

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 6]

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA
UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

3rd Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 21st November, 1972

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**

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

Dr. The Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National
Development and Agriculture **(Absent – on leave)**

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State of Agriculture

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Works and Communications **(Absent – on leave)**

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

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information, Culture and Youth

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister without Portfolio and Leader of the House

The Hon. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Health

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

The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of State for the Public Service

The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of Co-operatives and Community Development

The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of Local Government

Appointed Ministers

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Attorney-General **(Absent)**

The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Public Affairs

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

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

The Hon. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance and Trade

Dr. the Hon. K.F.S. King,
Minister of Economic Development **(Absent)**

The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Finance
and Trade

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Information,
Culture and Youth

Mr. C.F. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and
Communications

Other Members

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. E.F. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Mr. R.J. 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

Dr. C.B. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition

Mr. RamKarran

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

(Absent)

(Absent – on leave)

Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.
Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bholu Persaud
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
Mr. L.A. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

United Force

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

(Absent – on leave)

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco

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**Leave to Members**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. Hoyte, Minister of Communications and Works, and the hon. Member Mr. M.F. Singh for today's Sitting and to the hon. Member Mr. Wilson from 19th November to 15th December, 1972.

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****DEBATE ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

Assembly resumed debate on the following Motion.

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly approves of the Government's Policy adumbrated in the President's Address for the present Session of Parliament which was made to the Assembly on Tuesday, 14th November, 1972.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member Mr. Sutton.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Speaker, we on this section of the House are appalled at the emptiness of the President's Address. My colleague the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva has described this pamphlet that contains the President's Address as “brevity of wit”. We have tried to see if there was something worthwhile in it that is why it is so short. It seems to have created a record in brevity as far as we are concerned because I have looked and compared this Address with the last seven Addresses either from the Governor-General or the President who visited this House to deliver such a Speech on previous occasions and I can find none as short as this

The President's Speech is usually expected to enunciate in reasonably broad terms the putting into force of the policies of the Government for the ensuing period, which means the Year of Our Lord 1973. We find when this Speech is analysed in detail that it is very difficult to find any direct statements as far as what the Government is going to do. We find a lot of generalities of things that are to be done, most of them have been enunciated before, and we of course must be looking for instances or statements which would particularly apply to the year 1973, the Budget for which will be laid very shortly. In the case, I think it is sufficiently important to bring to the attention of the House which are the statements here that have given us a positive undertaking or made positive statements that this or that will be done or this or that has been done.

On page 1 there is a positive statement congratulating you the Speaker in the method that you have handled the business of this House. I am not prepared to analyse this very closely. The President no doubt has good reason for congratulating you, probably the congratulations are well merited but, we in the Opposition must look at it from our point of view and we must reflect on the fact that 99.9 per cent of the requests that have been made by the Opposition to the Speaker which the Speaker could have used his discretion if he so will have been denied when in fact as against that we find that 100 per cent of the requests of the other side of the Table have been gone through without any ... As a result of which we have no doubt that you have exercised your prerogative as you should, but we must be cognizance of the fact that that prerogative has always, with the exception of one case that I know about, been exercised against the wishes of the Opposition.

With respect to the other definite statement on page 1, we find that the Minister will present in the next few days of this session the Budget Speech. That is such a handy annual, the fact that it is made in this statement surprises no one or does it give anyone any information of which they were not or should not be aware of.

We look the whole of page 2 and we can find no statement other than generality. When we turn to page 3 we find again one statement but on page 4 we find a firm statement made:

2.25 p.m.

“Committed to the building of a Co-operative Socialism and inspired by the principles of self-reliance, my Government’s energies will be devoted in a large measure in the forthcoming session to advancing the national objective of Feed, Clothing and Housing Guyana.”

In that sentence, the feeding, clothing and housing Guyana, we hope it will take place. That is not the statement I refer to. The statement I refer to as positive is, “Committed to the building of a Co-operative Socialism ...”

We continue further down on page 4, and we find the fourth statement of a definite undertaking to be done during this Session, in relation to import duty levies on agricultural machinery and equipment, and the establishment of an Agricultural Credit Bank, Motions will be put through the House in order to ensure that these things take place during the next Session. Those are the fourth and fifth positive statements, that is, the duty free concession on agricultural machinery and equipment and the establishment of an agricultural credit bank.

The sixth positive statement is that “My Government will also present to Parliament early in this Session legislative proposals for the institution of a Mortgage Finance Bank.” That is a positive statement, “These, if approved, ...” which, of course, is a euphemism, because the Government has a majority and the question of approving a matter laid on the Table is purely academic,” will facilitate the programme of Housing ourselves by 1976.”

The seventh positive statement is at the bottom of the same page 4, “My Government remains committed to the fulfilment of this great national undertaking”, meaning the linking of

our coastal plain with our borders to the south by means of the self-help development road. That is the seventh positive statement. The last and final statement which may be interpreted as positive is that in the first paragraph on the final page, "This House will recall that in March of this year the Report of the Working Hours Committee was tabled. With a view to rationalizing our national working hours, ensuring maximum productivity and providing for community efforts, my Government will seek Parliament's approval of a new scheme of national working hours."

As I said before, the President's speech is regarded as a most important enunciation of policy, which the whole nation hangs on, and what does one really expect to get from this Speech? What one expects to get is at least some indication of what the Government intends to do in the next year in order to try, or what the Government is going to do which will have some effect on the burning questions of the day. Let us try and see what the burning questions of the day are. What the normal citizens of Guyana are asking themselves, what is the Government going to do next year? What answer will one get? I submit that everybody accepted a firm pronouncement of what measures Government will either take or positively improve upon during the coming year with the direct intention of minimizing unemployment which is an open question, but the majority of citizens believe it is increasing instead of decreasing. We find no positive statement other than the usual generalities which were enunciated more than several years ago, including the last Budget speech on this matter.

The next question that is on everybody's lips is this one of development. The Government has announced that it will do its best in order to control such a proportion of the commanding heights of the economy that it will be able to direct major effort in the field of development. Obviously, if we hear nothing on unemployment, we would like to hear what positive measures are to be taken, rather than measures which are described in general terms, no firm commitment and what we have budgeted for to be done in 1973, so that some hope can be held out in this grievous situation where so many people are unemployed. We find no positive

statement other than what we know already, other than vague generalities of what will actually be done as far as development is concerned.

Similarly, bearing on this question of unemployment, we expect that development comes on, unemployment will be minimized, mitigated and let us hope to a degree that is really meaningful. We hope the Government will tell us something. It may not be under development but they must tell us something, "Well, we are going to make a real thrust in industrialization and this is what will be done in 1973. We look and look, and we can find, other than the eight statements which have already been read out, no positive statement of what will be done for industrialization. We can find no major hope of how the unemployment situation will be contained or minimized.

Coming down to the man in the street, the housewife, what is their greatest care today? Their care is the cost of living. We had hoped that the Government would have caused to be initiated by the President some measure which was directly aimed at the cost of living. We are told that the cost of living has spiraled due to no fault of our own, world conditions over which we have no control, etc., but we are making a thrust into agriculture, we are making ourselves self-sufficient, and we imply by that that this cost of living will be contained and reduced when this never never ending or beginning of the thrust into agriculture will show some signs of improving the every-day conditions as far as people are concerned. It is very well to say these are the plans that the Government is making for improvement of the situation next month, next year, year after next, but the man who is getting the squeeze wants to know: what are you doing to help me now?

Terrific thrust in agriculture. We find we are paying a controlled price at the Guyana Marketing Corporation of 18 cents per pound for plantain, when before this thrust in agriculture came, we were paying 6, 7, and 8 cents. We can continue like that for a long time. If we are to judge his Government on what it says it will do, the object that it hopes to achieve, it will get 100 percent full marks. The aims and objects of the Government as an undeveloped country must be

pursued by any Government that hopes to help the people, that is, stop its dependence on foreign goods, develop local goods, but there must be a transition period where it moves from one to the other. The Government cannot take away the people's food wholly or to such an extent that it causes the substitute to cost them so much more, when we have not had an official increase in the daily wage for so many years. The only official minimum wage I am aware of is \$4 a day, which came in several years ago. Everything is moving. We are asked to tighten our belts and we look around to find who is making the sacrifice. The small man who is being made a real man! But while the situation continues, the small man is suddenly going to wake up one day and find that all that is being done for him is that he is being made, and steps are being taken to ensure that he remains really small.

2.35 p.m.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we in this House must be concerned with measures which are aimed and so designed to take care of people in the future and improve conditions in the future because people are human beings, because people have to live in the words of my colleague who spoke yesterday "while the grass is growing the horse is starving", therefore, if you do not put grass you have to provide something to take the place of the grass until the grass grows. But to tell me, "Boy, try walk meet Meadow Bank," and I will get a meal then, and I fall down in Georgetown because I was too hungry; I cannot get up to meet Meadow Bank. How am I going to meet Meadow Bank? You have to help me to get there in order to get the meal.

All the measures are well taken and properly designed, but where this Government has fallen down and leading the people by their noses on a string is accomplishment, what is being done, not what we plan to do. In the meantime what is being done? How are the people being helped? And all the people, almost without exception, will tell you those that are helped is a fraction so small that you need a microscope to see it. Those that have not been helped the number has been increasing every day. They are crying out but, like the famous cries in the wilderness nobody is listening, nobody wants to listen, because they ask themselves: Are we to

conclude this is a problem that could only be solved in the future and it will only be solved when none of us are present in order to reap some of the benefits of all these grandiose plans? We want to get beyond the point where we talk about what we will get in the future. We want to get something today. It is true we have to plan for the living of our children but you cannot plan for your children dead, you have to plan for them alive, therefore, you want some benefit too.

Mr. Speaker, I said a moment ago this question of industrialization, development, all hinges on the question of what is being done to contain if not minimize unemployment. We can see nothing that is being done that has not been there already. Maybe there is a slight improvement here and there. But the hon. Minister of Education will tell you how many young people come on the employment market every year. Are we finding jobs to keep them employed and when these 10,000 – odd people come on the market every year, are the small improvement enough, at least, to contain them and your situation is not going up?

