Year Development Programme.

Government talks about presenting a new plan. Are we going to get a similar plan where it says it want to spend \$516 million and then it is not in a position to raise the money to carry out the development works? The Government is virtually fooling the people of our country

because, if a Government, having received the necessary technical advice, undertakes a development programme and is then unable to raise the required money, that Government, is misleading the taxpayers and building false hopes in its people. The Government, while it is building false hopes in its people. The Government, while it is building its bureaucracy on the one hand, is not carrying pot the task which it set out to do.

I shall give on analysis of the allocations in the various Divisions to show how serious the shortfalls were.

In its programme, the Government estimated to spend \$1.1 million on the judiciary as capital development, but over the years it has been able to spend only \$69,916, which is a shortfall of \$1,030,084. The Government wanted to spend, in its seven – Year Development Programme, \$1.1 million to develop the judicial processes of our country so that we should have a better system of justice, better courts, but over the years it has been able to spend only \$69,916. This is a shortfall of nearly 70 per cent but the Government is saying that much development has gone on..

Under the Division for Parliament there was an allocation of \$20,000 to be spent over the seven – year period. Not one cent has been budgeted over the seven years, by this Government, for the development of Parliament.

In the Office of the Prime Minister, the Government estimated expenditure to the tune of \$23,979,000. Over the years the sum of \$14,684,313 has been spent which is a shortfall of \$9,294,687.

In the Ministry of External Affairs there was no shortfall, but there has been overspending on the amount allocated to the tune of \$474,315. We have been very critical of the in which this particular Ministry has been spending taxpayers' money. Perhaps that is why there has been this over – allocation of money in that Ministry.

The sum of \$15,000 was allocated to be spent in seven years in the office of the development of this office.

In the Ministry of Information and Culture the Government planned to spend \$750,000. It has been able to spend only \$681,067, a shortfall of \$68,933. That is why the Government has been able to carry out the development that was necessary.

In the seven – year projection, the Ministry of Home Affairs was to spend \$13,081,640. It has been able to spend \$7,387,949, a shortfall of \$5,693,691, which is nearly 40 per cent.

In the Seven – Year Development Programme the Government projected spending \$7,695,000 on the Ministry of Local Government over the years it has been able to spend \$624,131.

5.10 p.m.

This is the amount of money for the development of the various local authorities in the country. The Government is saying that it wants to decentralise, that the people should be given more responsibility, that they must stand on their own feet. The fact is that the Government has been only able to give \$624,131 to the local authorities for capital development, a shortfall of \$7,071,869. There has been about 92 per cent shortfall in this particular Ministry. That is why you cannot have development in the areas. The Government is talking about development but the Government has not been really helping people to carry out development. The people in the local authorities were told that they were going to spend \$7.6 million on capital development over the years. We have seen that only \$624,131 was spent. What sort of development would they have? The Minister of Agriculture said that the Government wants to have diversification of agriculture. The Government estimated that it will spend \$9 million for livestock development in the country. Over the years only \$2,491,431 was spent. It has fallen short in this expenditure by \$6,508,569.

In the Ministry of Trade the Government said it will spend \$1 million in the seven – year period, over the years it has been able to spend only \$503,179, a shortfall of \$498,874. The Government said it is going to develop trade in this country, it is going to make better arrangements for trade to flourish, but it is not spending the money. In the Ministry of Communications alone the Government said it was going to spend \$54,664,000 in seven years, over the years it has been able to spend only \$39,650,038, about 65 per cent of money was not spent.

What is the Government talking about when it speaks about development? One would have expected by 1972 that the Government's Development Programme would have been fulfilled, but here it is, of the twenty – three Heads of allocations of the funds there has been a shortfall in expenditure. Another important point which must be noted is this: the Government has been deceiving this House in the estimates itself because in 1971 the Government said actual expenditure, that is capital expenditure, which occurred amounted to \$18,261,255. In this year's budget it is saying that the amount which was budgeted for development of this Ministry was \$19,858,772. In the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply - the Ministry has been spending nearly one – third or even sometimes a little less than one – third of Government's capital development supply. This Ministry has been spending taxpayers money with very little regard. Since before 1968 the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply has not produced a report to satisfy this House on how the Taxpayers money is being spent. A lot of money has been spent. I can give you the figures. In 1966, over \$17 million was spent, in 1967 over \$14 million, 1968 over \$17 million, in 1969 over \$19 million, in 1970 over 19 million, in 1971 over \$23 million, and in 1972 over \$23 million, and now in 1972 over \$27 million in capital development not on current estimates, will be spent. The Government has still not been able to provide this House or the nation with a report. Surely there must be a reason for the nation to be very apprehensive of this situation. Why is it that this Ministry cannot give reports? The fact is that the Ministry cannot produce reports.

There have been instances in this country where surveys were carried out by this particular Ministry on different projects but because of the incompetence of the Ministry and by putting square pegs in round holes to do the job, today, in the country, many of these surveys have to be done all over again. We know for a fact that the Government carried out surveys from the Supply Bond at Kingston up to Mahaica with a view to extend the road. Surveys were done and now they are going it all over again. Could the Minister say and inform this House whether surveys were not carried out two and a half years ago on the Essequibo roads and now the Ministry is sending a new team of surveyors to do it again? The Minister is not here. I hope one of his colleagues would give him the facts. Our information is that the responsibility to do the surveys was given to a technician and not a qualified surveyor. As a result, thousands of dollars of taxpayer money was spent on the surveying of the Essequibo roads and it has to be done all over because the surveys were not accurately done. It is expected that the project will cost nearly the same amount of money because the surveys were not done properly.

The road From New Amsterdam going to Sandvoort and West Canje had been surveyed by the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply. Now that road is in a very bad state but now the excuse is being made that that road is not the responsibility of the Ministry of works, Hydraulics and Supply. Who is responsible for the road? That road was surveyed by the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, that Ministry took the responsibility to survey to improve it, but now the excuse is being made that it does not fall under the Ministry of works, Hydraulics and Supply but that it is the responsibility of the Town of New Amsterdam. This is the type of situation which exists where the Government is spending a lot of money on this particular Ministry.

There is a serious shortage of surveyors in the country. Because of the Government's policy of discrimination in employment, promotional facilities and in the basic conditions of work over eleven qualified surveyors left the country last year. The Government is not doing anything now to be able to get qualified surveyors. In fact, the persons who are employed in this particular section of the Ministry have been complaining over the years that the pay is very

15.12.71.

National Assembly

5 – 5. 10 p.m.

small. They are getting \$.64 a day to work very late in the nights, plus one dollar a day allowance.

5.20 p.m.

That is not enough for a surveyor. The Government should do something to help.

