

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 5]

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

48th Sitting

2.20 p.m.

Wednesday, 26th January, 1972

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., Speaker

Members of the Government- People's National Congress (35)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture

Senior Ministers (9)

Cde. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of Communications

(Absent)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Finance

Cde. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security

Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Health

Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction and
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Leader of the House)

Cde. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Trade

(Absent)

Cde. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of Home Affairs

Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Local Government

Cde. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Co-operatives and
Community Development

Ministers (5)

Cde. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Attorney General and Minister of State

Cde. H. Greene,
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

Cde. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Mines and Forests

Cde. E.B. McDavid,
Minister of information and Culture

Cde. C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education

Parliamentary Secretaries (5)

Cde. J.G. Joaquin, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Finance

Cde. P. Duncan,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. A. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

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

Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

Other Members (14)

Cde. J.N. Aaron

Cde. M.M. Ackman

Cde. K. Bancroft

Cde. N.J. Bissember

Cde. J. Budhoo, J.P.

Cde. L.I. Chan-a-Sue

Cde. E.F. Correia

(Absent- on leave)

Cde. M. Corrica

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler

Cde. R.J. Jordan

Cde. S.M. Saffee

Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P

Cde. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition (22)

People's Progressive Party (18)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C.B. Jagan

Leader of the Opposition

(Absent- on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. D. C. Jagan, J.P.

Deputy Speaker

Other Members (16)

Cde. R. Chandisingh	
Cde. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.	
Cde. E.M.G Wilson	
Cde. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Chief Whip	(Absent)
Cde. G.H. Lall, J.P.	(Absent)
Cde. M.Y. Ally	(Absent)
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.	(Absent)
Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P.	
Cde. R. Ally	
Cde. E.L. Ambrose	
Cde. L.M. Branco	
Cde. Balchand Persaud	
Cde. Bholu Persaud	
Cde. I.R. Remington, J.P.	
Cde. L.A Durant	
Cde. V. Teekah	(Absent-on leave)

United Force (3)

Mrs. E. DaSilva	
Mr. M.F. Singh	(Absent)
Mr. J.A. Sutton	(Absent)

Independent (1)

Mr. R.E. Cheeks	(Absent)
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OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F.A. Narain
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly- Mr. M.B. Henry

PRAYERS**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER****Leave to Members**

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition for six weeks from 24th January, to the Hon. Member Mr. Correia for six weeks from 22nd January, and to the Hon. Member Mr. Durant for three months from today's sitting.

Wearing of Shirt Jacs with Short Sleeves

On account of approaches made to me from time to time by some members seeking permission to wear, as a further alternative, shirt jacs with short sleeves, at sittings of the National Assembly, I invited the Members of the Assembly Committee of this National Assembly to consider and advise me on the matter. The Members of the Assembly Committee for this Session of Parliament nominated by the Committee of Selection are as follows:

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, J.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance
Mr. A. Salim, M.P., parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
Mr. J.R. Thomas, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
Mr. M.M. Ackman, M.P., Government Whip
Mr. E.M.G. Willems, M.P., and
Mrs. E. DaSilva, M.P.

The Committee met on two occasions; Wednesday, 12th and Thursday, 13th January, 1972. After considering this matter, the Committee advised me that shirt jacs can be permitted to be worn at ordinary sittings, but on ceremonial occasions, shirt jacs worn must have long sleeves.

After giving this matter some consideration, I have decided to accept the advice of the Assembly Committee and would permit Hon. Members and officers of the National Assembly to wear shirt jacs with short sleeves as an optional to shirt jacs with long sleeves only at ordinary sittings of the National Assembly. On ceremonial occasions, however, shirt jacs worn must have long sleeves.

I am also extending this concession to the representatives of the Press, including photographers, to the officials and advisers who might be required to attend sittings, and also to guests who might be permitted to sit in the special galleries of the Parliament Chamber.

[Applause]

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following papers were laid:

- (1) Report concerning the wearing of shirt jacs with short sleeves at sittings of the National Assembly, together with the Minutes of the Proceedings of the Assembly Committee held on 12th and 13th January, 1972. *[The Speaker]*
- (2) Statement of Guarantees given by the Minister of Finance under section 3 of the Guarantee of Loans (Public Corporations and Companies) Act, 1971 (No. 16), for the quarter ended 31st December, 1971, and statement of Account for the financial year ended 31st December, 1971.
- (3) Ministers, Members of the National Assembly and Special Offices (Allowances) Order, 1972 (No. 4), made under section 8 of the Ministers, Members of the House of Assembly and Special Offices (Emoluments) Ordinance, 1965, on the 12th January, 1972, and published in the Gazette on the 15th January, 1972. *[The Minister of Finance]*

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS**North-West Steamer Service**

Mr. Chandisingh: I beg to ask the question to the Hon. Member of Communications
Question No.21 standing in my name:

- (i) Is the Minister aware of the congested and horrible conditions experienced by passengers using the North-West Steamer Service?
- (ii) What steps does the Government intend to take to relieve the situation and bring much needed improvement to the service?

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)(Mr. Ramsaroop)
on behalf of the Minister of Communications: The reply is as follows:

- (i) The Minister is aware that at certain times of the year, such as before and after the Easter, August and Christmas holidays, passengers travelling on the North-West Steamer experience some congestion as the vessel plying that route, M.V. Lady Northcote, is too small to accommodate the number of passengers who travel during the peak periods. The Minister does not accept that conditions are horrible, but concede that there is a certain amount of overcrowding.
- (ii) Government is aware of the need for a larger and better equipped vessel for the North-West route, and active consideration is being given for the provision of such a vessel in the 1972-76 Development Programme.

Mr. Chandisingh: Supplementary Question. May I ask the Hon. Minister if any definite timetable can be given with respect to the provision of a new up to date boat?

The Speaker: I think the hon. Member Mr. Chandisingh the provision of such a vessel is in the 1972-76 Development Programme. How more Specific can the Minister be?

Mr. Chandisingh: Mr. Speaker, if I may explain why I asked that question. If the provision is in the 1972-76 Development Programme, this is a period of five years, and the people are suffering now. Therefore, I should like if the Hon. Member can be more specific by just merely stating that it is in the 1972-76 Programme.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Your Honour, the dates inserted in the second limb of the Answer are clearly specific. It is a matter which is contemplated by the Development Programme which is now in the course of preparation.

Mr. Wilson: In view of the fact that there is so much hardship and on the view of the urgency, would the Minister consider having this matter looked after early in the 1972-76 Development Programme.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Wilson can you please repeat the question?

Mr. Wilson: in view of the hardship being suffered by the passengers on this boat, will the Minister consider having the matter implemented early, as a top priority, in the 1972-76 Development Programme.

Tain Government Primary School

Mr. Teekah: I wish to ask the Hon. Minister of Education Question No.22 on the Order Paper standing in my name:

- (i) Is the Minister aware that the Tain Government Primary School, which was built in 1959 to accommodate 750 pupils, has an enrollment now of 1,150 and that there is a

waiting list for about 200 pupils? Is the Minister aware that many of the pupils are forced to use the Home Economics and Handicraft Centres, with a consequential adverse effect on these students at the Centres?

- (ii) Is the Minister aware that the school has raised an amount in the vicinity of \$1,300 by raffle and donations for the purpose of constructing an extension to accommodate more pupils, but that this amount is quite inadequate?
- (iii) Will the Minister say whether there are any plans for extending the present school or to build a new school at the neighbouring village of John? If so, how early will this be done?

The Minister of Education (Miss Baird): Mr. Speaker, the reply is as follows:

- (i) The Tain Government Primary School was built to accommodate 780 pupils; it now has an enrolment in excess of 1,150 as at July 1971. The Ministry is not aware of a waiting list for further admissions.
- (ii) The Ministry is not aware of any curtailment of the Home Economics and Industrial Arts programmes carried out in the departments of the School.
- (iii) The Ministry is not aware of the amount collected from the fund-raising efforts by the School for the purpose of constructing an extension to accommodate more pupils. However, since at least four schools in relatively close proximity to the Tain Government Primary School are similarly overcrowded, an approach has been made jointly by residents of the John Port Mourant and adjoining districts about the construction of a new Primary School in the area and the matter is being examined in the Ministry.