There is another vital question that everybody wants to hear something about and what are we doing about it. It is the consensus of opinion that one of our greatest needs today is national unity. National unity is so important. I could only judge by what I see that the Government decides to treat it in one sentence of eleven words in the last sentence on this vital pronouncement of the Government's policy as what will be done next year. I quote from the *President's Address*:

“... National Unity will remain a priority in all my Government's effort.”

One of those general statements that we have been hearing for a long time, but various people from various points of view want to know what is being done positively. Something that springs to your mind straight away, sir, is that in order to avoid any one section of the community to accuse the Government of partiality for, or lack of partiality for any section of the community – it would appear that in view of the fact that it is well known that various diseases may need drastic cures, we pay lip service to partiality, people accuse us of racialism, whatever race you

subscribe to or are supposed to subscribe to and one side is blaming the other, the other side is blaming the other.

My hon. Friend yesterday spoke about imbalance. He produced figures which tended to show a degree of imbalance despite the fact that a Commission on this subject is still a very taxed question with a certain section of this community. We remember a governor, whether he was noted for his work or not, left a statement in this country that so many of us quote sometimes without knowing where it came from, that is, it is not enough to do justice but justice must appear to be done.

We, like Great Britain a thousand years before us, when they were invaded by the Normans and Saxons it took them five hundred years: before you forgot, they were invaded in 1066, and it was not until the sixteenth century that you stopped hearing about the Normans and the Saxons. It was not until the 16th century that people got justice in Court. *[Interruption]* I speak to people who know what I am talking about. Unfortunately there are so many who know nothing about it.

Anyway sir, we know those are now psychological things taking place. They do not take place every day, but you try because there are so many examples in our history before us to do what we can to hurry the process and whether you are in fact trying to hurry the process but getting nowhere, perhaps, it may be desirable to let justice appear to be done. In other words, on the question of application for jobs to the various Commissions of employment it may be better for applicants in the first instance to be identified by numbers. Their qualifications will be examined without you having the slightest idea of who they are or from where they came. All you would have to know is that they are Guyanese and they qualify for such employment. Then, of course, we know they will have an oral interview at some time. But they have to be screened before they get to that stage. If something of that nature is thought of then there would be less talk of partiality. We know several people have been embarrassed so often because whether we

like it or not sociological changes are taking place which we cannot control and will never be able to control.

Certain people hear names, because they are of Portuguese origin they have got themselves seriously embarrassed, by assuming this person in fact was of direct Portuguese descent, clearly definable and when they try to say well let us send for Tom Jones either to get a job as a Portuguese or not to get a job he is a Portuguese, Tom Jones does not look like a Portuguese at all. This has happened over and over again.

My hon. Friend the Prime Minister is here; I will leave the thought with him, because as I said before, I have no doubt that he himself would be one who is primarily interested in these factors of racialism, these factors of people having chips on their shoulders.

2.45 p.m.

We also find that in spite, as I said before, of the Government say in the last sentence of this speech that “national unity will remain a priority in all my Government’s efforts”, unfortunately, the average citizen, there is no factor, no major sign, where this policy of Government will always be judged by the unfortunately racial descent or background of the person who is exercising judgement, therefore the Government should try to do something to make such a conclusion at first glance impossible.

Another matter the Government has made, and rightly so, a lot of publicity on; in order to prove to the outside world that the character of the people in Guyana was no less when they are faced by a challenge, they will rise to it no less slowly than the people in any part of the world, our thrust in the interior by means of the interior road has been highly publicized inside and outside Guyana. It is a well-known principle that when you ask people to give you voluntary help, when you ask them to give you help by means of money or goods in kind which cost money, it is always desirable if not legally necessary at some time or other, to let them see in

writing, their money on one side of the paper, the cost spending on the other side, and for them to see how their money has been spent.

I feel the Government will marshal and line up behind it so may doubtful Thomases in this exercise, if it can bring itself to publish a White Paper on the self-help road in the interior showing how much it has cost so far, showing how much it may cost if it continues to receive the same degree of self-help, and finally, how did the cost compare by means of self-help as against if this road was done by contract in the usual manner. That would be very interesting and I am sure if that is done a lot of people who questioned the *bona fides* of the Government in these areas will be forced to be satisfied because they see the figures in front of them. Nobody is saying it cost a penny, it may cost millions, but let them know what the Government is doing and then say: if you had the opportunity, perhaps you will do it differently, but this is our method, this is what has been done with your money, this is what has been done with your help. That sir, will let the people see, whether they agree or do not agree with the Government's method of handling the situation, at least it will be an honest and straightforward attempt by the Government to solve a difficult problem.

Another question that is on our lips every day is the carnage on the roads, the deaths that are taking place every day. What has been done in order to satisfy the public, the John Citizen of Guyana, that more than concerned thought is being given to this question. We have taken the usual precautions taken in more developed countries to see that this does not take place. We put up road blocks, we embarrass the man who is right to try to catch the man who is wrong. I am afraid there cannot be much means of complaint further and we find that that is still not paying dividends. Instead of decreasing, the carnage is increasing. We must ask ourselves what can we do? Again, serious diseases need drastic cures and I leave it with the Government.

There is a matter where every citizen should be involved, as a matter of fact has to be involved and should be proud of being involved, and I leave the thought with the Government that the time has come when you cannot depend on people taking care of themselves. For

overloading a taxi, not only the driver must be charged but every passenger who permitted it, because a car cannot be overloaded except you are there. I mention this point because a couple of days ago, I found I could not drive two vehicles and it was necessary for me to bring a vehicle which got into difficulties from in the area of Timehri. I therefore decided to take a taxi to Timehri, in order to drive the vehicle down. I made the necessary preparations and what do I find? As soon as the Ruimveldt Police Station is passed, I am packed with passengers on my head, no matter that I paid my full fare to get up there. “Why you open your mouth? You don’t want me travel to.” Okay, I said nothing more, and before I got to Timehri that vehicle was overloaded about six times, all with the agreement and connivance of the passengers. What frightened me in one case, because the back seat was filled, two fat people were put to sit in the front seat and the man could hardly get to change his gear. If they knew that if they were caught not only the driver would pay \$500 but each and every one of them would pay \$500 too, they would think twice before. I spoke about it and all I got was cursing.

I have taken the opportunity before coming here to mention this to a police officer and he said: we can do nothing about it until the law is changed. I would seriously leave that thought with the Government. In motor offences, passengers who aid and abet by their silence or lack of objection, ought to be charged as well as the driver. I see in my opinion, private or otherwise, that it may be necessary to fix a limit to private cars as well, because a couple of days ago, I saw a headline that the private cars are now becoming just as bad and dangerous on the roads as the taxis, and the Government has a duty to the people and in this carnage should take such measures that are fit.

Finally the point that is also on every citizen’s lips: What is being done positively in order to contain this increase in crime? A few weeks ago, the police in their efforts to contain crime, had to shoot what has turned out to be a teen-aged criminal. There was a terrific uproar, the police was not supported, but I should like to say publicly, speaking for myself, that the police must be supported in all their laudable efforts to stop this crime and it is better that they be too harsh than they be too slack. But they must not make fish of one and fowl of the other,

because I am going to appear in court a few days from now because I refused to accept the opportunity to pay for a ticket when a policeman came and told me: "I was told to charge you, sir." The poor fellow has not got the experience to know and to interpret an international road sign. The signs were there in front of him, I told him, "You see where I was parked, you see where those signs are. I drew this to the attention of the police before and they withdrew their charge." He said, "I was told to come and charge you." This matter will be properly aired in the proper forum and this tomfoolery must stop, not make fish of some people and fowl of the other.

I have spent some time on the desirability of the government putting down some broad guidelines, what would be done in the period under review, in 1973, in order to help in the particular areas which I have described. That is as far as the satisfaction of John citizen is concerned, but as far as we in the House are concerned, whose job it is to examine these situations in detail, it was very regrettable when the President was made to say words to the effect that the policy will be seen and it will be carried out as would appear when the Budget is laid in another few weeks. We are not asking the President to tell us in detail, but there must be something that you would underline. We were talking about this for several years but this is what we will do now.

Having mentioned eight serious points in which the Government did make a positive statement, as these matters will be tackled in 1973, I will now revert to the discussion of these actual points.

2.55 p.m.

Now, sir, the second point is a statement that the Budget will be laid. We know that. It is no use discussing that. Why tell us anyway. The third statement of fact is: "We are committed to the building of Co-operative Socialism." That is nothing new. The Government told us clearly without any doubt at all that it was committed to co-operative socialism. As a result of this commitment it will pursue its objective of feeding, clothing and housing the nation. We

have heard that already. What we wanted to see is a short summary of the actual things that would be done in 1973 in order to show that the thrust in this area is well on its way to what it is set out to do.

The fourth statement of fact deals with agriculture. On page 4 of the President's Address it is stated:

“... The Session ahead will see an intensification of our national efforts for the improved efficiency and productivity in existing agricultural undertakings and the expansion of the agricultural sector by the introduction of new crops and in new areas.

In this context this House will be asked very shortly to approve of legislation to remove import duty levies on agricultural machinery and equipment, and that for the establishment of an Agricultural Credit Bank.”

We have heard; we know if we are to make any progress in the agricultural thrust we cannot do so without the necessary assistance. But how can it be done when a man trying to plant in Mabaruma or Bonasika when he goes for a loan he is asked if he has a property in Georgetown. We also know that drainage and irrigation is a major and vital concession. Are we to presume that Ministers of the Government have made some study of the situation?

But in view of the fact that the Government has made a positive statement and we know if we are to judge what some people have read in the press about actual arrangements and commitments as far as the Agricultural Bank is concerned, we would have expected the Government to give us, not a passing mention of what it will do in agriculture, but some definite pronouncement of what it is doing towards solving the problems of drainage and irrigation without which agriculture will fail. It is very possible that these matters have been given thought but in an important document like this, having mentioned the Agricultural Bank, the next thing one is going to ask who knows about agriculture is: Are they going to advance money from the Agricultural Bank for the purpose of drainage and irrigation? My good friend from Pomeroun knows that within the last couple of weeks since the rains started to fall people who have spent

money to keep themselves going again, he knows that their lands have been flooded again. When my good friend started to talk about this yesterday he gave it passing mention without bringing out the facts. He knows and the Government must know that because of the peculiar system which has been –

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Sutton, are you going to be very much longer? Because you have had forty-three minutes already.