Surveys have been carried out from Vreed – en – Hoop to Uitvlugt. The road is in a very bad state because of the increasing traffic. Surveys were carried out for the rehabilitation of that road but the Government has not been doing anything up to now. I am talking about extension. I am not talking about the existing road. There is need for an improvement of the shoulders of the road so that pedestrians can have to walk without the danger of being hit by cars. The Government carried out a survey on the road from Vreed – en – Hoop to Stanleytown on the West Bank Demerara but the Government does not say anything about it. There is a road from Stanleytown in Berbice to Brandwagt / Sari. This year, money has been allocated for that road but we do not know what kind of road we will get. I wish that the hon. Minister would give the necessary explanation.

The road situation in certain areas is very bad, especially in the villages, but the Government is saying the local authorities have the responsibility to look after their internal roads. The fact is, most of the local authorities are in a bad financial position. The Government is talking about self – help but it is not providing materials to improve the roads. It is only giving lip service.

There is another burning issue, that is, the awarding of contracts to contractors. I want the Government to state its position quite clearly. What has become of the Tender Board? Is it there as a rubber stamp? Or a white elephant? Do the Tender Board members have the right to determine to whom contracts must be given, or is it being decided by the Minister himself before hand? It is a wasteful exercise to advertise in the newspapers inviting tenders, because the

15.12.71.

National Assembly

5.20 – 5.30 p.m.

Minister before hand makes up his mind to give them to particular parties. Most of the main contracts are given to the Greenland Co-operative Society.

We have tried to get the registrar to give the information on any society which is formed, especially since the Government is saying the country is a Co – operative Republic. One cannot get any information on this Greenland Society. Everything is behind closed doors and the fact is, this society does not pay any income tax according to the regulations and most of the big contracts are given to this society. The building of the Chronicle, the Guyana National Co – operative Bank, the building of bridges, wharves, schools, public buildings – Greenland. What is happening to our local contracting companies? Very few of them are able to get a contract unless they can enter into a deal with certain person in this particular Ministry. This is the only way they can get contracts. This is corruption in the society, where the Government is using its position to give contracts involving public funds to its friends, to a great extent to a society which is controlled by them. That is why this Ministry has not been producing Reports over the years.

With regard to the question of foreign contactors doing these big jobs, the building of roads, etc., I should like to know whether the Ministry has been carrying out studies, getting the relevant information on the cost of the projects before awarding the contracts, because a contract is given to a person to do the sea defence say from Kitty to Nootenzuil, large sums of money are voted and given to a contracting group or company, but no report. So much money is allocated for this project and that project, and nobody knows what happens. I do not want to suggest that a contractor must supply us with all the relevant information, how much it cost him, and how much profit he made. We want the Government to let us know whether it has been able to carry out studies beforehand, to satisfy the nation that the taxpayers' money is properly spent.

Most of these projects are carried out with money which is borrowed from abroad. We secure the money by way of loans. The contractors have to buy their own machinery, their own parts and equipment, and they manoeuvre prices. They tell the Government that they are in a position

15.12.71.

National Assembly

5.20 – 5.30 p.m.

to show it cost them so much but the fact is , we might be able to have the job done more cheaply. There are many people walking the streets today unemployed yet the Government gives the big contracts to foreigners. The other types of contracts go to Greenland and the very small contracts like weeding drains, painting fences, these go to other Guyanese contractors.

The Government has been spending taxpayers's money and not accounting for it. As Speaker of our National Assembly, I wish to implore you, sir to see to it that the Government has issues reports because Members must be satisfied, as guardian of our Parliament, that public funds are properly spent.

5.30 p.m.

The Government must be able to give reports, but it is not doing this and somebody should talk to the members of the Government. I believe it is your job, sir.

Over the years, the Government has estimated for the expenditure of \$510,000 to carry out stage 11 of the Tapakuma project, but over the period it has not voted a cent to carry out this project. The project is abandoned.

With regards to the Torani project, the Government estimated spending \$500,000 to carry out works over the seven – year period. Not one cent has been voted over the seven years for this project. The sum of \$750,000 was to be spent over the years on Stage 111 of the Black Bush Polder project. Not one cent has been voted.

The sum of \$10,500,000 was voted for the Mahaicony / Abary project. People in Mahaicony / Abary area were very glad when the Government presented its Seven – Year Development Programme. Because the Government wanted to have support it put forward what it described as a realistic Seven – Year Development Programme to satisfy the people. The Government has allocated no money whatsoever to the 1972 budget.

The Government said that it would spend \$8 million to develop the Crabwood Creek area and to satisfy the land – hungry people in the Corentyne. Six years have passed and one year is to go and it has not voted one penny for this project.

There is the Canje basin area, the area at the back of the Canje. It said that it was going to spend \$22 million on a project in this area. Not one cent has been voted over the years. It is voting \$530,000 this year to do the East Bank Berbice Roads. One wonders what will be the outcome of that.

The Government has not really been helping the people in this country. It could have satisfied many land – hungry people; it could have relieved the unemployment situation. Wealth would have been generated in the country if the Government had allocated money on these projects and de – emphasised the infrastructural works.

Over the years the Government has been able to raise money to carry out development work. It will be seen from the Estimates this year that the Government has to borrow money from abroad to carry out the Development Programme - \$0.7 from foreign grants, \$4505 from foreign loans and \$26.5 from internal loans. The entire Development Programme is carried out on borrowed money. The Government has not been able to generate wealth in the country to carry out its Development Programme and that is why it has failed. The Government is not planning realistically; it has not moved from infrastructural work to real development and that is why so many problems are facing the people of our country.

I said earlier that there is great need for improvement in the Ministry of Communications. There is a definite need for improvement at the General Post office. For three years the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply was to have repaired the elevator at the General Post Office and to this day the Ministry cannot carry out the repairs, in spite of numerous request by the administration of the Post Office. Other departments are using the building but the Government

has not been able to have the elevator fixed. This is due to incompetence and to the fact that the job is not tackled when requests are made by the Ministry of Communications.

The Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply is supposed to be the servicing Ministry to all other Ministries. If the Ministry of Education wishes to have a school built, the Ministry of works, Hydraulics and Supply is called in to do the job. If any other Ministry wants to have some development work done, the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply is called in, but we see this Ministry lazing when it comes to doing the job. There is no proper direction.

The General Post Office needs more space for its employees, particularly in certain departments. A few years ago, there were 22 persons working in the assortment department and the space there was then considered to be adequate, but today there are many more employees working there. There are 32 persons in that particular department and more space is needed. It can be considered a health hazard for these persons to be working in congested conditions. Some employees live in country areas and go to work with lunch, but there is no proper room in which they could take their meals. They have to eat at their desks. This is not the way to treat employees. The Government ought to provide facilities. *[Interruption.]* The Parliamentary Secretary is saying that is not part of the terms of their employment, but an employer has to provide certain facilities.