Mr. Teekah: A Supplementary Question on the first part of the question. Is the Minister aware that some time last year a teacher of that school attended a meeting of a fundraising committee for the expanding of the school? Leading members of the Guyanese society solicited aid for that school.

Mr. Speaker: That is not a supplementary question.

Mr. Teekah: The Hon. Minister said she is not aware.

Mr. Speaker: You have four parts to the Question. I ask you to which part are you referring.

Mr. Teekah: Can I ask a supplementary question? I would like that question to be the supplementary question.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister, he is directing your attention to part (iii) of the question.

Miss Baird: The Ministry is not aware of any fundraising effort made by anyone.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah, you will kindly ask another supplementary question.

Mr. Teekah: Was the Hon. Member not herself aware of the existence of a circular from that school, because I am aware that four M.P's received circulars.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Minister says she is not aware.

Meten-Meer-Zorg Government School

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask Question No. 23 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

Is the Minister aware of the tremendous strain and inconvenience being suffered by pupils of the Meten-Meer-Zorg Government School since the destruction of the school building by fire nearly two years ago?

- (i) Is the Minister aware that several classes have been shifted from the Meten-Meer-Zorg Community Centre to the bottom flat of the defunct Sarsawat School (a private building) causing the children to walk a distance of over two miles for tuition?
- (ii) Will the Minister state what steps, if any, are being taken to rebuild the Meten-Meer-Zorg Government School to enable the children of this heavily populated area to receive their education in a better atmosphere and with less inconvenience?

Miss Baird: Mr. Speaker, the Answer to the Question is as follows:

- (i) The Minister is aware that the pupils of the Meten-Meer-Zorg Government School have been suffering much inconvenience caused by the willful and malicious destruction of their school building by unknown persons.
- (ii) The Ministry is not aware that several classes have been shifted from the Meten-Meer-Zorg Community Centre to the bottom flat of the defunct Sarsawat School, but the Ministry is aware that the pupils of the school who were accommodated under the unsatisfactory conditions below the Anglican parsonage as an emergency measure after the fire, have been removed to much more comfortable quarters in the bottom

flat of the building which formerly accommodated part of the Sarsawat Secondary School.

- (iii) The Community has commendably undertaken a fundraising drive to collect \$10,000 to rebuild the school by self-help. The Government is prepared to match this amount, to organise self-help and supervise the construction of this building. It is considered that this arrangement would ensure the interest of the community in the school, and its protection would go a long way in preventing a recurrence of vandalism which has caused so much inconvenience to the children in the area.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Will the Hon. Minister say whether she is aware that the committee, that is operating the fund received funds in the area, and if that committee enjoys the confidence and support of the people of the area? I wonder if I can proceed to ask another question.

Miss Baird: Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that I am not aware whether or not they have the community's confidence.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: I should like to ask, since the Minister is not aware, if she does not consider it in the interest of the students that an investigation be made since the committee does not enjoy the confidence of the community and as a result of this, the committee has not been able to raise any substantial sum?

Miss Baird: The Ministry of Education has no intention of carrying out such an investigation.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Will the Hon. Minister say how early it is expected that the self-help project will start so that the school will be completed for the children to start?

Miss Baird: Mr. Speaker, as soon as a reasonable amount of money is collected, we shall begin to examine the situation and provide funds.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: If the Committee fails in its efforts to collect money, what will be the reaction of the Ministry of Education?

Miss Baird: It will be in the interest of the community and the children of the district to assure us of their intention to provide self-help for the school.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: In the answer by the Hon. Minister, she did not refer to that part of the question which mentioned the distance where the children are going, that is, between De willem and De Kindren. Does the Minister not consider this a grave hardship and efforts should be made to house the children somewhere other than at the Sarsawat School, some two miles away from where the children are residing?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Minister has already answered that question. If you want to ask a question, you may do so.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Well then my supplementary question is if the Minister does not consider it a grave hardship for the children to walk two miles and the Government ought to find a suitable and alternative place for housing the classes held at the Sarsawat School at De Kindren.

Miss Baird: The Ministry realises that it causes hardship, but the people in the district apparently did not realize it would have brought hardship on their children, and whenever the approach is made, we shall endeavour to rebuild the school, as said before, by self-help.

Mr. Wilson: In view of the fact that the children walk a distance, will the Minister consider providing free transportation to the school?

Miss Baird: The Ministry's position is to provide a school in the district.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Will the Minister say whether a decision has been taken as to whether the school will be built on the existing site or there is an alternative site?

Miss Baird: The Ministry will be advised by its architect.

Cash Balance On Hand

Mr. Ram Karran: On behalf of the Hon. Member Mr. Lall, I beg to ask Question No.24 standing in his name on the Order Paper: Will the Minister say what was the cash balance in hand at 31st December, 1970, of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund?

The Minister of Labour and Social Security (Mr. Carrington):

The Answer to Question No. 24 is as follows:

- (i) Cash in hands of Account General at 31.12.70 (approximately) - \$293,670
Cash held on call in Joint Miscellaneous Fund at 31.12.70 - \$782,820
- (ii) You will appreciate that the State accounts for 1970 have been finalized as yet and as such, the cash in hands of the Accountant General cannot be accurately stated, but the amount was arrived at, taking into account all available information to date.
- (iii) The cash on call in the Joint Miscellaneous Fund is factual and is held in the United Kingdom by the Crown Agents. The amount is available immediately if the need arises and earns interest at the rate of 7% compounded.

Mr. Ram Karran: On behalf of the Hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, I beg to ask Question No.

- (i) Is the Minister aware of the poor services as regards water supply, roads and sanitation that are furnished by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee to sugar workers who live in the extra nuclear housing areas?
- (ii) If so, will the Minister indicate what steps are being taken to remedy the situation?

Mr. Carrington: The Answer is as follows:

Water Supply in Extra Nuclear Housing Areas

- (i) The original development of the Housing Areas included the provision of artesian wells from which water was distributed to the residents by means of standpipes erected along the streets. With a view to improving the hygienic conditions in the Housing Areas, however, steps have been taken by the Committee to extend water into houses of the residents. These improvement schemes involved the sinking of additional wells, the construction of overhead storage tanks, the erection of pumping stations, the installations of submersible and turbine pumps and the revision of the water mains along the streets. These works have been carried out in stages in accordance with the available of money, and already these schemes have progressed to a point where a house supply has been made available to all but one of the eighty-seven Extra Nuclear Housing Areas developed by the Committee serving a population estimated at 59,000 persons.
- (ii) A total length of 182.42 miles of pipelines has been laid; and between 1968 and 30th September, 1971, the Committee has sunk 25 new wells and constructed 20

new Pumping Stations with ancillary equipment. The expenditure approved by the Committee for providing water supplies in the Extra Nuclear Housing Areas totals \$8.16 million.

- (iii) The Committee has received no report as to unsatisfactory water supply in any of the Housing Areas except at Adelphi, Rose Hall Estate; and steps are already being taken to deal with the situation. Indeed, in Berbice and in East and West Demerara, the Committee has for some time been giving assistance by supplying water from its installations to residents in certain localities which are not Extra Nuclear Housing Areas.

Roads in Extra Nuclear Housing Areas

- (iv) In an endeavour to secure more rigid and durable roads and speedier construction at an economic cost, the Committee embarked, during 1963, on a programme of replacing the original burnt earth roads in the Housing Areas with lean-mix concrete.
- (v) roads with asphalt surfacing. This scheme is being carried out in stages determined by the availability of money and the priorities of other projects. On this basis, permanent roads have been completed in 30 Housing Areas for 10 Estates, while work is progressing in stages in other Areas. Simultaneously with the road-works, old wooden drainage boxes are being replaced with reinforced concrete drainage culverts.
- (vi) By the 30th September, 1971, the Committee had completed 43.1 miles of lean-mix concrete roads; 22.64 miles of asphalt-surfaced roads; 7.9 miles of quarry-based roads, and 995 reinforced concrete culverts.