Mr. Sutton: Thank you very much sir, if I can get ten minutes more I will be obliged.

Another situation which I should like to bring to the attention of the House is that persons are being fined in the courts for selling items above the selling price.

3.05 p.m.

They are being charged very heavily for not putting tags on goods but at the distribution centres of the Guyana Marketing Corporation, I drew it to their attention: “you are not doing the right thing”, and they had a tag put on the goods without stating the weight. In other words, they make it up in parcels, a pound and a half, three-quarter pound, or what you will, and put 35 cents as the value. The buyer has no means of checking whether the price is 35 cents per pound, and if this is three-quarter pound it must be at the proportion set by the Government, because when you have fractional pounds you sometimes have to pay more. The Government must lead in these things not follow and if all the merchants have to mark their goods properly, the Government should lead the way by having the Guyana Marketing Corporation do the same thing. I hope the Minister of Trade will see that the right thing is done and people do not have cause to criticize the G.M.C. unjustly.

Finally, I would like to say that we all know that example is better than precept and I close on the note, how does the Government expect to get people in positions of trust to do their jobs as they can, how does it expect to reduce these defalcations and embezzlements, because if a

Government is dishonest it will breed dishonest citizens and before it can do anything and satisfy anybody that it is taking proper measures to contain particularly its own activists, who are in important positions, from breaking the law with impunity, it first has to revise the Elections Commission; they first have to revise the electoral law and satisfy people that rigging elections in Guyana will in future be an impossibility. Until they do that there is no hope that they can insist on probity, honesty or otherwise because they are themselves dishonest.

Mr. Jagan: Development and nation building which the Government has been dreaming about will continue to remain a dream if the nation continues to be divided as it is today. There is no doubt that a large majority of people in this country feel, and rightly so, that they are discriminated against by this Government and unless the Government does something, the hope and dream that the Government has about nation building will continue to be a dream. No amount of election winning will contribute to moulding the nation together to enable development of the country. We have seen that in 1968, elections, and that is history now, by rigging. Has it brought the nation together? So the fact of winning an election would not help to bring to reality this dream that the Government has.

No doubt, the hon. Prime Minister has realized that people would not work for the benefit of the country unless they are satisfied that they are not discriminated against, unless they are satisfied that they have their fair due in the country, and that is why, no doubt, during March last year, the Prime Minister in this House had given an undertaking to remedy a number of matters. Sad to say, up to today nothing has been done. Apparently, Ministers and members of the Government do not feel that undertaking given in this House should be fulfilled. Your Honour one can remember a number of undertakings which were given by the Prime Minister and which would start to create the nation building that the Government so much desires.

One remembers that the Prime Minister had promised that the Elections Commission would be reconstituted so that the Commission would really have something to do. When one looks at the Estimated the Revised Estimates for 1971 and the Estimates before that, one will see that the Chairman is being paid \$1,000 and a member of the P.N.C., who is a representative of the P.N.C. on the Commission, is paid \$250, a total of \$15,000 per year and then the expenses

for the Commission during 1971, another \$5,000 - \$20,000. I have no doubt that there has not been a meeting of the Elections Commission since 1970. What is the Elections Commission doing? Why should the Government be wasting \$20,000 a year on the Elections Commission? Your Honour, if the Government wants to give jobs to the two members of the Elections Commission, I am sure it could find some jobs where these two officials could utilize their time more beneficially. I am sure that it is a great embarrassment to the Chairman and the member of the Elections Commission to be there drawing money without having to do anything.

Why shouldn't the Government, as the hon. Prime Minister had stated since March last year, bring legislation to this House to have the Commission reconstituted to have greater power so that my hon. Friend the Minister of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Home Affairs would not have so much work in respect of elections, because the whole spirit, if not the letter of the Constitution, intended that the running of the elections should be conducted by the Elections Commission. The registration, the revision of the voters' list, the appointment of persons to conduct the elections, these are all matters which should fall under the ambit of the Elections Commission.

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But instead of that we have the Ministry of Home Affairs which has usurped the powers of the Elections Commission, and that is why the Commission is now impotent, it is not functioning.

What is the use the Government trying to win an election? No doubt the Government has already set in motion machinery to rig the next elections. There are many persons high in the P.N.C. who are paid by the tax-payers of this country so that they could carry out electioneering all over the country and collecting proxies. There are people sitting in this House who are receiving money from the State and who are not carrying out any duties for the State, but duties for the party. A former Minister said there is no difference between the Government and the party. [**An Hon. Member:** Who said that?"] Mr. McDavid did.

It is no use the Government trying to win an election by rigging. Would that bring the people together? Would that help this nation building that this Government wishes? It, in fact, divided the people further. Many people are forced and are afraid of losing their jobs; many pensioners are forced to give proxies. These are people with whom one could sympathise. But what good is it to a Government by winning elections when the country itself is divided. The Government has won elections in 1964 and 1968. The Government, as I said has set in motion already to win the next elections, but would this benefit the country? Would this bring the nation together as the government wishes, as the Prime Minister himself no doubt wishes?

The Government have rigged the elections, having got into power could have then started to use the power so as to build and bring the nation together. But instead of that we have seen that the people are divided and they will continue to be divided regardless of whether the Government wins the next elections or not. The people would only have confidence in the Government if they know that there is free and fair elections. If the people want a change of Government unless they could have free and fair elections they would be denied this right of changing the Government. Therefore, there would be some antagonism against that Government. They would not give this co-operation that is needed in Guyana. Therefore, what the People Progressive Party has demanded, free and fair elections, could also help in our view to bring the people together. Because we all know, the Government itself must know that unless the nation is united development will only continue to be a dream. If the large section of the people continues to move in another way, we will get no where. There are many things that the Government could do to bring the people together, to let the people feel that the Government is working for the nation as a whole. *[Interruption by the Minister of Home Affairs.]*

My friend the Minister of Home Affairs is talking about a one-party state. Your Honour, does it matter really if, in substance, we have a one-party state? Is it not in theory what is happening today? If the next election as the last one is rigged by people collecting proxies and overseas vote, the Government could decide how many seats it wants. The Government would give some to the P.P.P. and some to the United Force so that there can be the façade abroad that

there is parliamentary democracy in Guyana. But is there any real difference between that and a one-party state in substance?

You allow the Opposition maybe to come here and make speeches but would not accept any suggestions they make, because you feel that having gained power by fraud you could continue to hold power that way and win again. But would that bring the nation together? People tend to move further apart when they see these things. *[Interruption]* Some of these people who whisper around are the same people who would like the nation to be divided. *[Interruption]* I am sure my learned and hon. Friend the Prime Minister must have experienced some difficulty when he was in the Opposition, when he himself was at that time trying to have the nation united he also no doubt found difficulty dealing with persons who may have been able to assist. [**The Prime Minister:** “You have not completed the thought. You must have a more logical mind.”] My hon. and learned Friend knows what I am speaking about. I am sure he is experiencing the same difficulty – [**The Prime Minister:** “Difficulty with whom?”] – with some of the others my hon. and learned Friend wanted to have talks with so as to have the nation united. [**The Prime Minister:** “Who are the others? Go on!”] *[Interruption]* When I hear whispering from hon. Members on the back Benches I ignore them, because they do not matter really. [**The Prime Minister:** “They are like you.”] *[Laughter]* They do not matter in respect of what I am speaking about, the Government needs them. What matters really is the unity of the nation.

Your Honour, the Prime Minister sat in that same chair last year and gave us a number of undertakings which would have brought the nation together almost, if not wholly. What has been done by the Government? All those undertakings have been forgotten by the Prime Minister it would seem because nothing has been done so far. I am sure he knows if some of those things can be implemented the people themselves would be able to come together.

3.25 p.m.

The hon. Minister of Public Affairs talks about example. I am sure he was here in the House. He must have heard the undertaking given by the Prime Minister. Why should I waste

the time of this honourable House by giving the eighteen or nineteen undertakings that were given by the Prime Minister? I would appeal to the Government not to try to use the State's money to have people going around collecting proxies. It is a waste of energy, a waste of money. It is a waste of time. What good will it do to the country? Winning an election by fraud will not bring the nation together. It would tend to divide the people further. I know that hon. Member does not like to hear these things. They are true.

In the speech by the President, there is reference also to the amendment of the National Insurance Scheme. This scheme in my view is a revenue-collecting scheme but the hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security and many other Government Ministers had given us and the nation the undertaking, that the workers would not derive less benefit than they had previously derived under the Old Ordinance. I have spent almost two afternoons with the Minister and members of the N.I.S. Board pointing out a number of provisions in the Act which needed amendment so as to bring it in line to what the provisions were before and that some amendments should be made. In my own experience dealing with the N.I.S., on a number of matters I have found there had been undue delay in settling claims in the hearing of appeals and so on. In order that I am not accused of just attacking the Board for the sake of attacking, I would refer to just a few of the matters I have brought to their attention.

In one case a widow was receiving benefit as a result of her husband's death. The benefit was paid to her in respect of herself and her children. As soon as the widow died, the benefit which then should have been paid to the children was automatically discontinued. After a number of telephone conversations, I wrote to the Board and the reply I received was that:

“Our inspectors are at present investigating these two matters and you will be informed of the decision taken as soon as investigations are completed.”

Your Honour, they have already taken a decision in discontinuing the benefit which should have been paid. I have written asking them why it was discontinued. But they have replied to me saying that I would be informed when a decision is taken. If no decision has been taken, why should the benefit be discontinued?

The Chairman of the N.I.S. Board, Mr. Donald Robinson, on a number of occasions in the newspapers lately, has said that the way the Ordinance is worded, and also the Regulations, his hands are tied and many people are not receiving benefits which he himself feels they should receive. I am sure that the hon. Minister must have seen, at least twice in the newspapers, the chairman of the tribunal referring to it in respect of sick benefits. The Ordinance is so worded, or the Regulations, that if a person is sick today and is claiming benefit, he would not be entitled to that benefit unless he was employed yesterday and he was on a job yesterday. But we have seen in many cases where people are not employed every day, as on the sugar estates where they may be employed only two or three times per week, that they are not being paid because they were not employed on the day immediately before the day when they became ill. In shipping, for instance, they are not employed every day and, therefore, one may find a person is employed say Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in one week, and on Friday he may be ill. Since he was not working on Thursday, he would not be entitled to any benefit.