There is another problem. Mails are posted at the northern side of the General Post Office. Every hour a worker has to take his bag to collect the mail, which he takes to another section for it to be sorted. The Government could easily install a conveyor belt and when a person posts a letter it would automatically be taken to the sorting section. The Government is not thinking in terms of improving facilities in order to ensure efficiency.

There are also some officers who sell stamps and others who write receipts and sell posted orders. They are all in separate cage and you may find, during the course of the day, that the employees who are selling stamps are working continuously because there are long queues of

15.12.71.

National Assembly

5.30 – 5. 40 p.m.

people waiting to purchase stamps and, at the same time, there is no work at the other cage. A better system is needed where each officer sells stamps, and postal orders and writes receipts. This would facilitate the public and people would not have to wait a long time to purchase stamps. They will join the queue that is shortest and thus there will be more efficiency. The Ministry is not thinking of doing this.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you have six minutes more.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: How much time is allocated to me?

Mr. Speaker: 45 minutes.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Larger post offices are required. The Post Office at Regent Road, Bourda, is very congested. People have to be standing in queues that stretch to Regent Road because facilities are not there. Charlestown Post Office is very small. There is need for a new post office at South Ruimveldt, in Alexander Village and at Kwakwani, which has only a postal agency. There is also need for a new general post office, but the Government has not been budgeting for this type of work.

5.40 p.m.

The last point I wish to make is with respect to pure water supply. The Government has been spending money on this project. I think over \$2 million have already been spent on only areas near Georgetown. But whilst the Government has been spending so much money on this project which we do not criticise, the fact is that the Government has been neglecting the other areas. The Government has not been able to tackle the situation and to help the people in those other areas. The Anna Regina area which is a very busy area, virtually as busy as New Amsterdam, lacks pure water supply, and the Government has been unable to do anything.

15.12.71.

National Assembly

5.40 – 5.50 p.m.

The hon. Minister responsible for pure water supply can have a survey carried out in this country to see the areas that are affected. For instance, from De Hoop on the East Coast Demerara going straight up to Perseverance people have to go for miles before they can get a bucket of water, yet the Government has not been doing anything to help these people. The Government has been spending all the money on one project and leaving the other areas neglected.

In Wakenaam, in the whole area Zelandia, there is only one pipe. The people have to put a saucepan on a 24 feet pole and push it down the pipe and dip the water saucepan by saucepan to be able to get water. At Maria's Pleasure the same exists, in Leguan there is the same problem. The position is that we have been unable to get a proper service. On the Corentyn from No. 51 Village right up to Crabwood Creek there is this problem of pure water supply. People have been getting water, but they have to spend so many hours to get a bucket of water, they have to go long distances. It is the responsibility of the Government to provide these facilities for people but the Government has not been doing so. Over \$2 million have been spent on this project and all you see is concrete foundations being laid and fences being put up and very little being done.

The position is that the Government has been neglecting this facility which it has to give to the people. The Government should be blamed for this deteriorating condition. The hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally mentioned in an earlier debate the problem facing the people in the Black Bush Polder.

On the East Bank Berbice, and Sisters Village. We are not saying that Government should not embark on a project, but the fact is the Government must be able to look at the other areas also where there is need for improvement to help the situation until it can do better. The Government should take the full blame for not providing proper water facilities in the country. The Government has been from time to time involving itself in a lot of slogan – shouting but when it comes to the actual fact, it has been unable to fulfil its Development Programme by nearly one – third of the amount of money which it wanted to spend. I hope that with this new

Development Programme that the Government is coming up with, the Government will be more realistic and let the nation know the truth so that we can be able to move on.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member please wind up.

Mr. Balchand Persaud: Sir, I wish to implore this Government to change its policies because the nation is going through a very serious crisis. Unemployment is rising everyday problems of drainage and irrigation are plaguing the people. There are problems of social services. The Government has not been providing all the necessary social services which people were getting in the past. It is not a case where people were not getting these things, but today these services are being denied the people by this Government. I wish to that when the Government comes with a new plan that nit will be more realistic and it should not try to fool the Guyanese nation again.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture (Dr. Reid): Mr. Speaker, over the last few days we have had some interesting discussions.

Mr. Speaker: Before you proceed, may I for the information of the House, mention that there has been agreement between the hon. Leader of the House and the hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition that we would sit until half past 7 0'clock.

Dr. Reid: During that time what is also of interest is the manner in which some people have decided to tell in this House, what if we were allowed to say, straight forward unadulterated lies but we are not allowed to say that. Therefore we would say that they are strangers to the truth. I just want to say for the records in view of some of the descriptions which were given very graphically by my friend the hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally. I do not want to spend my few

15.12.71.

National Assembly

5.40 – 5.50 p.m.

moments to do much of the contradictions, because agriculture is something that you see on the ground, it is not a talking matter. I always like the record for the year to speak for itself.

We have set out in the exercise of feeding ourselves. During the year we gave the Guyanese public the opportunity to see the reality of this by having brought to Georgetown from all parts of this country to the National Park some of the produce that Guyanese can grow, some of the commodities that Guyanese are growing, some of the processing that Guyanese are doing so that we will be able to stimulate more Guyanese people to pursue this path of endeavouring to feed ourselves. Over many years we have been accustomed to sugar and rice and even now many Members are trying to persuade us that we should continue to spend most of our energy on sugar and rice because people know to do these. If we follow that type of system we will never know to do anything new, we will continue the old way; and notwithstanding the needs of the economy we would be here not trying to do anything new. Of course, we must agree that what is strange is sometimes frightening, what is unknown is fearful and what is new is sometimes difficult. We in this Government must pursue a line of not an easy road if we are to succeed in Guyana. We must pursue some of the new, the strange and the difficult path so that people will be able to learn.

I wish to spend a few moments discussing our diversification programme in agriculture. There are some crops that we need in this country, commodities that we have always been importing in large quantities. I refer to crops like corn, soya bean, peanuts, citrus and other fruits, and oil palm. These are crops that we have now learnt to realise that Guyanese people can grow and are actually growing successfully. For the past year, including 1970 and 1971, we will know that the production of some of these newer crops that I have mentioned have moved upward very significantly.

5.50 p.m.

Some of them showed many hundred per cent increase, and this is the way it has to go. This is evidence that the programme is successful.

For instance, corn and sorghum rose by some 34 per cent from 1966 to the year 1970, and there is every indication that that percentage will be higher by the end of this year. Soya Bean, of course, is virtually new to us, and we were able to prove that oil can be extracted from the beans by doing some of the extraction locally. Peanuts, we have grown more in this country. In 1968, we grew only 30,000 pounds and by the end of the period 1970 – 1975, we should have grown over 200,000 pounds. At one time, there was a shortage of cabbage and I note my friend said yesterday there was a glut of cabbage. This is a sign that the programme is working and people are producing more and more, a product that used to sell for some 60 cents per pound, because of increase production, was being sold at the market in the earlier part of this year at 16 cents per pound. We can say the same for black – eye peas and more of the other commodities.