- (vii) Pending the construction of permanent roads in the Housing Areas, the Committee has been carrying out a regular programme of maintenance on all temporary burn-earth or quarry roads.

Sanitation

- (viii) The Committee is responsible for the subsidiary drainage of the Housing Areas, and regular maintenance is carried out by the Committee involving the weeding and cleaning of verges and parapets and the weeding, cleaning and re-digging of drains, et cetera.
- (ix) Under the terms of lease governing the occupancy of lots in the Extra Nuclear Housing Areas, the occupiers are responsible for the maintenance of the interlot drains. The occupier is also responsible for sanitisation of his houselot.
- (x) The Committee has no authority in law to enforce against the occupiers any regulations providing for sanitisation in the Housing Areas. Under the Public Health Ordinance, enforcement of Sanitary Regulations lies with the Local Sanitary Authorities and the Public Health Officers of the respective Districts.
- (xi) Within the limits of available money, the Committee has, up to present been continuing to carry out its programme of works with respect to the provision and maintenance of water supply, roads and drainage and is discharging its responsibilities as indicated above, with respect to the sanitation.

Mr. Ram Karran: I should like to ask the Hon. Minister specifically if sugar is produced at the present rate of production how long the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee will be in a position to provide the amenities the Hon. Minister referred to, roads and water supply in Albion, Leonora, Enterprise and Industry and Cummings Lodge?

Mr. Speaker: I will not permit that as a Supplementary Question.

Mr. Ram Karran: On behalf of the Hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, I beg to ask Question No. 26:

Will the Hon. Minister say when the Ramsaroop Watchmen's Advisory Committee Report will be made public?

Mr. Carrington: Sir, as soon as the exercise as regards the enacting of appropriate legislation is completed, consideration will be given to the question of releasing the report.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAHAICA-MAHAICONY –ABARY DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION SCHEME

“Whereas every year farmers on the East Coast, Demerara and the West Coast, Berbice, have suffered heavy losses in crops, cattle and poultry, through flooding;

And whereas in 1968, when the Conservancy Dam at Cane Grove was breached, catastrophic flooding took place, from which farmers have not yet recovered;

And whereas in the current season of heavy rainfall, extensive flooding from Cane Grove, Mahaica to the Mahaicony Rivers extending to Abary, West Coast, Berbice, has again resulted in tremendous losses to farmers;

And whereas there are many occasions when inadequate rainfall also causes heavy losses to farmers;

And whereas many years ago, Guyanese engineers completed plans for the implementation of the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary (MMA) Drainage and Irrigation Scheme;

Be it resolved that this National Assembly calls on the Government to take steps to implement the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary Drainage and Irrigation Scheme.” [Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud]

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Speaker, I have brought this Motion before the House to bring very forcibly to the attention of the Government the importance of drainage and irrigation in our country. Water control with good husbandry will result in substantial increase in crops as well as yields, and will provide better facilities and opportunities for diversification which is so necessary at this time of the history of our country.

2.50 p.m.

Inadequate or no water control is the main limitation to economic land use and production.

In spite of these undeniable factors, the Government stands indicted for neglecting drainage and irrigation in the country. In its own Development Programme, the Government laid emphasis on the importance of having proper drainage and irrigation throughout the length and breadth of this country with particular emphasis on the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary and Canje Schemes. The Government, as is usual, dishonoured its own programme resulting in tremendous and significant damage done to farmers' crops in various parts of the country.

In the Development Programme for 1966/1972, \$35.5 million was provided for water control. Instead of using this money for one of the important schemes in the country, which would have brought thousands of acres of new land under cultivation, it appears that the Government has diverted this money to projects like Kibilibiri and Matthew's Ridge. I will refer later to these areas to show that the Government has not benefited from these two schemes. The point should also be made that no provision was made in the Development Programme for these

two schemes that Kibilibiri and Matthew's Ridge exist at the expense of the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary drainage and irrigation scheme, as well as the Canje scheme.

In the Development Programme, over \$10 million was allocated to start the scheme. From records available, this sum has not been expended on this scheme, as a matter of fact, it has not been started. The reason for not implementing the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary scheme is probably known to the Government because we on this side of the House find great difficulty to ascertain why such an important project, which will bring thousands of acres under cultivation and provide employment for thousands of people, is being shelved and pushed aside by the Government.

This scheme was conceived by Mr. Hutchinson in the 1940's or 1950's, and subsequently, Guyanese engineer, Mr. Comacho worked on the scheme and prepared and submitted a report for the implementation of the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary Scheme. Here we have got the combined technical advice of an expatriate as well as that of one of our competent Guyanese engineers. It is significant to note that every engineer who had something to do with this project has recommended in no uncertain terms to the Government, the implementation of the scheme. I challenge the Government to say if there is any engineer who has spoken or advised against the scheme.

The Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary project, for the information of the House, the Hon. Minister is aware, is on the eastern coastal zone and spreads over an area of 469,700 acres. The total area is 700 square miles. It has 208,000 acres, according to a report, of class one soil. The report also shows that 294,600 acres or 63 per cent of the land in this area is extremely good for agriculture; an area of 140,000 acres, or a little over that is at present under cultivation. Should the scheme be implemented according to figures available to me, an additional 154,600 new acres can be brought under cultivation. These figures are indeed revealing. These figures support the early implementation of the scheme because unless the farmers are assured of proper water

control, they will not be inspired into cultivating even those areas that are already under some type of cultivation.

My information is that the delay in implementing this Scheme has resulted in farmers abandoning areas that were under cultivation. It means that instead of making agricultural advance, we face a situation where we are declining in that we are dropping in the acreage so far as production is concerned and no new land is being brought under cultivation particularly in the area to which I am referring.

3 p.m.

The Hon. Minister who will speak on this Motion cannot, and I hope will not, deny that with proper drainage and irrigation, production will improve considerably. This is an elementary point. The area is drained by Berbice, Abary, Mahaicony and Abary rivers and their tributaries. From available reports and from practical experience of this area, there is no doubt at all that actual drainage is inadequate in that area. The Rivers, according to the experts, are too small and the capacity for draining is not available.

When rainy seasons occur, the farmers suffer tremendous loss. We will all remember in this House last year the catastrophic experience by farmers between the Cane-Grove/Abary, West Coast Berbice, or beyond that. In 1969, the rainfall was about 70 inches. In 1971, it rose to 80 inches, from our own experience, we see that rain today has no season and so we cannot confine ourselves to discussing the weather to June and December any longer; rain falls anytime now in this country. One can easily assume that the rainfall will rise to a minimum of 90 inches during the course of this year- 1972. It is easy and reasonable to suggest this figure when one takes into account the rise between 1969 and 1971 and, as I said before, our practical experience with rainfall. The position therefore us that 1972 can indeed be another disastrous year for the farmers on the East Coast, the upper East Coast and West Coast of Berbice. We are still to hear from the Government what is that decision so far as the M.M.A Scheme is concerned.

In the flood last year which I referred to farmers at Cane grove, without recuperating from the flood of 1968 caused by a breach of the Conservancy Dams, had to face last year's flooding. What happens in such circumstances?

The Government hands out a few food parcels. Full-stop- nothing more. The farmers need substantial financial help to bring them out of the disasters. But, Mr. Speaker, the Government makes a few statements when the situation is hot and therefore, the Government forgets the farmers completely. At the moment, the Government is doing nothing positive in any of these areas to help these farmers. I have had cause to speak to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture pointing out to him that certain areas are being neglected and by-passed by officers of his Ministry in the distribution of fertilisers and so on. The farmers suffer because of the lack of drainage and irrigation. They suffer because the Government is not sympathetic towards their problems and in this state; the farmers become frustrated resulting in the drop in production and the decrease in yield.