There is a large number of appeals still pending. I remember when the Act was being debated, I had raised the question of the reputed wife, who had been living for years with the person, and who on his death under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, was entitled to benefit together with the children. I am sure the hon. Minister will remember that, and rightly so, that the Government had said that this practice should continue as it was in the Ordinance. But we have found on a number of occasions that the people administering the scheme are not paying benefits to the reputed wife and the children.

I have in mind a matter where, and one will have to draw an unfavourable conclusion which should not have been drawn, a person died leaving a reputed wife and children and his father. The father went and reported to the Board that his son had died leaving the reputed wife and his children and she should be paid, but the Board in its wisdom decided that the prior claim was that of the father because, according to its interpretation, it says the reputed wife is not entitled to it. One sees under the scheme, the Regulations under the Act, that reputed wife or widow is first, and next, the children, then parent, brother, sister. Even if the Board did not want to pay the reputed wife, it would have had to pay benefit to the children before it went to the

father, and although I had written to the Board explaining my interpretation of the Act, and the father himself went and said that in his view the wife and children should be paid, the Board disallowed the claim and advised them to appeal. In 1970, on the 12th December, we filed a notice of appeal on that matter and up to today we have not heard a thing about it.

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If the Board felt that it had made a wrong decision it could have rectified it easily, if it feels that it is right they should have the appeals brought up to be determined because since December 1970 an appeal should be heard long ago.

Apart from that, at the meeting when we sat until 5 o'clock one afternoon it was agreed that a copy of every medical certificate dealing with the person's injury must be given to the worker because unless he has a copy of the medical certificate he would be unable to take advice to decide whether he should appeal or whether he should accept the benefit of the medical referee or medical board. Although the hon. Minister has told the Board this in my presence we have seen that this has been disregarded.

Only a few months ago two persons came to me because they wanted advice as to whether they should appeal. The first thing I asked was where is the medical certificate to decide whether there is ground for appeal or not. To my surprise they told me that they were given a certificate from the doctor who first examined them, then they were sent to a medical referee who examined them and was not given that medical certificate. The person was sent to the Medical Board and he was not given the report of the Medical Board either.

I wrote the Director of the Scheme and pointed out to him that at this meeting with the Minister of Labour it was agreed that a copy of each medical report should be handed to the worker. I think the hon. Minister said two copies should be given to the person to receive benefits, bonus and so on, so that the estate would know that during the period of the person's absence he may have been ill.

I wrote the Director of the Scheme and pointed out to him that at this meeting with the Minister of Labour it was agreed that a copy of each medical report should be handed to the worker. I think the hon. Minister said two copies should be given to the person so that one copy could be sent to the estate to enable the person to receive benefits, bonus and so on, so that the estate would know that during the period of the person's absence he may have been ill.

Your Honour, I have drawn to the attention of the Director that medical reports should be given. So far, it is about three months since I wrote these two letters on behalf of these two persons and I have not even received an acknowledgement of those letters. Apart from that, during last year I wrote in respect of three claims where persons died and the Board refused to pay. The Minister should look at the correspondence. I have written since early 1971, they have not even had the courtesy of sending us an acknowledgement of our letter. I am sure clients cannot afford to pay for these services. That is why one would have expected that the Scheme would be operated in such a way that there would be no need for litigation and for people to retain counsel. I hope that the hon. Minister would look into it.

I would undertake to meet again with the Minister so that the Board would see to it that the benefit that workers should receive under the National Insurance Scheme they would not be deprived of it. They should not be made to go to the office day after day and one finds that the benefits they receive may be less than the amount they spent for travelling.

Only last week one claimant had to issue a mandamus proceedings because the Board has failed to determine his claim. The whole intention, as I understood the Scheme, was to prevent people from having to spend unnecessary money in the courts. That is why I hope that the hon. Minister would look into it. People who are made to contribute who have to pay money now and receive less benefit than they used to receive before, they should not be deprived of the benefit even when they are entitled to it under the Act.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Mines and Forests

The Minister of Mines and Forests (Mr. Jack): Mr. Speaker, it would appear from hearing some of the remarks made by hon. Members on the other side of the House that all the

ills that beset this country of ours are to be attributed to the work of the Government. It would seem that under development, unemployment, the crime rate, national disunity, are all of our making. I wonder if they have sought to consider for a moment that we in Guyana in company with other Third World nations face the challenges of under-development which challenges face us as newly independent nations.

We face the problem of a lack of industrial development, of poor communications, of poor social development in keeping with other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Mr. Speaker, the Speech delivered by the President points the way in which this Government is determined to tackle these problems. I think that Members would accept and recognise that in much of what we have done we have sought the only path possible to us in our circumstances. Yesterday, we were hearing a usual tirade coming from the other side, suggestions of what we should do. But let me say that as we see it we are adopting Guyanese solutions to Guyanese problems. We do not believe that there are any ready-made solutions which we can pick up off the shelf to the problems which beset us in Guyana.

I will deal in a little while with the economic aspects of the problems which face us. But since my good friend the hon. Member Mr. Jagan spent so much time upon the history of national unity. I think it is only appropriate that I say something on this score. We believe that among the various challenges which face us in Guyana there is the challenge on national integration. Here, one again let me point out, we face a challenge which is faced by other countries of the world. We, in keeping with other plural societies, must look for solutions to the problems of a plural society which problems are not of our own making. We do not believe that there is one set of people good and one set of people bad, that there are one set of perfect people and another set imperfect.

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What we do recognize is that in every country in the world where there are plural societies, there are the problems of adjustment, and that with particular regard to the countries which have

received Independence since the end of the last war, these problems loom large in the whole area of nation building and economic and social development.

If one were to glance throughout the world, one would see that in East Africa there are problems of the plural society, in Asia, in Malaysia, in Ceylon, in West Africa and in the West Indies. Even in places such as Ireland, Canada and Belgium, where there is the identity of persons on linguistic, ethnic, or religious lines, the problems of social and national integration take up a large part of governmental time and I think it is only fair that members who consider the problems of Guyana do so not in isolation from the rest of the world, but do so with an understanding that what we are all looking towards is a solution to a problem and not the condemnation of one set of people or the praising necessarily of another set of people.

There are solutions which one can use, which this Government would not necessarily approve of. We in Guyana look to the building of a nation, but let me say here and now, that this is a two-way business. It is not a case, as my friend yesterday was speaking, of trotting out a whole set of names of persons who, he claims, were discriminated against. What was particularly saddening about that exercise was that the hon. Member, a member of a party claiming to be a national party, could only have seen hardship, discrimination, deprivation, in terms of one set of people. Let me say here and now, that no one who is familiar with the history of this country can close his eyes to the hardships and to the discrimination which all of us have suffered. I say that I include the people that my learned friend on the other side was talking about. They have suffered. Others have suffered.

What we need to do is to recognize that all the citizens of Guyana are valuable citizens and that we are faced with problems of adjustment, problems of identity, problems of cohesion, which need the combined effort of all of us. I believe that we face the challenge of economic development and that we will overcome this challenge. I think we face the challenge of social development and, I think, in a large measure, we can overcome these. In both cases, however, time will be an important factor. But more important than the economic challenge, I think that the greatest challenge that faces our country and therefore the prospect of the greatest success in our country, deals with the question of national unity. I believe, further, that it is not a success

that can be achieved by any one set of people alone but only by all of us acting together for the common good.

In this regard, I think that it would be well for all of us to recognize that what is needed here is a close examination of what are the issues and what are the problems. Unfortunately, some people seem to believe that all of the problems are to be found in the nature of the Constitution and in the nature of the election, and that once the election went a particular way, like magic, all of the problems of Guyana will be solved. I would hasten to remind my good friend, that when they were in office, they are faced with similar problems, and that they came up with no solution whatever.

Whatever may be the criticism leveled against this Government, I think one must accept that today, in 1972, we are nearer together than we were in 1964. I think this is a self-evident fact and something which I believe has caused my friends on the other side no small amount of disquiet. I believe that the whole of their exercise consists in keeping this country divided, hoping for what they believe is an automatic majority, and that wherever this Government takes action likely to lessen the tension, which they feel is necessary for their own survival, they suffer an increase in apprehension.

Let me say this, we do not claim that we have found any quick solution to the problem but let me ask my friends who would burden us with their criticisms, which is this good country in the world that they would point to, where a plural society in a matter of six years or ten years has solved all of the problems and are on a happy road to integration? Where in the world will they look, in Asia, in Africa, in South America, even in Europe, can they point to a single country in which they could say: here is an example, the problem of ethnic cohesion has been solved, this is the path you must follow.

I contend that what we need in this country is to give up posturing, to let us recognize, as I say, that the problem is a problem handed to us by people whom we did not control. This is the problem with the short-sighted. He would have it that the problems of this country were created in 1953. It is a pity that people who assayed to lead others should be so short-sighted on a matter

of such great importance, and I shudder to think what would be the nature of the solution which he would suggest, if that is the extent of his knowledge of this problem. The year 1953 is but a year. Were the problems of India created in 1953? Were the problems of East Africa created in 1956? Were the problems in Trinidad created in 1953? Were the problems in Ceylon created in 1953? I say no. These are problems created at a time when imperialism broke up old societies and created new ones, when imperialism kept various groups of people at each other's throats, and when they sought the old principle of divide and rule.

If we accept that this is true then honestly we can look at the problem of racial integration, national unity, etc., in the same dispassionate manner as we would look at the problem of economic development. If we are to assure, as some of us tend to do, that there is some special body of bad people oppressing another body of good people, then I confess that I doubt whether we will get anywhere. So, I would trust that in the coming months, the efforts which this Government will be making to promote and to accelerate national integration will receive at least an intelligent understanding, by those on the other side. I do not ask at this stage for support. All I ask for at this stage is an understanding that there is a problem, and that we recognize a problem and that we are seeking means of solving that problem, but that the problem is not one of good and bad, it is a problem of adjustment at a national level.

3.55 p.m.