Then we come to livestock products, an area that is so necessary in this country. One will note that some of the crops I mentioned, especially peanuts and soya beans, are also high vegetable protein crops and I was happy to learn that in the hinterland, the consumption of peanuts has increased especially among Amerindian children. In one of the areas, notwithstanding the thousands of pounds of peanuts grown, it was possible to consume these peanuts in that area. I refer to Baramita.

Then we turn to livestock. In table eggs, there has been self – sufficiency in this country. We do not import table eggs any more. In 1965, we produced 17.9 million eggs whereas last year 31.3 million were produced. There is every indication for 1971 that there will be a rise in this area. Let us take bacon. Production of bacon rose from 68,000 pounds in 1965 to 193,000 pounds in 1970. As far as hams are concerned, in 1965, we had a record of 23,000 pound. Last year, it reaches 107,000 pounds and so we see the general increase in the production of the goods that the people of Guyana need.

Mr. Speaker, I have to use these figures because it is no point just talking of agriculture. You see the performance and so the record must speak. Even with ground provision, it is interesting to note for this year 1971 there is an increase of some 33.6 per cent. Pineapple, there was an

increase of 24.9 per cent; corn, there was an increase of 17.7 per cent; black – eye peas, 100 per cent; peanuts; 566.7 per cent increase, while onions rose by 42.7 per cent. Unless we keep this momentum, then the people of Guyana will not be able to produce the goods we need.

Since I mentioned some of the newer crops., I want to mention some of the areas where they are grown. We hear so much noise in this House about Matthews' Ridge, about kibilibiri, and my friend has the gumption to mention here that the people of Matthews Ridge grow nothing, they cannot feed themselves, if they do not get food from other places, they will starve. Let us look at Kibilibiri. We have been growing corn, sorghum, soya been and peanuts in an area that was only forest. Sometimes we run away to other people's countries and we talk about what we are doing, forgetting that at one time they too had forest. When we begin to clear our forest and to cultivate it my friend seems to be very worried, but this has to be done in this country – as we are doing, where there used to be only grass lands and trees, there will be thousands of acres under cultivation, growing corn, sorghum, soya beans and peanuts. In that area alone, for 1971, we had over half million pounds of corn reaped, sorghum, nearly 200,000 pounds, and soya beans 131,760 pounds. We will continue to do this in these areas so that we can carry out our commitment to feed this nation.

It we look at the pork production that I mentioned a while ago, we will find that the Guyana Marketing Corporation has been able to introduce a scheme that we call the pig credit scheme. Due to this scheme, the production of pork has increase significantly. For instance, to November of this year, they have been able to produce in value some \$600,000 with an average buying price of 60.5 cents per pound. In the slaughter of pigs, the improvement is also significant. Where we used to have a slaughter of 60 pigs per day, today we can slaughter 200 pigs per day. This is a significant advance from what it used to be. Then the processing follows.

We have said if agriculture is to succeed then there must be processing of agricultural products. This is being done now at the Guyana Marketing Corporation. Let us compare what

15.12.71.

National Assembly

5.50 – 6 p.m.

was being done, as late as 1969. With what is the position for this year, and this year is not at its end as yet.

6 p.m.

Let us look at a few of the processed products. The production of shoulder bacon moved from 70,000 lbs to 117,000 lbs. at the end of November; boneless ham moved from 16,000 lbs. to 25,000 lbs., while leg ham moved from 40,000 lbs. to some 50,000 lbs. and picnic ham from 16,000 lbs. to 23,000 lbs. In 1969, 5,000 lbs. of sausages were produced, while in 1971 that moved up to 18,000 lbs. we are satisfied that this programme is doing well. Another products is raw pickled pork.

As we produce more, there is a greater demand for the products and so we have introduced other equipment. My colleague, the hon. Member Mr. Van Sluytman, has already indicated some of the benefits of the Guyana Marketing Corporation. We have in additional equipments so that we can do better work there. We have been purchasing pigs from all parts of this country, the North West region not excluded, because the Guyana Marketing Corporation serves almost every part of this country. The general purchase in pigs alone has reached over \$1 million. The volume of purchases has increased and more people are benefiting from this service.

We have been able to extend the storage facilities at the Guyana Marketing Corporation. We have now instituted facilities at Ruimveldt, where the Guyana Marketing Corporation has additional storage facilities. Storage facilities have been provided at the National Park so that deterioration will be a thing of the past. We have also improved on the marketing of the products by carrying them to the consumers. We hope that by doing this, people in all areas will be able to get their food commodities cheaper.

I want to advice all who are listing to frequent these markets in the various districts so that they will get food commodities at the lowest possible prices. On Sunday morning we have an

open air market at the National Park. There is one at Golden Grove and one at Annandale on Saturday. There is another at Linden and one at Wismar, at Cara Cara and at Leonora, so that commodities can reach the people. Thus we see that the service to the community is expanding more and more.

We decided, some years ago, that if we are to develop Guyana we should do it by concentrating on regions. We have been able to identify some of these region and one of them is the North West region. I hope that when my friends note the expenditure for the North West they will not think that it is all for Matthews Ridge.

We have also indentified the Soesdyke / Linden area as a region and work is being done here because we think that if we concentrate our total resources on the development of regions we will have significant results. This work is going on now in the area of the Soesdyke / Linden highway and in the North West region. Already thousands of acres under cultivation in proximity to the Soesdyke / Linden highway.

I heard someone say a while ago that the programme in agriculture is discriminating. During the year we have been able to use loan funds to rehabilitate some farms and farmers to put them in a position where they can produce better by recognising the needs of their districts, by making on – the- spot observations and by trying to meet these needs.

We have been using what is called the Public law 480 loan from the United States of America. It is interesting to note what has happened to some of these funds. When my friend talk about discrimination in agriculture they cannot support what they say with what is happening on the ground. I invite them to go to Cane Grove and see the assistance that is now being given in drainage and irrigation. Anew pump has been installed.

Let them go to Port Mourant and see the assistance that has been given to the Port Mourant Follow – up Co – operative to rehabilitate an old sluice. The people there are very appreciative of this help.

We know that our extension officers much reach all parts of this country and we provide them with better means of water transportation. If you go to Jappa on the Corentyne you will see work going on there to improve the drainage system. Go to Crabwood Creek and you will see works in progress for the improvement of their drainage. Go to the Pomeroon district and to the Essequibo Coast and you will see several scheme in operation to improve the lot of the people.

If hon. Member will go to Black Bush Polder they will see men working on a road to give the people in that area better roadways. Amerindian farmers in the interior have benefited from this programme, and we have spent thousands of dollars trying to help there. At the modified M.A.A Scheme, several thousand dollars have been allocated to begin work which is now being done.