Mr. Speaker, it will not be unreasonable to suggest that the farmers, who have suffered from these floods, whether as a result of the breach or last year's situation, should be compensated by the Government. The farmers at Cane-Grove filed action in the Supreme Court so that they can receive compensation for the breach which occurred in May 1968. My information is that the Water Conservancy Board is bankrupt. It means that even if the farmers succeed in their legal action, they will be unable to receive damages to compensate them.

The farming community is important. I have always said, and I firmly believe that the farmers are the most important people in any country; they deserve the best treatment. They need all the encouragement in this country. However, they are not being encouraged; they are not being helped and if at all anything is done, those efforts are to frustrate and depress them.

In the Budget Speech I think it was the Minister who made mention if not, the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, during the course of the debates in this House and spoke of

Government's decision to acquire pumps for these areas. The pumps will only help empolderised areas. The inference on the Mahaica- Mahaicony-Abary area will be very nominal I emphasise. The Government must therefore concede that people are not stupid; people are not so uninformed that they will not be able to realise that pumps will only help them in drainage. What will happen in other situations of irrigation and those drainage that will be done by pumps, will be very limited, as I said earlier.

3.10 p.m.

The pump will not cause greater acreage to go under cultivation. It will only provide some form of relief, but this undoubtedly is not the answer to the constant flooding of the East Coast and West Coast Berbice areas.

Floods can be controlled and overcome by the dredging of the conservancies so that the water can be drained and at Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary, the water from all these areas can be drained into the Berbice River. Pumps, I repeat, will not in any way help in irrigation, because there is no reservoir. Instead of expending large sums of money to tackle this problem of drainage and irrigation in a piecemeal way, the Government could have done a better service to the nation by approaching it in a comprehensive way. The solution undoubtedly is the implementation of the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary Scheme in its totality.

The intention of this Motion is to call upon the Government to implement without delay in its totality the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary drainage and irrigation scheme, which was conceived by Hutchinson and put into writing in proper form by our own Guyanese engineer Mr. Comacho. Not only Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Comacho and our own engineers have put into writing and supported strongly the implementation of the scheme as soon as possible, but every expert approached by the Government recommended the scheme as the answer to the problem in these areas. But instead of spending the money here, the Government spends the money at Matthew's Ridge, Butanabo, and Kibilibiri. What is very important for us to know is exactly how

much has been spent in these areas, because one gets the impression that not only the sums shown on the Estimates are expended in these areas, but sums provided for other projects are used in these areas and so we are to seek to find out exactly how much has been spent in these areas and the output of all these areas.

The Government bought for the people of Butanabo, a dragline, a launch, and other machinery, amounting to thousands of dollars; the Government has not been getting the result it has expected from the Butanabo area in the Mahaicony River. When stock is taken of all these areas of squandermania in the name of feeding yourselves, co-operatives or what have you, the nation will become more depressed than it is already. One is compelled and forced to ask questions; how many families have benefited from Butanabo, Kibilibiri or Matthew's ridge? These questions become very pertinent because if the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary project was implemented, thousands would have benefited along the East Coast and the West Coast Berbice, with the result that the nation as whole would have benefited.

The implementation of the scheme is very vital. It is in the interest of this country, in the interest of feeding ourselves, or as suggested on one radio programme, "No Big Thing", we will have to eat one another if that objective is to be achieved. If the scheme is to be implemented, the farmers will feel reassured, they will be inspired, they will be able to cultivate in comfort, the fear of flooding and drought will be removed, thus one can expect fantastic increase in yields and in production from this area.

The P.P.P during its term of office, from records, has got much to be proud of. This Government cannot point to a new scheme, so far as the items, drainage and irrigation are concerned. The P.P.P. can refer, though one or two of these schemes were conceived by the Interim Government, but we did not abandon them. We examined them to see if they were in the interest of the nation. Boeraserie, Black Bush Polder. The Minister is speaking without proper knowledge of the area. The Black Bush Polder provided employment for many families and if the P.N.C was not indulging in burning and looting, more would have been done during the

regime of the People's Progressive Party. In 1963, Tapakuma, and if the P.P.P. was not removed by fraud in 1965, the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary project would have been implemented by the P.P.P. From December, 1964, we are in 1972, and according to their own programme, Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary should have been implemented and probably completed by now; they have not yet started.

Agriculture was blossoming and flowering during the term of office of the P.P.P. Farmers were buying tractor and combines and what have you. One was able to see in Georgetown a large number of people, farmers in particular, who came to Georgetown and spent, and so there was a flow of currency. The very businessmen in Water Street today admit when the P.P.P. was in office, business was much better. Today we see retrenchment in all these commercial firms. In

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some of them large-scale retrenchment and in some of them small scale, or, of course, there were no new job opportunities in the commercial sector because the money is not there to buy.

The purchasing power is not there. The Government has to keep in mind that when the farmers make money, whether from rice or any other agricultural crop, the money is kept in this country and spent in this country. But the areas the Government has been pushing and plugging the money goes abroad and the Guyanese people do not benefit. By suppressing the rice farmers, by not increasing the prices for rice, by not giving crop bonuses and other incentives to the farming community, the Government has frustrated their zeal. The result is we have a drop in production during the period of the People's National Congress Government.

What is very important for us to know as well is the pioneering spirit of our farming community. In many of these areas, the farmers, assuming that the M.M.A. Scheme will be implemented, spent their own money in developing lands, in clearing lands, in empoldering lands and acquiring new machinery so that they can give better service. But, Mr. Speaker, although the

farmers have taken the initiative, although the farmers have shown by their willingness to cultivate and produce, the Government has not shown any sympathy or concern for them.

It is not only a question of drainage and irrigation, but loans to the farmers have affected them too. This Parliament passed the Agricultural Loans Bill to lend money to the farmers. We have not heard anything about that Bill. Subsequently, the Government brought another Act in Parliament; again they talk about providing funds for the farmers but still, the funds never reach the farmers. In fact, in those areas which the Government is lending, like rice and so on - Rice Action Committee- the money goes to their own supporters.

The Government has to understand, it has come to the realisation some time or the other that the farming community in this country is known. If you by-pass the farmers, if you suppress them, if you bring pressure against them for one reason or the other and they drop tools, the nation will suffer. We cannot expect to ask people who wear ties and socks all their lives to become farmers overnight. It is an illusion to expect them to go and cultivate as they should in the various parts of the country. I am not saying that we must not make an effort. I am not saying that we must not encourage new people into the agricultural community, but the history of this country is that persons who are already involved in agriculture are coming out because of the Government's policy and new people are not going in. In many of the areas – take Matthew's Ridge – all the co-operatives have failed. The Minister would get up and tell us a different story, but we know otherwise. This is the record of the Government. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture would bring some crops and say, "Look, we have done this here, and we have done that here." But this will not fool the people. The farmers, because of the serious depression facing the agricultural community, are experiencing a lot of problems, their machinery are being seized by the commercial community because they are unable to pay their instalments, they are unable to honour their hire purchase agreements. Therefore, the machinery bought during the P.P.P. regime by the farmers are being seized during the regime of the P.N.C.

Mr. Speaker, the Government should take stock of itself particularly in the field of agriculture. Millions of dollars have been spent in various investigations year after year. The Government has numberless reports on its shelves, moths and cockroaches have probably taken them over. What is it doing with all these reports? The Government does not know to implement. All that is done is investigations are made and the matter closes there. It is because of this the Government cannot point to new schemes.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has embarked on a policy of hinterland development. We are not opposed to hinterland development, but the hinterland must not be developed at the expense of the coastal belt. The experts have said that we have got the best lands, not only are lands available on the coastal belt, but one must take into consideration communication facilities, schools, hospitals and other social facilities in these areas. When you create new areas- not that we are opposed- but one would expect that you would develop the areas that already have certain facilities that will be necessary for the farming community to be there. But the Government is guilty of discriminating against people in the Upper East Coast and West Coast Berbice region. Evidence of this discrimination is eminent in the Government not implementing the M.M.A. Scheme.