Now, Mr. Speaker, as I was mentioning earlier, we have responded to certain challenges of under development by taking steps to ensure control of our national economy. There are some who would like us to rob Alladin's lamp and change Guyana overnight. We do not propose to do this. There are some who believe that merely by making a change-over from one side of the fence to the other side of the fence that all things would be set right. But let me point out to them that in the particular country which is usually touted as the example which we should follow and which has received massive foreign aid, the condition of the people has not improved to the extent which one would have hoped. I do not seek here to criticize anybody.

It is a fact that very valuable re-deployment of the national wealth has taken place; I do not question or challenge this. It is a fact that a lot of good has been done. What I am saying is that the pace of development as such – and it may very well be that this has been due to other external forces beyond the control of that particular country, but it is a fact that the pace of economic development has not kept up with other parts of the world. This cannot be challenged. It may very well be due to the blockade that was imposed; it may very well be due to the hostility of certain nations, but the fact is that the standard of living has not increased as we thought it would have been increased ten years ago.

We set out to feed, clothe and house ourselves. By this we propose to restructure our society so that necessary development would go into these three important sectors. We intend to develop the industry which would house ourselves. We intend to develop the industry which would feed us, and clothe us. Apart from this, however, we have recognized how important the marketing of our produce. Later this year we propose to bring to this House a Bill to establish a timber marketing board so that Guyana's timbers can be marketed with the full weight and support of the Government behind it.

We have always been conscious of the inhibition which this country's development has suffered by our lack of proper shipping facilities. It is well known that the Bar at the mouth of our River has prevented large ships from coming in. With a view to changing this situation we have embarked upon a project of building an off-shore facility to accommodate our bulk product and also to investigate the Essequibo for the purpose of having a deep water harbour. I would trust that that, at least, in this we would have the support of Members on the other side. When this is done Guyana will have overcome the disadvantage of a Bar and will be able to transport large volumes of produce out of Guyana in ships at a more economic rate.

We have intended also to accelerate our agriculture and shortly we will be going into cotton production. Years ago, we used to produce cotton in this country; then we turned over to producing sugar. We told people that we were going to produce cotton once again; they laughed like my friend on the opposite side and other doubting Thomases, and they said it cannot be done. I sometimes wonder when I hear some nationalists speak how much they echo what the

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imperialists say. It was not a person from Guyana who first told us it could not be done but the second person who is about to tell us it cannot be done is our friend across the table. However, we shall confound them, we will grow cotton in Guyana and we shall fulfill that order whenever it is given.

Mr. Speaker: Are you going on to another point? It is 4 o'clock now and perhaps it is a good time to take the suspension.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On resumption –

Mr. Speaker: At the suspension the hon. Minister of Mines and Forests (Mr. Jack) was speaking, he may proceed.

Mr. Jack: Mr. Speaker, it has become a ritual for some hon. Members irrespective of what Motion, Bill or subject they speak on to discuss elections and to moan about the state of the Elections Commission. It would appear that if they have to discuss health, sanitation electricity, youth or what have you, they manage to see in this an opportunity to talk about elections. I wonder if any thought has been given to the constitutional position in this country and whether those same people who have expressed admiration for certain other countries which countries do not have the peculiar Westminster model which we follow in Guyana, whether those persons have given any thought to an examination of our entire constitutional position to see whether they can come up with any positive suggestion for a change or for a solution to what they consider to be an unsatisfactory statement. What it does appear to me to be is that they are satisfied with things as they are, but would hope that by using the machinery available to them to get a special advantage for themselves and that where they find that this advantage is not immediately forthcoming, and it would appear that this advantage would not be forthcoming either in the near or distant future then they think that by spending a lot of time in this hon.

House speaking of rigging, proxy voting and what have you that some dramatic changes will take place.

I believe it is the hallmark of the colonial mind that can envisage no other form of Government save what we have now and no other form of constitutional arrangement other than that which we operate at the moment. And I would think that it would be better if some constructive thought was given to an examination of our entire constitutional situation to see whether it is completely relevant to our situation and if it is found not to be in all aspects completely relevant to make some positive and constructive suggestion which, if adopted perhaps can lead to some further progress.

But it would seem to be useless to spend the amount of time that these hon. Members spend in this hon. House going over and over again the ancient tale of what took place in the last Elections and to continue to voice their misgiving for what they fear will happen in some future elections. It is not our fault if the electorate is convinced that the Opposition has accurately forecast the path when they said they would lose and have accurately forecast the future when they promise again to lose. It is not our fault if the electorate being intelligent persons decides to seek to ensure that they give representations to people who have the confidence to accept that representation. For it has convinced me that apart from us on this side of the House there is in fact nobody who is really anxious to take on the heavy burden of Government of this country. I looked in all directions when I said these words.

4.35 p.m.

And I repeat them. I doubt that there is any other group of people in this country at the moment anxious to take on the heavy burden of the Government of this country, with the problems of under-development and the necessity for promoting plans for the rapid development of this country, except the present Government, so that I think a lot of time would be saved if hon. Members would spend less time talking about the past elections and more time upon what the Government's programme is.

Our programme, as set out by the President, has not so far been really attacked at all. We have in many instances achieved what for the other side was merely an ambition. In our case, we have clothed with success the ambition of the other side. Guyana at the moment is on the brink of great things. With the developments which are envisaged for the coming year, I am confident that not only will we see a rapid acceleration of our developmental progress but the unfolding of a sense of grandeur which a country with our largeness of area and with our determined population makes possible, and it is for this reason I am confident that the unfolding months will show the value and correctness of our policy. Thank you.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: Mr. Speaker, I want to be brief in discussing this President's Address. We notice on page 2, the second paragraph cities that Guyana is being exposed to the international environment, that we must expect a certain amount of influence exerted on our prospects for survival. It is nothing more than the truth and I should like to quote the following passage:

“... but just as it would be unrealistic to close our eyes to these realities, even so, my Government is of the firm opinion that it would be wrong to believe that there is nothing that we can do at home and abroad to influence the nature of that environment or to alter the character of the international systems which produce it.”

This is a very good Address and despite all the corruption and the political immorality as copied and practiced by this P.N.C. Government presently, we should all enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. Even at this late stage, Guyana can and will survive honestly by God's help if we sincerely alter and change the character of the international system which produces it. We must realize that God Almighty can do everything without anything, but this P.N.C. as an individual party or as a Government, despite all the brains, all the intelligentsia, despite all the natural resources, all the forces it can muster, it cannot do one single thing without the will of Almighty God. I should like to quote several of the promises the Prime Minister did make on 1st March last year which still have to fulfilled.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Ally, I do not want to interrupt you, but you should name the source of the quotation.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: Yes, sir. This is an extract of the Hansard of 15th March, 1971. This is relating to fair employment practices and Commissions uttered by the Prime Minister.

“I think that it is a good proposal because then those on the outside will get an opportunity of seeing the problems inside. We can set up by legislation or administrative act a board or commission, or what have you. That can be worked out. We both speak the same language, though it is not our native tongue in either case. We can work out something so as to have an institution which we may at this stage cryptically call “Fair Employment Practices ...”

“The Government is not anxious to sit alone; we want all to see what is happening. We have no skeletons in the cupboard on this question but if, perchance, as is said, there is a fear that there is this discrimination, very well, we will all be there to see exactly what happens and we must set up machinery for persons who feel themselves aggrieved to have an opportunity of having their grievances rectified or remedied.”

Quote some more promises made by the Prime Minister. The Leader of the Opposition had spoken of bodies like the Public Service Commission, the Police Service Commission and also about the Boards of Corporations.

“Now, however, that there is this atmosphere of understanding and co-operation the Government is prepared, not merely to consult, but to guarantee that the Opposition can practically name representatives as long as it is understood that the Government must have the majority.”

We have more promises again. Anti-corruption committee. By the Prime Minister.

“Says the Leader of the Opposition, he wants an anti-corruption committee. Right ...”

“I have told the Leader of the Opposition that if he will submit his proposals clearly worked out on this, we are prepared to consider them favourably. I make that offer again and I await the submission.”

These are some of the big promises made by the Prime Minister to the Guyanese nation and I can honestly say that these have not been met up to now. What do we find? I can say if we sincerely want to succeed and to unite our people, we must take the President's advice and alter and abolish the rigging of our elections, we must cut out the fraudulent overseas vote, we must cut out the corrupt proxy vote, we must cut out the immoral padding of the voters' list and let that old criterion ring out again and come into play, that is, *vox populi vox dei*, meaning, the voice of the people is the voice of God. Then nature in its own way will adjust our people to have faith in one another, and with confidence, will our people resolve their differences with one another.

This will bring about unity and fair play because it is started at the very top. Despite we may be a poor nation, it could be truly said that a poor country that is full with the hearts that pull, can level the roughest road. Most of the "soup lickers" will realize that the racket is closed, they can then get honest employment, they can gain an honest livelihood, and as a consequence, they will have to co-operate with the Government of the day. We have a classic example of how diametrically things are working under the P.N.C. Government now.

4.45 p.m.

It was only the other day I remember we were at a function and the hon. Minister Mr. Salim can bear me out and let him deny that this is untrue. We were at a function where a corner stone was laid for an institution for higher education. A P.N.C. hack by the name of Mr. Hossein Ghanie was making the point that he agreed that education is good but muslim propaganda should be a priority; and he was propagating that he should be given a job to make muslim propaganda. This is a report in yesterday's *Evening Post* about the laying of a corner stone at which ceremony the hon. Minister, Mr. Salim was present.

"At corner stone ceremony Salim urges muslim unity for nation's good. Moulvi Amerila of No. 70 Village laid the corner stone in the presence of thousands of muslims."

Sir, this is sheer propaganda. If the hon. Minister is a true muslim he should stand up and deny this. This is a lot of untruth and false propaganda. Our religion, Islam, stresses very severe

punishment for this type of people on the day of judgement. I want to warn the muslim Members of the Government, the hon. Member Mr. Kasim, Mr. Salim, Mr. Saffee, Mr. Hamilton Green (Bilall) and all those other muslims. People, especially muslims, who tell lies to rich people and to the heads of Government just to find favour there is a serious consequence awaiting them on the day of judgement.

I remember quite well the President General and Head of the Maha Sabha told me that his religion says that there is an era when there will be widespread corruption and as a consequence everyone who wants to save his skin will have to go in for corruption. He reminded me that this is the stage that we are in. This is the kind of thinking that we have in our society.