I want to say a word Matthews Ridge / Arakaka / kaituma, part of the North West region. If our friend visit that area – I know that the Leader of the Opposition has been there – they will see some of the best cattle ever reared in this country. If it were not so far away, I am certain that my friend, the hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally, would have found very attractive commodities for purchase. In an area where, years ago, people thought nothing would have grown, we have been able to establish pastures and some of the best cattle will be found there. I do not think anyone will find cattle looking like those in any part of this country.

6.10 p.m.

What is interesting is that from this work we have now been convinced that cattle can be grown and fattened on good pastures. In this type of exercise people in other parts of the world have spent millions of dollars trying to do just that. Here in Guyana we have got cattle being fattened on pastures to meet market age within two years. But other than cattle we also have

small stocks because we are endeavouring to grow sheep and goats as well. During the year we were able to buy some improved breed of sheep and goats so that we can improve our own stocks in this country.

When it comes to crop cultivation we have grown thousands of acres in corn, soya bean, and peanuts. But here again we are not only thinking of these short – term crops, we are concentrating also on permanent crops. It is good to recognise that for this year alone some 45,000 citrus plants have been planted which in three to four years will be bearing fruits that are useful in this country, because we import a lot of orange juice from other parts of the world. Before long we will be able to have enough fruit so that the canning industry can expand with a cultivation of this kind.

Moreover we have been able to establish the cultivation of fish at Matthews Ridge and this is doing very well. This very month the first crop of fish will be reaped. We do more than that. In the hinterland in the past you find one community all by itself, completely isolated from the other communities. Work has been going on to remove this isolation and we have succeeded in connecting Matthews Ridge to Port Kaituma by road so that people can walk, ride or drive. It is a distance of thirty – five miles. Work is being done now to connect Mabaruma with Kaituma. They have already done a large extent of the road construction and this is a distance of seventy – five miles.

We are determined to connect these areas. Next year work will start on the second phase which is thirty – nine miles, already a large section has been constructed. The areas, Mabaruma, Hosoror, Wauna and Yarikita will all be linked and people going into the hinterland will be able to have miles of road on which to drive. Some day probably there will be a toll in this area as well.

How we come to what is nearer to us and that is the Black Bush Polder Scheme. We all know where it is. This is a scheme that has three drainage canals. I heard from my friend that drainage and irrigation are good. This is the mistake that the P.P.P. has been making by just shouting, “We have been able to build a new scheme here and a new scheme there. We have been able to put people here and put people there”. Then you find that these people cannot pay the rent; when you visit the place and look very carefully you begin to find out some of the reasons.

I mentioned here some time ago that if you want to keep animals in a paddock it is no use you fence it and do not put a gate. When I look at some of the schemes that were established during the regime of the PPP those schemes are like paddocks without any gates. That is what has been happening at Black Bush Polder over the years. Nature has always been very kind to us and in first few years production per acre was good. Some of the people were even deceived by this type of production and they thought there was no limitation to the returns that they would set, they paid no attention to what they were doing. They learnt nothing in the exercise; and people have moved from twenty – eight and thirty bags of paddy per acre on some of those plots to three and four. This has happened because the husbandry practices were bad; some people were washing out the best of the land. You see the ploughing going on, all the good soil is stirred up and at the same time is being drained away. There are all bad practices.

Moreover the schemes were not complete, because some of the drainage canals were not properly laid out and you find that the main drainage has to depend on gravity. This has been one of our problems and I will deal with what Government is doing to relieve this situation. This has been going on for many years. If you have to depend on gravity, you will find it cannot work well in these areas; the schemes have not been able to produce even though we have spent millions of dollars on them. I heard the hon. Member talk of the North West regions. I do not think we have spent \$2 million, whereas in the Polder we have a record of over \$20 million having been spent and yet the scheme is not complete.

Our exercise is to make sure that these schemes are completed, and so work is going on there now, giving them inter – settlement roads, putting in some of the Kokers, some of the pipes that they need to improve the drainage. There has been a cattle nuisance in the place and I repeat, the animals belong to the people who occupy the Polder and we have been able to remove some from the more dangerous areas to where the animals are not so troublesome.

We have been able to give to settlers' children, they are adults now, their own plots of land. The Polder has possibilities, no doubt. We have hope in this Polder because during our national competition in the production of our new variety of rice, Star Bonnet, it was good to note that the winner of the competition was a farmer from Black Bush Polder, and that man was very happy in receiving a new tractor as his prize for winning that competition. We have great hope that more farmers will follow good husbandry and be able to improve themselves and their production.

During the year. We have been able to put on the ground our livestock development programme, and we are happy to note that the co – operative organisation is at work in this area where we have been endeavouring to establish livestock farms. We said in this house some time ago that we were fortunate to receive a loan from the World Bank to assist the country in this great move forward. Some people were doubtful about how the scheme would go, but today, we can happily report that already we have got seven of those farms established. New agriculture is something which one can see, and so, Mr. Speaker, if you go to the Canje River, you will see the Tobiana Livestock Producers' Co – operative Society Ltd. , situated on the right bank of the River. It has an estimated cattle population of 1,200 and the acreage already leased to them is some 13,000 acres. Then there is the Abary Cattle Ranch Company, Ltd. , cattle population, 2,000, acreage, over 12,000 acres. Yuma Livestock Producers' Co – operative Society Ltd. , is also on the right bank of the Canje River. It has a cattle population of 1,800 and the acreage is some 12,000 acres. Maruni Livestock Producers' Co-operative Society, Ltd. is on the left bank of the Abary River. They say that the co-operatives are not working. They will find out when they visit these areas. The cattle population there is some 2,000 and they have 10,000 acres for the ranch.

We have the Banning Livestock Producers' Co – operative Society, Ltd., on the right bank of the Canje River, with a cattle population of 1,500 and an acreage of 15,000 acres. Then we have private company in the Rupununi, the McTurk Company. It has a cattle population of 1,500 and 100 square miles. In the Runpununi, the land is poor and so we have vast areas, at Mara on the right bank of the Berbice River is another and we also have one in the North Savannahs in the Rupununi. In the Rupununi itself we are establishing ranches at Karasabi and Aishalton. This project is now on the ground and I hope that my friends when they visit around the country will be in a position to see what is going on.

Later, I will have a word on the rice industry though there is not very much need to spend time on the rice industry. I want to say a word about processing. In the Rupununi now, the cashew nuts that were exported to Brazil in the raw state are being collected and processed at Lethem. There is already installed a processing unit and the Guyana Marketing Corporation will be buying the nuts, doing the processing, and bringing them to Georgetown with the certainty that the high price of the commodity will be a thing of the past. We have put up equipment to turn some of the waste from the abattoir into fertiliser as well as stock feed. These are things that are happening on the ground.