The Government in its Development Programme had projected 30 per cent increase in agricultural production by the year 1972. One assumes when they were talking about an increase in agricultural production by 30 per cent in 1972 that we would have been half way or near feeding ourselves, but as the evidence is, the situation is worse than five or six years ago. Many produce that could have been got at a cheap price during the regime of the P.P.P., today have to be bought with a severe strain on the pockets of the consumers. Instead of achieving a 30 per cent increase in agricultural production, the Government has a record of a decrease in the production despite what the Members of the Government will get up and tell us here. We know the realities of the situation; we know of the 1969 Agricultural Report which is the Government's report which shows the severe drop in several items-coffee, corn and milk.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, you have spoken for forty minutes. I will just remind you that you only have five minutes more.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Speaker, since then the Government has not made a break-through in agriculture. This Government has been living on slogans, and it will exist and die on slogans. It is like someone interpreting E.T.B. as “every ting bad”. This is the record of the Government. *[Interruption]* The Hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply will easily say that I have said nothing, it is because of his approach to agriculture and the agricultural community. They do not see anything, they cannot and have not thrown away any interest advanced by the agricultural community whether in rice or in other areas since they have come into office.

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As I said earlier, the figures are against them so far as production is concerned and because we were able to nail them to the cross on the 1969 Report, since 1969, at least the Hon. Member Mr. Jordan when he was Minister he was giving us Reports, since the new Minister took over, not one Report from the Ministry of Agriculture. They are afraid to give the true agricultural figures to the nation.

Those two, drainage and irrigation, are of primary importance to the development of this country. I wish to urge the Government to support the Motion for the implementation of the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary scheme. I cannot see what arrangement the Government can advance to vote against it. If the Government concedes its mistakes in the past, the Government has an opportunity this afternoon to correct those errors and I urge that course in the interest of Agriculture, in the interest of the nation and indeed in the interest of achieving its own objective of feeding ourselves. *[Applause]*

Mr. Ram Karran: I beg to second the Motion moved by my friend Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud. There is nothing that I can say that can add to, or that can enhance the excellent contribution the Hon. Member has made, but since formality requires a seconder, and the seconder to say a few words, I wish to indulge in that exercise. It is a historical problem.

Not long ago in this House, I mentioned that the records show that the first time in this Hon. Chamber, this question of drainage and irrigation was taken up, was in the year 1906 when Mr. J.P. Santos moved the examination of drainage and irrigation on the coastlands. Exactly 37 years and 3 days ago, another stalwart, Johnny Eleazar, a late Hon. Member, moved another Motion pointing out the lack of following up the earlier Motion moved by me. J.P. Santos, but he moved a more comprehensive one, urging the acquisition of funds for setting up drainage and irrigation throughout the coastlands of the country. During the debate, that Motion was naturally criticised by the then colonial administration and by the sugar interests in Guyana, particularly by Mr. F.J. Seaford, who called it wild, and who thought that the Mother Country could not provide the funds for such an elaborate scheme.

We have drifted through since then with constant droughts and floods as recorded by my colleague, even though the 135 Motion followed a most ruinous flood in 1934 and the Hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply would substantiate what is recorded in debate on this Motion, that every year some part of the country suffers from drought or flood and that for every seven years in Guyana there is a major flood or a major drought. That makes a cycle that every 21 to 25 years, there is a very serious flood or a very serious shortage of water; and so in cycle of 50 years and 100 years. I think we are now passing the 100 years when we have had such calamitous weather in our country.

These reasons are of course sufficient to convince any Government interested in the welfare of Guyana to urge the speeding up of schemes of drainage and irrigation. My friend has been at pains to point out that it is necessary. I wish to record for this stalwart. I referred to Mr.

Eleazer. Brief quotations I would like to make from his speech on 23rd January, 1935, from *Hansard*, Column 791. He started off:

“On the subject of drainage and irrigation for the progress of an agricultural country I think there can be no dissention, therefore, I intend to content myself with dealing with the subject as if the proposition were universally accepted.”

I read that merely to express or expect that as in 1935, so it is today, that there can be absolutely no opposition to the idea that these two things, drainage and irrigation, are a must. I am sure that the Government must share this view. He goes on to say in column 792:

“The major portion of the population is resident on the coastlands, except possibly 12,000 or 13,000 who may be found in the hinterland prosecuting various and subsidiary industries, but the major industry of the country is being carried on the coastlands, and the largest portion of the revenue of the Colony is derived from those coastlands. Strange to say, although this is the case, it has never struck succeeding Government what really was the cause of the non-progress or stagnation of those coastlands. So we have been going on for years, subject during that period to a flood or two every year, succeeded by a drought, yet Government did not seem able to realise the drain on the energy of those who attempted to pursue agriculture, the millions of dollars or pounds expended to carry on in the way they have been carrying on, and the blood and the brain and the brawn that have been used up in the attempt to carry on the major industries of the Colony and make a living.”

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The situation has not changed very much. I read this again to urge upon the Government to recognise the situation as it is to accept, if not the advice of the P.P.P. if not the advice of its political opponents in the farming and in the agricultural sector in the country, but to heed the words of one who has gone before one who has recorded in this Hon. Chamber, a view which prevails even to this day.

My friend the Hon. Mover of the Motion has pointed out that even though this was a subject that was being discussed, even though it is a subject which has brought tremendous sufferings to past generations, even though it is still among us – the lack of drainage and irrigation, the frustration of countless numbers of people in several parts, that it was the P.P.P. that initiated action on this very important aspect of Guyanese life. My friend the Minister can get up and shout as he attempted to do just now from his seat that this scheme is incomplete, but at least, the P.P.P. attempted something. What has this Government started that has been completed? The Government has done nothing in so far as drainage and irrigation is concerned.

What has the Government done in so far as drainage and irrigation is concerned? I repeat, absolutely nothing. Let me quote again from the Johnny Eleazer Bible:

“I consider from my experience that to preach the gospel of ‘Back to the land’ under present conditions is criminal and wilful deception”

That endorses, Sir, most eloquently the character of the Government today which tells people to produce in substitution of imported items. This is true.

During the Advance Guyana Campaign in my own little district supporters of the P.N.C. the other day began to weed, clean, fork and plant seeds- out themselves to expense – and no sooner had they done that when the rains came and they were all flooded out. My friend the Hon. Member Mrs. Lola Willems was there. Go to the area and you will see there is a lot of bush, all the trenches are overtaken with weeds and the people cannot get drainage. How are they going to plant ochroes and bora and the other items? They cannot; it is all being flooded out.

The Government must attempt if not in Bel Air, if not in Campbellville and these areas where we are supposed to live in urban communities, let us begin to think in terms of the area suggested by my Hon. Colleague and Friend, the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Scheme. I speak about this not only because the Scheme was prepared during the time of the P.P.P. Government was in office and during the time I was Minister of Works and Hydraulics, I say it particularly

merely to emphasise my friend's point that it was done by Guyanese Bobby Comacho one of the best engineers this country has ever seen, who has had to leave Guyana to go and work with foreigners who, when he was going, said he was sorry to have left Guyana. [Dr. Reid: "If you are brave, tell us the year."] We need notice of that, Sir. Bobby Comacho left Guyana because there were no prospects. He saw that the Drainage and Irrigation Scheme for Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary area which he had put on paper, the Drainage and Irrigation Scheme for the Canje Project, all embracing thousands of acres of land – [Mr. Green: "What year he left?"] I do not remember. Sir, he left because he saw the writing on the wall.

My friend the Hon. Member Mr. Persaud was referring to the ex-Minister of Agriculture during the time he was in office and during which time we used to get reports for that Ministry. I wish to refer to him in another light, when he came to us with the banana bubble, when he sat in the Front Bench and told us that Guyana is going to produce so many bananas. He told us about Elders and Fyffes, that X and Y are going to take it and we are going to be a very big producer of bananas. Eleazer dealt with that too.