We were expecting to read in the President's Address something about war on the rising cost of living. In my little analysis I can say that during the reign of the P.P.P. salaries and wages were way below what they are now, but food was always cheap and plentiful. The good earth was yielding, the rivers were yielding, and nature was yielding also but, today, what do we find? Shortages of this and shortages of that. Members made this point before, there is not enough plantain, cassava, fish, meat, milk, fruits, etc. There were times when you could have bought a basket of mangoes for 50 cents; today you have to say "Mr. Mango". There was a certain period during the PPP regime when provision was so plentiful that it had to be dumped. There was no problem then because despite the fact that wages were low, cost of living was very cheap. In those days farmers always planted enough. Today I can honestly say that through the policy of the P.N.C. Government our whole country is blighted with the corruption that is going on.

Sir, we read that the success of Guyana only lies in the Co-operative Republic. I have a certificate from a subscriber of the same Co-operative Republic, a man who has paid \$100 in shares and he has the devil's job to get a cent back. This gentleman is Mr. James McDonald Williams. This is what he said:

"When you sold the President of our Association the 100 shares in your National Consumers Co-operatives Society Limited you blatantly refused to register the share capital with the Deeds Registry. Your Co-operative Republic is a vehicle of

fraud now two years old. When will the small man become a real man? Oh yes, of course, in 1976 when after you are gone with all of this money in your pocket, he is still feeding, clothing and housing himself.”

Some of our Members of Parliament can rightly remember that during the days of the P.P.P. provision was not sold by the pound, it was sold cheaply by the heap or bags. Today everything is scarce. People are going away, from the land and nothing is being done to assist people to go back to the land so as to help themselves.

On the Co-operative Complex in Regent Street. I really thought that Government was spending half a million dollars and that it was trying to establish something like GIMPEX. But what do we find? The only item one sees stocked there is soap powder: Surf, Foam, Tide, Drive and all other brands. What has this Government done to reduce the cost of living? It has succeeded in closing the three Chinese grocery shops alongside them. This would not bring the cost of living down.

This expensive complex should be an agency whereby we can have cheap potatoes, cheap salted-fish, cheap foodstuff, cheap footwear, cheap drugs, cheap hardware, cheap meat, to be wholesaled to encourage competition. But all we find is the squander mania that is going on.

The sum of \$5 million has been spent on the Daily Chronicle which is only a white elephant. What benefit has been derived from the Chronicle? They could have extracted \$1 million to put up a condensary plant as Trinidad had done. Today have to import condensed milk from a little place like Barbados. This is the policy that this Government is pursuing. I should like to remind those Pharoahs and those armchair Caesars who are holding power today they must remember that they will have to leave the world one day and it is not too late for them to realize that before they leave they should try to make some genuine contribution to our people. Despite the fact that they have fooled people about making the small man a real man, let them try to set an example and cut down on this biggety-type living.

We find instead of cutting down the cost of living, there are more Daimler cars, more big property, but the time has come, that unless we have national unity to bring our people together, we will be doomed all over.

Mr. Lall: Your Honour, first, I should like to deal with the first paragraph of page 1, where mention is made of the “impartial manner in which you have presided over and conducted the sittings.” Your Honour, with all due respect to you, I do not want to tell you that you are partial, neither do I want to tell you that you balance the scales on that side of the House or in favour of that side of the House, but what I want to tell you, Your Honour, is to examine your conscience and when you examine your conscience, ask yourself the question, whether “I have done the right thing to the nation and the office I am holding.” Let your conscience be your guide, because it is said that conscience speaks louder than voice. *[Interruption]*

I knew the heckling Prime Minister would have come here because I know we do not have any protection from the Chair. I have just said it and here it is the Prime Minister is disturbing a Member of Parliament when he is speaking. Yet the Speaker does not seem to hear that the Prime Minister is heckling. But if it was somebody else on this side of the hOuse, of course, the Speaker would have called that person to attention. In this House all of us are equal and all of us should receive equal treatment as far as the Speaker is concerned. That is all we ask of you.

I want to make reference to page 3 paragraph 5, that is,

“The primary tasks of development are those to be performed at home, in our towns and our villages, in our fields, in our offices and our factories, in our coastal, our riverain and our hinterland areas – in all these sectors there is need for national effort and for a contribution to nation building by every citizen of Guyana.”

This I completely agree with but how could you get every citizen in Guyana to participate in nation building, one, when you lack equality of rights, two, when you lack fair and free elections, three, when you have overseas voting. Who are called upon to build Guyana? The people who are immediately residing in Guyana, in the villages, in the towns, and in the hinterland areas.

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4.55 – 5.05 p.m.

Not the people who left the shores of the green land of Guyana to go to America, to Canada, to England. Who will help to build our nations? Not they. How is it fair that they should exercise the franchise? How is it fair that they should select a Government which should rule the citizens who live in Guyana? By God's name, how can this be fair? I therefore appeal in the name of justice, in the name of development of Guyana, for the abolition of overseas voting.

Then I should like to refer to page 4 paragraph 1, and this is very essential to the nation and our society:

“Committed to the building of a Co-operative Socialism and inspired by the principles of self-reliance, my Government's energies will be devoted in large measure in the forthcoming session to advancing the national objectives of Feeding, Clothing and Housing Guyana.”

First, what is the concept of socialism? What is the concept of co-operative socialism? My friend attended a communist school.

5.05 p.m.

I have the greatest respect for him if he is one. *[Laughter]* Because he holds a communist card he knows what is the meaning of socialism. For the purpose of this House and for the purpose of the Members on the other side of the House who did not read and understand what is socialism I should like to explain to them what is socialism. Socialism is a political system which advocates public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. “Public ownership of the means of production” which means that all the factories and the big enterprises should be owned and controlled by the people of Guyana. I do not want to speak like my friends, the United Force. I want to tell you that if you are disseminating Burnhamite socialism, socialism means only one thing. Socialism whether it is Burnhamite, Jaganite, Mao Tse Tung or Lenin socialism, it means one thing. I know my friend the Prime Minister does not want to hurt people. *[Interruption]*

I will come to that just now because it is our duty to advise him and his followers, I would say lackeys. The Opposition is here to advise this Government maybe Members of the Government might not like the advice we are giving them but it is right advice. At one time I heard: Nationalise sugar, nationalize every industry, let the people own – [The Prime Minister: “What about your father-in-law’s sawmill? Do you want me to nationalize that?”] Your Honour, I am at the mercy of the Prime Minister. [Laughter] I am sorry that the President is not here to see the behavior of the Prime Minister and the Protection the Opposition is getting from the Chair. Because I am sure that paragraph 1 or page 1 of the Address would have been deleted.

Your Honour, Feeding, Housing and Clothing the nation by 1976. This is just another slogan. We would have liked to see this being a reality. How can we feed, clothe and the nation? Your Honour, I want to refer to page 5, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the President’s Address:

“This House will recall that in March this year the Report of the Working Hours Committee was tabled. With a view to rationalizing our national working hours, ensuring maximum productivity and providing community efforts, my Government would seek Parliament’s approval of a new scheme of national working hours.”

That is very good. But whether this is going to be done during the lifetime of this session is another thing. Promises, promises and more promises. What about the job evaluation exercise which has been going on since 1969 now we are in 1972. The job evaluation has not been completed as yet.

5.15 p.m.

I hope the national working hours will be a reality before the end of this Session. Then in paragraph 2 page 5:

“Also during this Session my Government hopes to present proposals for the reduction of the age for eligibility for benefits under the National Insurance Scheme. These will be based on actuarial studies now being carried out.”

If we check the Hansard of 1969 –

Mr. Speaker: I am not following you. You should note the page and year.

Mr. Lall: I am making a general observation on a debate in this House. If we scrutinized the Hansard in 1969, when we were debating the question of national insurance, we would see in part of my contribution that I made mention that the Statistical Bureau of this country has stated in no uncertain terms that the life expectancy of a male is 59 years and that of a female is 63 years. The Government then set the date from which a person would receive old age pension at 65 years. To whom are you giving old age pension, not dead people? How then can you fix the pensionable age at 65? The Prime Minister, in the Guyana Graphic there is the report of what you said in your May Day Speech.

Your May Day pledge, 2nd May, 1972, page 1 column 2.

“I cannot honestly say the pensionable age will be reduced to 60 immediately. In the first instance, it may probably be reduced to 62.”

Why 62, when the life expectancy of a male is 59 years?

When we debate in this House, we must debate realistically. When we make a pledge, we must make our pledge based on the situation confronting us in Guyana and I am asking that when the amendment is to be made, it should be amended to 60 years instead of 62. Time and again I have taken up with your Minister of Labour this question of pensionable age, but sir, I want to bring another burning question in relation to the N.I.S. to the attention of this Government, that is, invalidity benefit, if a person becomes an invalid and he is 40 years. I have a case now where a house fell on the man's back, finished with, that man has to wait until he is 55 before he receives invalidity benefit. I am suggesting that when the Amendment is made, only ½ per cent of the working population of the country will be affected. If a worker is qualified and he becomes an invalid, he should receive invalidity benefit. I am asking the Government to include that in its amendment.

Severance pay law. This might be history to you, Your Honour, but in 1963 I had the honour as a member of the P.P.P. to move a Motion here for the payment of severance pay to all Guyanese workers. I must congratulate the Members who were then in the House. All of them voted for the Motion unanimously. It is a Resolution now. From 1963 on to now the Legal Draftsman is still drafting it. Why doesn't the Prime Minister draft it himself because if he did that he would be doing something for the nation? The hon. Minister of Health could help. There is another hon. Minister who could help. I appealed in this House because the hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security said that he had no legal draftsman in the Ministry. The Cabinet provided him with a legal draftsman. He is still going through the final stage. I do not know when this Bill will come before this Parliament.

5.25 p.m.

What are we doing? We shall pass through this world but once and whatever we can do to save human beings from poverty and exploitation let us do it now because one shall not pass this way again. Your Honour, the Prime Minister has said before the end of this session in 1973 this Bill will come to Parliament and will be passed. I do hope that the Prime Minister lives up to what he said in his May Day pledge.