We move on to the East Coast where there is a cassava mill. Already, in the North West region, we have equipment to turn corn into corn meal and to help the people in the Moruka to dry their coffee as well as to make lime oil. I hope my friend will reap some benefits because it is my information that when the people receive their payment from the Guyana Marketing Corporation, they move straight to the hon. Member Mr. Eugene Stoby's shop. I am hoping that in the future he will give them some instruction – since he is a lender in the community – on how to establish thrift and credit societies, so they will not spend all their money in his shop on non – essentials. Knowing my friend, he would not mind doing this good service to his friends in the Moruks district.

In agriculture, we are not only growing the raw commodity, we are also engaged in the exercise of processing, so that the farmers can do better and better.

We have been hearing in this House about drainage and irrigation. When we look through the details of the estimates, we will now find a significant allocation for pumps, because during the years work has been going on very feverishly on this exercise. This has been recognised for a long time yet we find the situation was not being resolved.

6.30 p.m.

At Three Friends a pump has already been installed. It has been giving such good service that, notwithstanding the floods that occurred during this year, the Essequibo Coast has saved itself. In some areas there were floods similar to the floods in 1933 and 1934 and people would not have expected any production at all.

The pump at Three Friends is working; I have seen it at work. I have heard praises being sung about his pump. When other places were flooded all they had to do was to open one door of this pump and all the water went out. In some areas on the Essequibo Coast there has been an increase in the rice crop. I am certain that during the last crop farmers were able to reap no less than 400,000 bags of paddy as compared with 300,000 bags previously reaped.

As a matter of fact, at the Rice Corporation's mill at Anna Regina 228,000 bags of rice were bought during the autumn crop and that was a record there. This year they have bought 250,000 bags, in addition to which there are two milted – stage mills on the coast, one owned by Sankar and one by Bacchus. Both of these mills were over – stacked with paddy the last crop season.

We know that once drainage and irrigation are improved there must be an increase in production. This project was undertaken very carefully. Arrangements have now been worked out for the establishment of drainage pumps in areas along the coast. In the Estimates we have asked for \$2 million for the first phase.

15.12.71.

National Assembly

6.30 – 6 .40 p.m.

This is work that cannot be done in any one year because the pumps have to be specially made. Site works have to be done. We are hoping that in January or February the site works will begin along the East Coast for the first stage of the modified M.M.A. scheme. At Cabe Grove a pump is being installed and at Three Friends on the Essequibo coast one is already in operation. All of this is being done so that agriculture can proceed apace.

We have already heard of the Committees that are working to establish an institution to provide reasonable credit for agriculture. Since the Government has come into office, special attention has been paid to agriculture and, from the time that this Government came into office, special attention has been paid to agriculture, but , during the past year and this year, more emphasis has been put on the development of agriculture in this country of ours.

Now we come to rice. I do not wish to spend too much time on this because we have always been talking about rice. Our programme is working well. The rice industry is being improved all the time. Farmers who were leaving the land are now looking for lands.

Hon. Member made the point that it was mentioned in the Budget Speech that there was reduction in the quantity of rice produced. When they make this criticism I know that they understand why this happen in agriculture. Agriculture depends on weather.

When one thinks back to the year 1971 and thinks of the production that has been achieved, one ought to be a little surprised that this has been done notwithstanding the weather, because production will fluctuate depending on weather conditions. This is nothing new and that is why I have mentioned it. I wish to expose those who try to deceive people.

Let us look at the year 1960. Production was 112,000 tons. In 1962 it went up and production was 128,000 tons. In the year 1963, production was 139,000 tons but in the year 1964 – it cannot be said that we were in office then because we took office at the end of that year – production moved down to 118,000 tons. In 1965 it jumped to 163,000 tons. That is the type of

fluctuation that goes on. In some areas, notwithstanding the floods we have experienced during this year, our production did not suffer substantially.

What is happening in the rice industry? The rice industry is now on a firm footing and there is nothing to change the situation because the farmers themselves realise this. What has happened during the year, as far as the Rice Corporation is concerned? Research is being done. Support is being given to farmers by way of credit. I shall give the total amount of money used for credit. In the various areas we see facilities being provided for cleaning, drying and storage of paddy.

In the times past, this country used to lose some \$4 million in the rice industry because of inadequate storage and drying facilities. We have been able to contain that, over the years, by several ad hoc arrangements. As silos are completed, there will be the certainty that there will be proper storage and proper drying facilities in the rice industry.

The mills are now more efficient and much of the low grade rice is not now being produced. We are getting better and better grades. We have been able to hold our overseas markets better than ever before. At one time people talked about the destruction of the rice industry, but you hear them say, in these days that Government is trying to rob the farmers, that the Rice Marketing Board is making profits. I do not understand how, if you are destroying the rice industry, you could still talk at the same time about making profits.

We have been pursuing an exercise of increasing production and of putting some of the surpluses back into the industry. From 1968 we have been able to repay some of the debts that the industry owed. As a matter of fact, since 1968 we have been able to repay some \$4 million that was owned on modern processing and packaging equipment. The plant is there for hon. Member to see.

In order to supply our markets with a better quality rice we have spent \$1.2 million to purchase more equipment, tractors, combines, pumps and spraying equipment for the farmers. We have spent \$2 million for reconditioning three rice mills. These mills are Black Bush Polder. They were completely destroyed and this Government took action, through the Rice Corporation, to rehabilitate them for the service of the community. We spent \$900,000 doing that.

My friends talk about the rice industry, but I am certain that when they visit the areas they will find something quite different. We have ordered equipment for the production of rice flour, breakfast cereal and rice wine, as well as baby foods and we hope to get these installed so that people in this country may use more and more of what we produce.

On the whole, the programme for agriculture is moving forward and when the new year comes more work will be done. There is much to be done; there is no doubt that, so that the work that is done is still a far way from what we hope to achieve in the agricultural sector.

The hon. Member who were so far from the truth never attempted to give the House the truth. I want to invite my friends on the other side to visit some of these areas that I have mentioned, Kibilibiri, the North West region, Cane Grove, Black Bush Polder, Port Mourant, and see what is happening in the agricultural sector. I do not want them to take my word for it.

6.40 p.m.

I have not mentioned cane farmers because I think it is well known that through the credit facilities arranged by this Government for framers more and more people are producing framers cane in this country and more and more people are benefiting from this type of activity. More lands are now being put under cane cultivation to meet some of the shortfall from our Caribbean neighbour. Our old crop production has been increasing and in our new crops the pace is set for self – sufficiency. We hope that by 1976 we would be in the happy position to report to this House what distance we have covered in feeding ourselves. *[Applause.]*

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member Mr. Vincent Teekah.

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Speaker, having looked through very carefully and thoroughly the 1972 Budget Speeches and Estimates presented by the People's National Congress Government certain questions keep coming to my mind all the time. How accurate is the Budget presented by the Minister of Finance? Does it really reflect the expenditure to be undertaken by the Government in the year 1972.