This is what Eleazer said:

"Recently there has been some talk about growing bananas. I would like to hear the director of Agriculture say that you can embark upon the cultivation of bananas or anything else on flooded lands and hope to achieve success. Government preaches agriculture to succeed. A short while ago there was some talk of producing cassava because a firm wanted the starch, but would any sane man embark upon the growing of cassava on any large scale on the swampy lands we have here?"

These things we have been telling these hard-headed people all along. I hope that word is not banned, Sir. We cannot develop agriculture, we cannot produce unless we create the situation, unless we prepare the land. The Hon. Prime Minister has been carrying us on an excursion the other day, "We are going to use a local produce as a flooculent for the bauxite

industry”, whatever that means. The expatriates, DEMBA, were using wheaten flour. How are we going to be able to produce cassava in a flooded country? The Hon. Prime Minister was only working up his mouth as they say. Where are you going to produce the cassava? The cassava produce in the canals and areas near to Georgetown is not enough for local consumption. When I say that, I mean the edible types. Where are you going to produce the bitter cassava? In the North West? In the Pomeroun? Even if you do it in those areas the bulk of the population, Mr. Eleazer says, is on the coastal areas, and let us try to get some work for them.

I hope that when the Government is ready to reply that it will accept – I cannot see it doing otherwise – at least the principle that the expansion of the drainage projects started by the P.P.P. not necessarily with the same priority but would continue. One can see since they came to office that the priority which had been given to the drainage and irrigation by the P.P.P. Government has been put aside and other priorities have been developed. Let us hope that the new Development Programme about which we have been hearing so much which succeeds the Development Programme which the Government initiated in 1966/1972 and which has fallen upon barren soil, that the new Development Programme will include this important development, drainage and irrigation, and indeed, should not only include it but should embrace if not the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Scheme which in our minds should be given priority, or better still the Scheme known as the Greater Canje Scheme. Why we mentioned these two and why we ask that priority be given to either of the two is because the bulk of the population live in those areas, and secondly, because these two areas have the best lands.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran, I do not want to disturb you, we are dealing with the Motion calling upon the Government to amend the M.M.A Scheme. There cannot be an alternative.

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The Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary scheme embraces some of the richest soil and that cannot

be denied by the Minister of Agriculture or any of the technical officers in those areas. We ask them to embrace it in this new Development Programme particularly because we have learned from experience that every year these works are deferred, the cost goes up. That was the argument in 1935 and previous to 1935. Where are we going to get the money from? And because they would not look, because they were prepared to increase the size of the police, and the army, and allowances – I notice a paper has come in for an increase of the Prime Minister's allowance again – because they are prepared to waste the money in these schemes that no clear-headed scheme can be thought of for the development of the people, of the country, the development of agriculture.

This Government has been in office for as long as the P.P.P. was in office. Perhaps it will be there longer by rigging, perhaps it will be there by dishonest means; whether it is there or not, the time is long past when the Minister must come and say: you did not do it. That sort of excuse was good for Mr. Jordan in 1965, that sort of excuse was good for Dr. Reid in 1966, but surely, in the year 1972, it is a bit hackneyed, it is a bit old-fashioned for the Government to come here and say that the P.P.P. did not complete the Black Bush Polder or Tapakuma scheme or Boerasrie scheme.

I do not want to use the time of this House at this late stage, as I often have to do, to explain the rascality of those who sit in high places – I did not say over there, Sir – who have betrayed the Guyanese nation and destroyed the road going to Makouria through Parika. I do not want to use the time of the House to deal with why the Boerasrie scheme was not completed nor the ancillary work which was not then thought of at the Black Bush Polder or at Tapakuma. That type of excuse is frivolous. He must not come and tell us that. He must tell us whether he accepts the Motion or if he rejects the Motion, and if it is rejected, he must face at some future date, the wrath of the Guyanese society.

Motion proposed

Mr. DaSilva: Mr. Speaker, I wish to pitch hit for my leader who is unfortunately unable to be present this afternoon. This is not the type of thing I would handle. I do not however, have to be an expert on agriculture or an expert in engineering to support such a very worthwhile Motion because it is very elementary that we must have proper drainage and irrigation.

I was indeed surprised when I heard the Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran speaking. After all, the supported the Motion for the takeover of the bauxite company, and then he talked about cassava as being used as a flocculent, and now they were going to growing it. It is a bit late for him talk about that now. And our P.N.C. friends across there, when the bauxite company was taken over, they were the ones to say that the Canadians were taking all out all of our soil and putting nothing back. That is what the Government is doing. It is taking everything it can get from the land and not doing anything to help to put back into the land to help it produce more. It is true that proper drainage and irrigation cannot be counted as nitrogen and vitamins and minerals but they are absolutely vital for proper growth and control of the crops.

More than ever now, we have to go back to the land. Indeed, we are being forced to back to the land whether we like it or not, whether we are not accustomed to it, using a hoe, or forking the soil, or cutting the grass, by the very banning that we gave recently had. In this way the Government is helping the people to go back to the land.

I was very impressed to hear that 154, 600 more acres of land could be cultivated. This fertile land on the East Coast could be put into cultivation for the benefit of Guyana and I should like to ask why it has not been done before. The Government has not got the excuse that a feasibility study would have to be done, that it would have to go for the pros and cons to see whether it is worthwhile to spend all this money, because we have been told that the scheme has already been drawn up by an expatriate, Mr. Hutchinson, and supported by our own Guyanese, Mr. Bobby Comacho, and every engineer who has had to deal with this area, the deal with the necessity for proper drainage and irrigation in this particular area. They have said it is a feasible project.

I understand from the Hon. Mover of this Motion that \$10 million was earmarked for this purpose, so I should like to know why, after all these years since the 1940's and we are in the 1970's, nothing has been done about it, and I should, indeed, like to know what the Government intends to do about it.

We were told with great pride by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Reid, that because of the policy of the Government, of forcing people back to the land by banning good, we now produce vast quantities of cabbage. I remember the time we had to pay 65 cents per pound for cabbage, even though it was controlled at 46 cents per pound, and you were told, "if you don't want it, lef it, somebody else will buy it." Now it is washing away all over Guyana and we have been offered it at as low as 20 cents per pound.

Now, the Hon. Minister takes great pride for that. He forced people to go into the pros and cons of growing cabbage. With pride now, he should also turn and support these people in order that they might further cultivate 154,600 acres of new, arable, fertile land.

On behalf of the United Force, we wish to give our support to this Motion and would urge the Government to do the same.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, perhaps this is a convenient time to take the suspension. The Sitting is suspended for 30 minutes.

Sitting suspended at 4.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On Resumption –

WELCOME TO MR. DAVID ANDERSON, M.P. (CANADA)

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, before we resume I should like to inform the House of the presence here this afternoon of Mr. David Anderson a member of the House of Commons of the Parliament of Canada. I understand that Mr. Anderson is on a short private visit to Guyana and on behalf of the Members of the Assembly and myself I extend a very hearty welcome to him and wish him an enjoyable stay in our country. *[Applause]*

Resumption of Debate on Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Drainage and Irrigation Scheme.

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

Dr. Reid: Mr. Speaker it has been somewhat interesting and I noted that my friend the Mover of the Motion has been trying in vain to say that Government has done nothing on drainage and irrigation. As a matter of fact, over the years he seems to think that Government has done nothing. To that, I would say, whatever this Government has done is there for all to see, and even the blind, I believe, would see the works of the Government. I would not chronicle the long list of accomplishments. But I want to say what probably my Opposition friends never like to hear, that it is not the initiation of on drainage scheme after another that is so important, it is how the schemes have been done and what is got out of the schemes as far as the development of the people in the schemes is concerned. He has named three of them: Black Bush Polder, Tapakuma and Boerasiri. I am certain that as he named them in his own mind there is the evidence that none of them was done properly and now in this House he is trying to persuade this Government to start another single scheme all by itself and leave it unfinished so the people who are involved, other than not being able to make life better for themselves cannot even contribute, so that with development of those schemes other schemes can be found. But I will come back to that later.