I come now to the question of hire purchase legislation and this is what the Prime Minister is reported to have said in his May Day pledge:

“On the introduction of hire purchase legislation Mr. Burnham said the labour leaders were right to criticize the Government for not providing this legislation as yet. He explained, however, that although a draft was completed there were certain changes which had to be made in the light of the new move to make use of local products.”

[**The Prime Minister:** “What more do you want me to say?”] The Prime Minister must have to find some excuse. So many years have passed and the Government is still making amendments to the draft. When will this Government finish amending? I wish to quote again:

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National Assembly

5.25 – 5.35 p.m.

“He further announced that at the next session of the National Assembly the hire purchase legislation will be introduced.”

I hope the Prime Minister will live up to the expectations of - - [The Prime Minister: “Harry Lall.”] No, not me, of the workers – Read yesterday’s Graphic and you will see what the newly elected President Mr. Ishmael had to say about things in the country, not Harry Lall. [Prime Minister: “He is your friend.”]

On the question of a national minimum wage a Motion was tabled in this House for years; it has lapsed now nothing has been done. Let me read the Prime Minister’s speech on this, he is a master for making pledges. [Laughter] I quote:

“On the Resolution dealing with the setting up of a timetable for Government’s introduction before May Day 1973 of a national minimum wage, Mr. Burnham indicated that Government had accepted this in principle, but he could not make any disclosure at the moment because the matter was now under discussion between the Minister of Labour and the T.U.C.”

Oh my God! Every time I approach the Minister of Labour about something he says, “I am discussing it with the T.U.C.” Now, the Prime Minister is blaming the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Labour is blaming the T.U.C. This is all it adds up to.

Let us not fool the nation because the cost of living is mounting daily and we ask the Government to have a close look at this. The national minimum wage of this country should be no less than \$6 per day to cope with the rising cost of living.

5.35 p.m.

Self preservation is nature’s first law. If you cannot protect yourself, you cannot protect anyone else. If you are a cripple, and you want to assist somebody else, how can you assist that person, therefore, I have to teach you how to assist the nation.

Then, Your Honour, we come to the burning question. I advocated through the Minister of Labour – pledge again – the question of legislation for a minimum take-home pay for seasonal workers. We do not want to hear words. We want to see deeds. The hon. Minister of Labour is a man of promises, and a man of words, and a man of fooling. He has to prove that he is a man of action because this representation was made to him about three years ago. Is that true? Only in 1972 the hon. Minister said they are looking into this. I am grateful for this because thousands and thousands of workers will benefit.

I should like to mention of the conclusion of the Prime Minister's pledge, which were very realistic, and here is what he said.

“There are some people who are employed, there are some people who are not employed. If you are Prime Minister, would you seek to improve the lot of the employed or to find employment for the unemployed?”

He asked, Good question! My friend was the Prime Minister from 1964. All right, from 1965. What did he do to stop unemployment in Guyana? What did he do to increase unemployment in Guyana? Will you allow me to examine this question, Your Honour?

Mr. Speaker: Yes. I will try to be fair to you today.

Mr. Lall: Who is responsible for the closing down of the East Coast railway where more than 1,000 people were retrenched? And if we assume that every man that was retrenched had a family of five, then 6,000 mouths will be looking for bread and butter. Who retrenched over 600 workers from the Public Works Department? *[Interruption]* I am subject to correction. You have the statistics. If you doubt me tell me how many. All right, I will pass it. [The Prime Minister: “If you are going to pass it, withdraw it.”] I withdraw it. The Prime Minister allowed Jessel who owned Demerara Company Ltd. to retrench over 300 Guyanese workers. Fact or not. The Prime Minister allowed Sandbach Parker to retrench over 300 workers. Your Honour, one set of workers were sugar workers and the other workers were from the store. The first time he came and took over the industry he knocked out 300. I am drawing this to your attention that you can take appropriate action.

When the E.T.B. was established, rightly or wrongly, the commission agents sacked hundreds of workers. Self help in many sectors in Guyana helps to swell the ranks of the unemployed. You have a goodly lady, Mrs. Burnham, going with pitchfork cleaning trenches when workers who want bread and butter for their children should do them. I am not talking about national projects, people should do them by self help, but not to usurp. *[Interruption]* The self-help road, hundreds and thousands of Guyanese dollars were spent there when workers in the streets would have gone there and earned a livelihood. Right now over 200 workers are facing retrenchment at Reynolds Metals Company. What is my good friend prepared to do? Your Honour, he is the Prime Minister in an Independent Guyana and the Republic of Guyana. *[Interruption]* He was in office, not in power but he did far more than your government did by establishing land settlement schemes where people can earn a livelihood.

5.45 p.m.

How does this Government propose to cope with the large numbers of children leaving school? What are the plans this Government has for finding jobs for these young people when they leave school? Every year there are twelve to fourteen thousand young people seeking employment. Let the Government tell us how it is going to cope. These are factors which have to be closely examined by the Government.

The only way, I submit, to cope with this unemployment situation and other ills of our society is to nationalize the commanding heights of our economy where the means of production will be owned and controlled by the citizens of Guyana. If we do not pursue this policy, then we shall surely be building a society of crime, prostitution and juvenile delinquency.

I wish to deal with the last paragraph, page 5.

“..... National Unity will remain a priority in all Government’s efforts.”

National Unity is of paramount importance to any society or State but how can one except national unity when more than half of the population is dissatisfied and is suffering from a sense

of insecurity? This is the question which I am asking the Government whether it accepts it or rejects it, it is my duty to put this question to the Government and this proposal should be examined.

This Government might think it is winning over people but all those people who are coming over to its side they are like weather cocks. When you are in Government they are with you, when Jagan gets back into power they will twist back that side. We want this Government to know that these people are not its friends, they are enemies of the society. They are fooling themselves. It is the duty of the Government to create an atmosphere of goodwill and security for all in our beloved country, this Greenland of Guyana. [Mr. Clarke: "What does the Opposition propose?"] This Opposition proposes that the Government should stop rigging the elections by abolishing overseas voting and voting by proxy, govern without fear, favour or partiality.

In this Budget Speech in 1971 the Minister of Finance congratulated and saluted the sugar workers of this country for breaking an all-time record of this country. But, sir, these same sugar workers who were saluted and congratulated in December 1971 were tear-gassed in May Day 1972. What shameful and disgraceful set on the part of the Government. At that time I was in Kremlin. [The Prime Minister: "You were in Moscow, you have never been to the Kremlin."] The May Day reception was held in the Kremlin and millions of people passed where we were standing. They waived flowers as they passed. But in Guyana the workers were showered with tear gas. What a tyrannical Government, on a day when you should rejoice with the people for working hard, for making target, for breaking all-time records, you shower them with tear gas. Why the Members of this Government do not examine their consciences? Would they allow their children to go through what the sugar workers went through on May Day?

5.55 p.m.

Shall I be permitted to remind the Government that the care of human life and happiness, and not its destruction, is the first and only legitimate object of a good government. I thank you.
[Applause]

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Information, Culture and Youth (Mr. Thomas): Mr. Speaker, the President's Address did attempt to identify the numerous areas in which Government was moving. Indeed, from the numerous speakers I have heard from the Benches of the Opposition, the entire House has the impression that very little thought was given to what the President had to say. Indeed, very little preparation went into the debate. Throughout, there was a trend to criticize and chastise the Government for lack of employment opportunities simply because the concept of unemployment like employment, in so far as the Opposition members of this House are concerned, means to them being employed by some agency, some institution, or for someone.

As a matter of fact, we have heard the sad story coming from the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, when she said that co-operatives do not employ people. I think at a time like this when the country occupies the focal point in so far as regional progress that affects individual countries is concerned, it is a sad story, in that today in this country we can say that for 1971 alone, 20,000 people were employed by their involvement of the 20,000 first to say that out of the involvement of the 20,000 co-operators, they were able to share a sum of more than \$2 million during 1971 alone.

Let me try to identify some of the success stories of these co-operative societies by starting with the Port Mourant United Co-operative Society. Incidentally, I think the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall may be interested, since he felt that apart from the situation getting worse, people were being retrenched and no opportunities were being provided for them. Let me say that a group of 93 people, who were retrenched workers, constitute the membership of this Port Mourant United Co-operative Society. For 1971 alone, they cultivated an area of 1,830 acres of land and generated income from sugar cane and rice cultivation to the tune of some \$385,415. While this activity was going on, another group of co-operators belonging to the same area, by the name of the Port Mourant Follow-up Co-operative Society Ltd., with a membership of 488 persons, reaped a single crop of sugar cane and paddy valued at \$239,840. At Rose Hall, there is another successful cane co-operative society with a membership of 180 persons, and they sold produce to the tune of \$71,250.

I mention these statistics to show that apart from people being involved in co-operatives and having gainful employment by their active involvement in the movement, we are able to generate sufficient income which can give them a happy means of existence. But I can go on naming success stories, and the hon. Member asked for a good example of a successful pig rearers's society. May I say, in 1971, the pig rearers' co-operative society increased its produce by 100 per cent which was sold to the Guyana Marketing Corporation? The membership increased from 280 to well over 500 people.

Not only the agricultural co-operative and the pig rearers' co-operative were successful in the exercise of providing employment for people and generating income but the construction co-operatives have been doing a successful job. Over 2,000 co-operators are involved in construction in this country and the numerous structure completed by these societies witness the participation of these people, who some people feel are not employed and are classified as unemployed. The works are definitely among the better pieces of construction now going on throughout the place.

It is difficult, however, even with this number being so, to identify the number of people who gain employment as a result of co-operators' involvement. In other words, the linkages which come as a result of people's involvement in co-operative enterprise and provide employment for people are numerous, like the people who benefit from them. The consumer co-operative society has made a tremendous amount of progress. In this particular section of co-operative development over 200 people have benefited so far by being actively involved. Needless to say, we are not all satisfied with the progress being made, because more progress is envisaged and for 1972 alone, Government proposes to ensure that the co-operative movement get a more into its own even more that it is now.

The hon. Member Mr. Lall spoke about unemployment resulting out of self-help and community development activities. His criticism of self-help is not dissimilar really from the criticism made by the hon. Leader of the Opposition when he said it is a pity that morals are on the decline and indeed at the lowest level. Self-help and community development activities have swept the country by storm over the last year particularly.