To justify my anxiety I want to stress that after the 1971 Budget was passed the Minister of Finance came to Parliament on no less than six occasion with Supplementary Estimates to the tune of \$32,212,899.36; that was after the last Budget of \$205 million was approved. It is approximately one – sixth of the Budget which was approved. Therefore, for next year how many Financial Papers will be brought to this Parliament, and what will be the total of the Supplementary Estimates to be asked for by the Minister of Finance in anybody's guess. It means that the planning of the Budget in the past has been very poor because all the statistics point in that direction.

Turning my attention to education, I observe that in the 1972 Budget the sum of \$29.9 million has been allocated to the Ministry of Education for the year 1972. Of course, that sum contains the sum of \$5.6 million which is a loan from the World Bank and International Development Association given since January, 1969. Apart from the fact that if education is to be given a shot in the arm, this sum of necessity has to be steeply increased. I have great doubts as to the capacity or the capability of the present administrator of administrators in the Ministry of Education. I question whether those who are in control of the administration, be it the Minister or some other person, whether they are capable of tackling this great task of reorganising the educational system of this country. I note that the present Minister of Education is the third person to have held this portfolio since the PNC Government came into power. I note also that these Minister have to their credit the bringing down of the allocation to education in the Budget from 16 per cent in 1964 to 11 per cent in 1971. That is the record of the Minister of Education

15.12.71.

National Assembly

6.30 – 6.40 p.m.

under the P.N.C. Government. It is true that this year education will be given 13.2 per cent of the national Budget, but still this is far from what it was in 1964, in the colonial days. One cannot get away from the fact that the educational system in this country is now in shambles.

I was talking with the hon. Member Mr. Cheeks who himself is an educationist and he was reminding me that if there is one Ministry which has no consistent policy, it is Education; and that is very true.

First of all, I should like to draw to the attention of this House to the fact that during the life of this Parliament the Ministry of Education has not brought to this House one report. The last report on education was brought to Parliament by the then Minister of Education Mrs. Winifred Gaskin – a White Paper on the 4th January, 1968. That was the first paper on education and unfortunately the last one. This is now the conclusion of the third year of the present life of this Parliament and we have had no reports.

6.50 p.m.

We have had Reports from the Ministries of Home Affairs, Communications, Finance, many other Ministries, but not one from Education. What is the problem, what is the difficulty? It is that the Minister is afraid to expose to the Members of Parliament or to the nation the true picture in the field of education? Why no Report at all from the Ministry of Education?

I know for a fact that the Ministry has a Planning Division and that Planning Division puts out every year a digest of educational statistics. Why one of these copies cannot be made available to each Member of the House so that the people of Guyana could see what is happening in the field of education? This is a very comprehensive document. I am sure it is not to the credit of either this Minister or those Ministers who held that portfolio.

The next point I want to make is on the present education code. If Reports are brought to the Parliament people would see what is happening, suggestion could be made, everybody can subscribe to the development of education in the country. It is surprising to know that the present Education Code in use by education officers, headmasters, and teachers, is the Education Code of 1940, with a few amendments made by the P.P.P. Government on dual control of schools. Just a few in the 50's and early 60's, but basically, it is the Code of 1940 in use. Many education officer and headmaster do not know the thing. They do not have a full copy. They do not have anything to guide them. The Education Code of this country is outmoded, it is archaic, it needs to be revised along modern concepts of education because if an education officer picks it up and seeks advice, he will see that it is something that calls the Chief Education Officer, the Director of Education, and talks about the colony British Guiana.

I now turn my attention to the Capital Budget. When I look at the Capital budget and when I do some research on the portion which education has been given, and this year last year, I am rather shocked. When I also look at the performance of the Ministry of Education in this regard, I am astonished to know that has been the achievement of the Government in the field of education. I console myself by saying that probably, the present hon. Minister of Health has been removed from the Ministry of Education because the budget for education but according to the Revised Estimates, only \$2,000,054 was spent.

The real development in any aspect of the Government's programme takes place under capital works. Of the total allocated for 1971, 16.3 per cent was not spent. Only 35.7 percent of the whole Capital budget on education was spent in 1971. May I ask has the Government put that amount on order to make it appear at the beginning of the year that much has been allocated to education? Is the Government putting figures to show that high priority has been given to education? It has not been spent but brought over and when one looks at this 1972 Budget, one sees over \$4 million brought forward from last year. One sees that a lot is going to be spent. At the end of the year, \$4 million has not been spent and it goes over to the next year. Is this what the Ministry of Education has been doing all the time?

It shows clearly that all that is happening is that the Ministry of Education is barely limping along the road of educating the nation. In Guyanese vernacular, when one is very inefficient or very incompetent, you say your speed is dead slow and stop. It is therefore necessary that a critical analysis of the education system of this country be carried out. It is urgently needed so that we can identify the areas of weakness so we can resolve within ourselves to strengthen these areas. That is why I was very much concerned about the time given to me for my speech and I am thankful we have arrived at an hour.

7 p.m.

Starting, first of all with kindergarten education.

Mr. Speaker: You must not forget, hon. Member Mr. Teekah, that the Estimates will be debated later.

Mr. Teekah: I want to examine the educational system of the country. Starting with Kindergarten education, the Government's record in this field is extremely poor and kindergarten education is actually the foundation of the education of a child. Fifty years ago, many Guyanese would not have paid much attention to Kindergarten education. Fifty years ago, the masses of Guyana felt that it was important to give the child a good primary education and that at the age of five or six it must go to school. Primary education was the starting point.

We are now living in the second half of the twentieth century and any parent who understands what ought to be given to his child knows the importance that is attached to Kindergarten education, especially since the Government has raised the age for admission to the primary schools from 5 years to 5 years 9 months.

The Government has been saying that the establishment of Kindergarten education schools must be done by local authorities and the municipalities. This has been stressed on several occasions by the Minister of Education, by the Minister of Local Government and by the Prime Minister, but this policy has not caught the imagination of the local authorities and the

municipalities. How many Kindergarten schools have been set up by the local authorities or by the municipalities?

The Kindergarten education field is largely dominated by private teachers, whose only interest in that field is that it provides them with a few extra dollars. It allows the not – so – busy housewife to earn an extra dollars and, thus, without any professional training, many of these persons open Kindergarten schools. This is the position.

There are about 150 Kindergarten schools in this country. I have carried out an investigation and about 90 per cent of those people who own and teach at Kindergarten schools are not trained in Kindergarten education.

I challenge the hon. Minister of Education to name 10 local authorities and municipalities that have set up Kindergarten schools. There are over 50 Kindergarten education and the hon. Minister will not be able to name 10 that have set up Kindergarten schools. I therefore want to urge that Kindergarten education should be brought within the national educational system. It should be brought within the national educational framework and more attention should be focused on this very important section of education. Do not leave it to private enterprise but bring it within the national framework and have a direct hand in it. It should not be left to the local authorities and municipalities because their performance so far is very hopeless. Something urgent must be done to remedy the situation.