He said too that the M.M.A. Scheme was listed in the 1966/72 Development Programme, and it is to him strange that this Scheme is not yet accomplished. I want him to recognise that development for countries like Guyana is a war against a lot of social evils. In war, planning is vital, but in the battle field change and adjustments are essential if you are to succeed in battle. You cannot rely on the blue print. Take that to the front and believe therein lies your salvation. We therefore make no apology for analysing schemes like the M.M.A. Scheme, and putting up new thinking and new ways and means of tackling the old age problem, as we have heard in this House, of drainage of the coastlands. He mentioned too that nothing has been started since the P.N.C. has been in Government and then he said there are schemes at Matthews Ridge and Kibilibiri. I do not know what really he wants to say. He tries to tell us that nobody should get into the hinterland to do development and the concentration must be in the coastlands. This

Government, and any sensible government, would have had reason for getting into the hinterland, especially in the North West region, so that future generations of this country will not be denied any square inch of this land that we call Guyana.

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It is our objective to people of such regions, to prevent people from experiencing the exodus to the city and in that particular area some 4,000 people still remain and find a livelihood instead of making the journey to the city trying to find another way of life. At Kibilibiri, we are endeavouring to meet the needs for other commodities – corn, sorghum, peanuts, and soya beans, and even though he says nothing has happened, I am certain that people in this country for the first time in their lives are in a position to enjoy oil processed from soya beans grown here. We make no apology for moving out of the coastland into the hinterland to project development in these areas but let us see what happened over the years with the scheme we are looking at this afternoon.

Some 24 years ago, a gentleman by the name of G.O. Case had a 20-year development plan for drainage and irrigating the coastlands. Provision was made for irrigation as well as drainage and certain works were to be done across the Mahaicony and Abary Rivers. After his death, the Government of the day, around 1950, appointed F.H. Hutchinson as consultant on drainage and irrigation. He promptly criticised what Case had proposed because there was no facility for flood control and said that the scheme would not have been a viable one. He therefore submitted alternative proposals but one thing that was common to both proposals was that there should be a provision for drainage pumps and I want us to take note of that.

There was a provision in both schemes for drainage pumps. Strange enough, the sugar estates then adopted the proposals and they installed drainage pumps, and we note that because of this, over the year, even though there is no denying that we are flooded on the coastlands, the sugar estates have remained productive, and production has been increasing over the years.

In 1953, Gerald Lacey, also a drainage and irrigation advisor then to the Colonial Office visited Guyana. He too looked at the schemes including the East Demerara Water Conservancy. He too insisted that there should be flood control of both Rivers. Mahaicony and Abary. He gave a list of priorities, Boerasrie Project, Torani Canal, Black Bush Polder, Tapakuma, Mahaica/Mahaicony and Canje. That was 19 years ago. That was the order of the priorities. In those days, we did not manage and control our own affairs. The people in those days were not involved in what happened in the hinterland or not. This was not their business. Their one concern was that we were here as machines to produce raw sugar and whatever was useful for sugar was to be done. We were not growing crops for ourselves, and so, this was their priority. One would wish to know that if this was the priority in the colonial days, if this is the same priority we need today.

In those days there was no threat from our friendly neighbours, east or west. Not at all. Nobody would even bother of there was any threat. The British and their friends would make some arrangement and that would probably be the end of the matter, but in these days we

recognise that unless some serious attention is paid to other parts of this country, then generation to come would very well have cause to curse us. But we are not only planning for today; we are planning for all time.

Mention was made of R.F. Comacho who in 1961 did some more detailed work on this very scheme we are talking about, so there would have come under cultivation some 244,000 acres at a cost of some \$70 million. \$40 million for the general works and some 430 million for the internal works. Some of the schemes have failed because the internal works were never completed properly. In 1961, Comacho did the detailed work and the cost to the scheme was \$30 million for internal works, and \$40 million for the general works, a total of \$70 million, as compared with some of the previous costing, \$12 million and \$20 million. Mr. Comacho, as my Hon. Friend Mr. Ram Karran said, left the country, but he was not brave enough, the coward he is, to say that he left during the time the P.P.P. was in office. I thought he would have been able to say that much and not give the House a half truth. But as time moved on and some of the changes I mentioned occurred, the scheme had to be looked at again.

4.50 p.m.

In 1966 a team was headed by Mr. S.S. Naraine and the proposals were again put up. After a careful study, it was discovered that, notwithstanding the economic feasibility that was carried out, if the total scheme was to be initiated then Comacho's advice to spend \$70 million on the Scheme would have had to be carried out.

In 1971 Ramsahoye made a more careful study of the Scheme and this proposal envisaged the development of the lands not only around Mahaica/Mahaicony and Abary but as far as the Berbice River. He, too, has insisted that there should be main drainage channels and pumping stations along with the sea sluices, as well as complete internal works. Therefore the scheme itself would be able to generate returns to continue works. But it was not just Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary; it has spread right unto Berbice. It can now be given a new name

probably, the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Berbice River Scheme or the Ramsahoye/Naraine Scheme, because Naraine in 1971 did the whole of the project and so reported on the entire drainage of the coastlands. He was able to pinpoint some of the difficulties in the older schemes. Even though they were empoldered, even though they had sluices, there was difficulty to control flood water.

The decision has already been taken to implement the Ramsahoye/Naraine proposals to drain the coastlands, and work has commenced on this. In the West Coast Berbice area in the initial stages some thirty-seven thousand acres would benefit. This task of drainage the coastlands is a massive one. It has been with us for a very long time. In 1935, in this very House, people were arguing about it and today, 1972, we are still debating this problem of drainage and irrigation. But in 1972, unless 1935 and some of the subsequent years, we can firmly say that the system of using pumps draining the coastlands is being implemented, because work is going on now.

Already since this Government is in office, there has been installed one of these pumps at Three Friends, Essequibo in the Tapakuma project; and one is being installed at Cane Grove, that same area that suffered serious floods. It is difficult to understand Members of the Opposition because when I talk of the pump my friend in his seat has said it is useless and when you go to the Coast you see these pumps in operation, the thing that is now looked upon by the people in those areas as a saving grace especially during the latter part of 1971 and the recent weeks. But he sits there and he says that it is useless.

We are proceeding with this wider plan for draining and irrigating the entire coastlands so that even though we are pushing towards the hinterland, the coastlands are not neglected. In the meanwhile, hundreds of schemes to rehabilitate several districts in this country have already taken place, from North West right on to the far east of this country. We are, therefore, certain that unlike times in the past when people talked of using pumps as the only effective way of

draining the coastlands but never implemented proposals, these proposals are now being implemented.

It is common knowledge that the returns from all the schemes mentioned has been very low indeed- Boerasiri, Black Bush Polder, Tapakuma. But, for the energy that has been displayed in trying to rehabilitate some of these areas, we would have found them abandoned. If there is any scheme that this type of work has not been done, then it is difficult to find people there. This Government is not looking forward to say in the future, "We have initiated Scheme 1, 2 and 3". What is more important is what is happening in the schemes. Are we just going to shout about, "We have begun schemes" and that is the end of the matter. So serious is the situation that at this very moment a team of experts is examining both the Black Bush Polder Scheme and the Tapakuma Scheme because all are now agreed that unless there is significant improvement in the works that are there then it will be difficult for people to make a reasonable good living in this area.

5.00 p.m.

Moreover, it has been found out that by certain extensions more lands in those very areas can be brought under cultivation and instead of hopping all over the country trying to get a name that it has started schemes, Government is not trying for a name for starting schemes, this Government will have to its credit that it has made the schemes productive and the farmers who dwell in those schemes better off in the near future.