In almost every community people are involved in self-help activities. By the involvement of self help we are able to inculcate the right attitudes towards work which are so necessary when we are talking about changes in so far as development is concerned. Self-help, apart from providing an avenue for the utilization of personnel in the technical area has been able to provide all its participants particularly those who are hitherto unemployable with basic ... It has been able to inculcate in the workers at a community level of desire to work and live together. Hence, it is able to provide environment and indeed allow the participants to recognize that in so far as development of the country is concerned service at the community level after the inculcation of the correct attitudes are essential factors for development hence provide them with the equipment so necessary for performing efficiently when they are employed even with themselves or with some institution or some other agency.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps it is opposite to point out that in almost every community people are active in the area of community development. Even though as far as the Opposition is concerned self help like community development is an ill which affects people and their livelihood. In areas where the P.P.P. is strongest Government has had the best results. A shining example will obviously be the Leonora Government Secondary School. Apart from that at Meten-Meer-Zorg and Zorg community activity is at its high point.

People all over the country are becoming more and more conscious about serving the community. We are not listening to the propaganda of the Opposition which is aimed at preventing people from developing their own communities, hence, developing themselves. People are coming out in large numbers, as I said before, from Coast to Coast in every district and every village to render service to their community.

It is a bit disheartening really for us to witness this assault upon Government's programme in so far as the provision of employment for people is concerned, particularly, when it comes from people who claim to be the representatives of farmers and workers, when they lump those categories of people among unemployed people in the country.

The Government has recognized that there is need to evolve new training programmes aimed at making our young people employable and absorbing their energies, efforts and enthusiasm into productive avenues.

As far as the school curriculum is concerned agriculture has been given a new and bold place. Within the primary schools Government proposes to teach the basic agricultural skills including, of course, the art of crop culture, animal husbandry, in the use of farm equipment generally, to develop a suitable attitude towards agriculture, and to have our young people from the kindergarten age to a stage that they need to be, in a position to feed themselves and the community. Indeed, the whole concept of school gardening was a wrong and frustrating more or less. It was thought as a type of scheme within the primary schools which allowed just about a handful of students to practice on a bed or two somewhere within the school compound.

We have evolved a new concept of the school farm and several areas have been identified for the pursuance of the programme to have our young children, students and youth involved in agricultural activities from school age. Among those areas are Matthews Ridge, Bartica, Linden, East Coast Demerara, West Berbice, the Corentyne and the Essequibo Coast. It is unless if we continue to adumbrate programmes of feeding the nation and having people involved in agriculture unless we start by educating our children of primary school age about new attitudes towards agriculture and have them involved while at school in agriculture.

6.15 p.m.

While we are attempting to evolve new programmes in so far as agriculture is concerned, we do not separate the need to have the children involved in agricultural pursuits, from the need to have our teachers in the schools understand that agricultural involvement for themselves and for the children whom they teach is of importance if we are to develop the country. Obviously, the willingness and interest of parents, teachers, and pupils must be wooed and inspired if we are to achieve this objective. Available lands have already been identified and suitable acreages depending upon the areas will be utilized in this exercise.

Like all programmes, we must recognize that there must be some degree of co-operation between the Ministry, which is primarily responsible for agricultural development, and the Ministry of Education. Towards this end, the technical officers in these Ministries have been working closely with a view to ensuring that when the programme reaches its high point, the students would have benefited. The programme of this Government is to ensure that the nation is fed, clothed, and housed by 1976. We propose by that period to ensure that the country achieves a degree of self sufficiency and indeed self-reliance which will make us economically strong and a force to be reckoned with in so far as the development of our nation is concerned. It is within the framework of the national goals that we have evolved an educational system, and indeed, a programme for young people, like programmes for our students, must come as a result of a clear understanding of our goals and targets.

Towards this end, the curriculum development unit of the Ministry of Education has been working tirelessly and to date it has produced a number of supplementary reading materials which are relevant to our aspirations and also bear some relevance to our history and indeed the direction which we chart. I have been successful in obtaining a few of the copies of the supplementary material which our local artists are working on tirelessly. Among them are: *Bound for Guyana*, which all hon. Members must have seen, *Balram's New Home*, *Our First Village*, *The Little Man*, *How the Others Came*, *We are One*, *They Came From Africa*. I particularly mention this because all our efforts can go for nought, all the sacrifice our leaders make can be meaningless if we do not attempt to inculcate in our children from the very beginning the love for their country, and understanding of our thrust, and a willingness to be involved in activity which is aimed at making the country more prosperous.

I did mention that the materials production unit of the curriculum development centre was established and so far has brought out, as a result of the efforts of our local artists, some supplementary reading material which bear relevance to the Guyanese situation. It is indeed satisfying to note that within the year of its establishment, so much work could have been done. The writers do not intend to cease their work at the stage of supplementary reading material but will later on begin working towards the production of text books locally. But in order to meet the immediate needs for relevant reading material, we have decided to write little stories and

poems that would tell the children important aspects about themselves and their country immediately, while the production of the more formal type of textbooks will be undertaken as part of a long term programme of having our students study some local books for local and/or regional exams.

We have been working on our young people from the very beginning of their scholastic careers. This work must continue from the kindergarten right through to the primary via the secondary to the university level, with the primary via the secondary to the university level, with the intention of witnessing a type of university graduate, who is attuned to the going on at home, who understands clearly what his respective role is, and depending on his major, what role he is expected to play. For some people today, particularly many of our students at the university, we see that institution as an institution which is apart, distinct, or rather without the community. Indeed, a few of our students at the university level see the university level see the university as an institution which ought to be involved in community activity and programmes.

The educational institutions particularly the university ought to witness a brand of student who understands what involvement in the true sense really means, who does not see his presence in the university as being responsible for a desire to match a graduate from another university with a degree but rather, one who sees his presence in the university as one who is deeply interested in activity within the country, economic, and social, and political.

6.25 p.m.

Throughout we have heard stories that apart from a formal programme of education for our young people the Government is incapable of coming up with programmes which can involve our young people, unattached, or who do not belong to any organization. The burning question at these times is what to do with the unorganized or unattached young people. This group constitutes a substantial amount of the out-of-school unemployed people. In the past, voluntary and traditional youth and social organizations were virtually responsible for programmes aimed at involving or captivating the interests of the young person, particularly the person who left school without receiving some form of academic certificate or qualification. But

today, we are evolving the new model scientific programmes aimed at reaching out to the unattached, unorganized, out-of-school young persons who are not really benefiting from the programmes even though the programmes we plan are intended to benefit them. They are looked upon, and do constitute a group which we can actively describe as a group of disillusioned young people.

What have we done in those areas and what do we propose to do? Obviously, the Government has placed at the disposal of these young people the type of technical and financial assistance which they need to develop their organizations and programmes. We have been able to attract that group of persons who describe themselves as young lionesses and actively involve them in developmental programmes.

But while this is so and we work with the unattached and the unorganized groups we continue to work and treat with interest the activities of other social and voluntary groups, most of whom have been losing the fascination which they had for the young people. More direct attention will be paid to these young people rather than to the traditionally organized or voluntary youth groups and organizations.

Mr. Speaker, not only are young people now becoming aware of the need for them to be involved in co-operative activities, agricultural programmes and, indeed, hinterland development, or to put all in a nutshell in programmes aimed at benefitting them economically and socially at the same time, they are also involved in more direct programmes. Perhaps, since the question of youth involvement in the hinterland development has always been a query, I may need to inform hon. Members, particularly those hon. Members who sit on the opposite side of this House, who for one reason or the other are either misinformed, uninformed or disillusioned about programmes which this Government plans, that the ferment of activity in the hinterland area prevails at Tumatumari, a place which was once held by the B.G. Consolidated Gold Mines and sold by the P.P.P. Government to the Stoll/Low-A-Chee partnership and bought by the P.N.C. Government for the purposes of the establishment of the Youth Corps. Very little money is being spent on foodstuffs for the Corps. In so far as food is concerned the Corps is not only

well on the way to developing agricultural activities to such an extent that it can truly feed itself but, it is on its way also to ensure that other areas are fed. It may be good to mention, too, that come December 8th, the largest batch of graduates from the Youth Corps will proceed to their settlement scheme when they shall have been graduated.

The remarks I sought to make a while ago came amidst a lot of mouthings by the Opposition that the President's Address was empty, he said nothing and pointed no course. But he said in his Speech on page 5 in the final paragraph and I quote:

“As we place emphasis on economic development, my Government remains keenly alive to the demands of human development and the need to advance within our society those human values which are so essential to the growth of the nation. The education and training of our people, and more particularly of our young people, will receive continuing attention with new and relevant programmes being devised to meet the changing needs of our contemporary society. National Unity will remain priority in all my Government's efforts.”

6.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, those were in the words of the President. I have already attempted to identify the numerous programmes which we have embarked upon to ensure that training for our young people remains in such a position that emphasis continues and generates to such an extent that indeed we will be able to ensure, that with involvement of our young people in our programmes for self reliance, we can really develop the country. *[Applause]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I wish to remind you that the debate on the presidential address will come to an end at 6.30 p.m. tomorrow. I hope that the spokesman for the Opposition and the leader of the House will take note. I am grateful to the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall who remarked in opening, that I have permitted the scales to be unevenly balanced and I think I will have to take remedial steps to correct the situation. For your information hon. Members, the Hon. Member Mr. Corrica spoke for 24 minutes, the hon. Mr. Zaheeruddeen spoke for 41 minutes, the hon. Leader of the Opposition spoke for 82 minutes, the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva spoke for 24 minutes, the hon. Member Mr. Hamid spoke for 26 minutes, the hon.

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National Assembly

6.35 – 6.33 p.m.

Member Mr. Bholu Persaud spoke for 26 minutes, the hon. Member Mr. Sutton spoke for 48 minutes, the hon. Member Mr. D.C. Jagan spoke for 34 minutes, the hon. Prime Minister took 27 minutes, the hon. Member Mr. Yacob Ally spoke for 19 minutes, and the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall spoke for 60 minutes. I hope that hon. Members will understand that tomorrow I will have to try and rectify this imbalance.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Wednesday, 22nd November, 1972, at 2 p.m. [**The Minister without Portfolio and Leader of the House**]

Adjourned accordingly at 6.38 p.m.