Going on to speak on primary education, the first point I want to make is that this is a field where the Government continues to grope hopelessly in the dark, without much success and credit.

The first point I want to make about primary school education is that the Government has failed to provide the children of Guyana between the ages 5 and 14 years with adequate places in

the primary schools. There are 206,885 children of primary school age in this country. [Mr. Joaquin: “Where did you get that figure?”] If you go into the Planning Division of the Ministry of Education you will see a sheet of cardboard on the door with that figure on it. It is the first thing that strikes you. It is also stated on that sheet of cardboard that only 72.8 per cent of the children of primary school age are in school. It means that 43,000 children are not in school. These are statistics from the Planning Division of the Ministry of Education.

Every Guyanese citizen today knows that the most acute problem in the field of primary education is overcrowding. It is a very sad state of affairs that 43,000 young people cannot find places in schools. I have tabled a question to the Minister of Education in which I state that there are 200 children now on the waiting list at Port Mourant to enter the Tain Government School. Nothing can be done. I have asked a question on this and no answer is forthcoming.

This is a very serious problem. May I stress another point. Although there are 163,000 pupils now in the 389 primary schools in this country, those children do not have adequate accommodation because every school in the country is seriously overcrowded. There is not a primary school that is not overcrowded. Most of them, having been built to accommodate “X” number of children now

7.10 p.m.

The Government boasts about feeding, housing and clothing the nation by 1976. We want to know what will happen to those children of primary school age by 1976? Is there any plan to conquer this problem because the Guyanese population increases by three per cent per annum. According to the statistics from the Ministry approximately 13,000 join primary schools every year. Therefore if you calculate what will be the position by 1976, taking how many will leave school and how many will enter school with the population increasing by 3 per cent, it mean that 39,000 children will not be able to find places in the primary schools of this country. Let the Minister say what plan the Government has to accommodate these 39,000 children.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want to stress the point that the Government should not say self – help will be the answer to the problem. Do not treat it in this casual manner. First of all it used to be aided self – help where Government provided certain materials and the people provided the labour, but the whole self – help programme has deteriorated to a point where the people are expected to provide everything now. I have known headmasters who have been trying for over three years to get an extension to their schools. I have just visited a number of schools. People are willing to provide the labour but the assistance from the Government is not forthcoming. We have a Minister in charge of community development and co – operatives. What is happening? Where are we going in this country? I wish the Prime Minister was present to hear these comments because as head of the Cabinet he must be aware of these things.

Overcrowding is another problem in primary schools. The most seriously affected by overcrowding are the denominational schools. I want to call on this Government, having taken into consideration the fact that the denominational schools especially most of them are in such a state of despair, with a shortage of equipment and furniture, to increase the grants or set new policy towards denominational schools. Let us know your new policy, let us hear what your plan is.

Mr. Speaker, on secondary education this is a department where the Government has failed most miserably. It is interesting to note that when the P.P.P. left Government in 1964 it had built or taken over some twenty – five secondary schools during its seven – year term of office. This is now seven years for the P.N.C., do you how many schools the P.N.C. Government has built and taken over? It has only been able to build or take over four schools. There are now only twenty – nine secondary schools. I know the Minister will say that seven multi – lateral schools will be built. The Government has now decided to change its plans, and I will have a strong word about the reduction to six, the cutting out of one from Annandale. The fact is that it has only built or taken over four. Let us see what is happening in secondary, technical, industrial or university education. When one examines this whole question one sees that there are 631,000 pupils in the primary schools, in the Government and Government Aided Secondary Schools, the Technical Institutes, the Agriculture College and the Industrial Training Centres whether

Government or private, there are no more than 2,000. What has happen to the 140,000? It means that 140,000 young people will just fall out like that. Education is the basis of the development of the country's economy whether you are going to do agriculture, whether you are going into industry, commerce, teaching or what have you.

7.20 p.m.

For 140,000 young people there is absolutely no accommodation. The young people of this country will seriously indict this Government for providing no future for them. People look forward to achievements, but hopeless people are running these Ministries. One talks to some of the Ministers but they do not know what is going on.

Going over to teacher training, I want to say that it is shocking to know that of all the teachers in the primary schools, only 37.28 per cent are trained, and 62.72 per cent are untrained. It means that there is nobly one trained teacher to every 81 pupils in the primary schools. At the secondary level, only 28.9 per cent of teachers are trained, and 71.1 per cent are untrained. Are those achievements such that this Government will lift its head and say it is proud? I have the *Statistical Digest* from which I can quote. As a matter of fact, on page 52 of this Digest it is stated that in the primary schools there are 37.28 per cent of the teacher trained, 6.39 per cent qualified untrained, 19.67 per cent unqualified, 12.68 per cent pupil teachers, and the 23.98 per cent they do not know about. Most likely, these are acting teachers, interim teachers.

At the secondary level, 28.9 per cent are trained teachers, 6.5 per cent are unqualified teachers, 11.1 per cent are acting teachers, and 63.11 per cent are unqualified untrained teachers. Nut the shocking thing which I will bring to this House is the result of having unqualified teachers in the schools.

I was totally astonished when I looked at the figures yesterday, when I carried out a research concerning the success of the examinations, P.C.E, G.C.E., and teachers' examinations. I will tell you the figures. At the Preliminary Certificate Examination, I want to show you the

success of the children in this country; in 1965, 3.36 per cent. This information has been taken from the *Statistical Digest*. In 1967, passes were, 2.76 per cent; and 1968, 20.47 per cent; in 1969, 9.34 per cent; and in 1970, 10.03 per cent. What a shame Mr. Speaker and hon. Members of this House!

As for the College of Preceptors Examination, I want to quote what has been the performance of students at this examination. In 1961, passes were 35.3 per cent, 1964 – 1964 being P.P.P. days; in 1962, 36.73 per cent; in 1963, 16.11 per cent; in 1964, 29.35 per cent. Now let us start at 1965. In 1965, passes were 15.83 per cent; in 1966, 3.36 per cent; in 1967, 2.76 per cent; in 1968, 20.47 per cent; in 1969, 9.64 per cent; and in 1970, 8.9 per cent. The performance is similar because the children were all tutored by the same teachers. A national disgrace! It shows that, because of poor planning, lack of central direction in the Ministry, lack of a comprehensive teacher training programme, much was not achieved.

Going on to the G.C.E. examinations, I want to quote what has been the performance of students. At the G.C.E. examination, "O Level in arts, by arts I mean subjects like literature, history, economics and so on, the performance of students last year was 27.8 per cent passes.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, it is now half past seven, the time agreed for the adjournment. The sitting is adjourned to Thursday, 16th December, 1971, at 2 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 7.30 p.m.