In those areas along the West Coast Berbice and Upper East Coast, we have initiated several projects, several of them through self-help, to relive the situation and I can think of several areas like No. 5, No. 8, Hopetown and Foulis never had a sea defence. If one visits those places today, one will find them having sea defences and proper kokers, and so, cultivation in many of these areas is proceeding. Though in some areas there are changes in the quantum, over

the years diversification of agriculture has been significant and crops that before used to be registered as nil, have been showing significant production in this country.

Some commodities that were produced on a garden scale are now produced in larger quantities, in some cases, 300 per cent increase and that why this Government is in this position today to be satisfied that if it bans the importation of \$12 million of foodstuff in this country, the people in this country need not starve because there is enough production. Farmers are all behind it to keep this nation strong and healthy. What is really needed is the change of habits acquired through no fault of ours of being accustomed to foreign foods and people. I am certain we are already aware of the impact it is making. Small businessmen and large businessmen, farmers and all, are now showing a new awakening in feeding this nation. Only yesterday at Carnegie School, there was a demonstration of how we can use our own fish, not the imported fish, and so the story goes. People are now talking of doing new things.

A few days ago we heard of the programme of Guyana. One big industrialist is now planning to make the type of sausage that is no necessary to make hot dogs. People are beginning to think that if we use our own imagination and skill nobody in this country should suffer from inadequate nourishment and this Government has been able to take that step because in our plan for development not only the canals and the sluices matter, but the development of the people themselves, the skills they can acquire, the know-how they can acquire, and this we see happening more and more. In the flooded areas in that very region there was initiated very promptly, a service for those who suffered flood relief, which has been followed by goods and services to re-cultivate some of those areas.

My friend has mentioned that people are not purchasing the things that they used to purchase before, but i want him to realise that in 1970 there came into being in this country the National Co-operative Bank and in that year there was an accumulation of the people's savings of \$9 million. Last year there was an accumulation of people's savings of some \$18 million. This is an indication that people are being given a new type of direction, how to form our own capital

and in some of the areas where farming has been done, everyone has agreed that there was over-mechanisation so that it is no surprise, what with the scheme initiated by Government to ensure that the small farmer with his five and with his ten acres is given a service, that he should not go buying capital equipment because it would be uneconomic for him to buy himself a tractor or a combine. Because of this re-organistaion, work has been done to prevent him doing this and so we look closer to the needs of the farmer.

The Hon. Member mentioned the Agricultural Loans Bill and it was mentioned already in this House that if the Official Gazette, which is given free to Members, is consulted week by week, they will find in the publication where farmers benefit from the Agricultural Loans Bill. I wonder what is motivating so many of the small cane farmers if it were not for the Agricultural Loans Bill, and yet my friend says this Bill means nothing. He attempted to compare prices in 1964 with 1972, to say things were sold cheaper in 1964. I do not think one expects that over the years that things will all be cheaper in 1972 than they were in 1964. It does not happen. If you were in this House in 1964, what you worked for then, it is not the same now. Things change.

In many of these areas work is going on. What is happening is to give the farmer better skill. I mentioned that if you are to develop this country people must be developed in skills, in know-how, in self- reliance, and so the people who are doing the activities that they did in the past, are being reached by the supervisors, by the instructors, so they can do the job better than they used to do, so that they can implement some of the new technology and get more out of the land. I refer again to sugar. What was reaped per acre is much more now and several of our crops will have to go toward this direction by being able to get more out of the acre of land than they got before.

5.10 p.m.

With the plans that the Government already has, one sluice is nearing completion at Cotton Tree; there is a sluice at Onverwagt that is being reactivated and by Republic Day this sluice will be

completed; the outflow canal will be dug. In 1972 there will be sure evidence of improvement in the drainage in the area between Abary and Rosignol right on to the Berbice River. As a matter of fact, some of this work started last year and much more of it would have been done if we had received some of the equipment already on order. Some more equipment, however, will arrive in May of this year so that this work can proceed; and all the foundation work will be done for the pumps in those areas. This Government sees no point in accepting the Motion move by my hon. Friend because of the plans we already have and the work that has already been done, Mr. Speaker, we have no alternative but to reject the Motion.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Speaker, I am disappointed in the contribution by the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture. Is the Hon. Minister telling this House that the technical officer whose name he mentioned did not recommend the implementation of the M.M.A Scheme? [**Mr. Green:** "When?"] The Hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply said that he has no regard and respect for technical officers, he does not need technical advice to build kokers. This is the downfall of the Government. You use the officers in your moments of sever difficulties when the farmers are actually looking for those who are in command of their destiny to project the image of these officers and say we have placed it in the most competent hands. When those competent officers advise, whether it is the Government shows absolutely no consideration to Hutchinson, Comacho, Naraine or Ransahoye. What Green says matters.

Mr. Speaker, common sense will teach the Hon. Minister that if the M.M.A. Scheme is implemented obviously the water has to be drained into the Berbice River. There can be no doubt therefore that the proper drainage and irrigation facilities will be extended beyond the Abary and it will include Ithaca, No. 28 Village, Rosignal, etc. The Hon. Minister's point had no logic, no reason and no sense. He spoke without knowledge of this subject, he needs to be advised.

Probably he will be in a better position if he takes the advice of the technical officers who are better qualified to speak on the subject.

Taking about what the Government is doing, Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member Mr. Stoby has just informed me that in December there were four feet of water between Matthews Ridge and Arakaka. The farmers in that area lost all their crops. I think efforts are being made now by the Ministry to send them food parcels. Everytime this happens the Government gives the farmers a few pounds of flour, some bread, and two boxes of matches until the next flood. This is the kind of Government we have in office.

At Lousiana Leguan in the Essequibo Island, the koker has not been in operation for some time now. Since last year, I am reliably informed, the Government has done nothing; as a result, the farmers have been suffering. If Members of the Government had gone to the areas that were affected during last year's flood they would have seen that almost all the very arable agriculture lands in this country were under water – the canals, both No. 1 and 2, the East Coast, West Coast Berbice and Essequibo. We received letters from almost every area in the country that was involved in agriculture. How can the Minister say that something is being done, and he said even the blind can see. But let me say those of us who have eye cannot see and we commend the blind who see the work that the Government is doing. It is only the blind this Government can speak to; this Government cannot speak to people who have eyes because everyone can see it wants a nation of blind people to deal with. The Hon. Minister was honest this afternoon when he said this Government is catering for the blind; and I congratulate him for being honest so far as this is concerned.

Mr. Chairman, the Government tried to say this was not completed in Black Bush Polder, that was not completed at Tapakuma, and this was left to be done in this scheme and that scheme established by the People's Progressive Party. I think that these are very poor points. What the P.P.P. has to show are these schemes, and there can be no doubt that the people who have gone on these schemes have benefited and they are grateful to the P.P.P. Government. In

fact, this Government, if it has done anything, is to destroy the schemes. The P.P.P. has always said that when it established a scheme we did not mean that there will be no more interest and attention to that scheme. The P.P.P. was prepared to make further extension and contribution so that the agriculture sector can be viable.

[Interruption]

Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Minister said I referred to Matthews Ridge and Kibilibiri and still I am saying that the P.N.C. Government has done no schemes. I want to remind the Minister of what I have said, and I repeat, the Government is merely doing experiment in those two areas. I challenge him to produce 4,000 people at Matthews Ridge. I repeat the people have refused free houses and free lights and the people want to go back to Georgetown. They are terribly disappointed in the P.N.C. Government.

The Government is aware of its own problems at Matthews Ridge. I do not want to bore this House with Matthews Ridge. They are still paying the bills for Matthews Ridge. The Government's input at Kibilibiri is so great that it will never be able to reap enough to compensate for the amount they spent there. The Minister knows that the golf course is being used to graze cattle. Grass does not grow there. Two acres for one cow. The area that is fertile is ignored.

Coming back to the main point, the Hon. Minister has made a serious faux pas in this debate when he confined his contribution mainly to drainage. The Motion calls for both drainage and irrigation. Commonsense will tell him the pumps only pump out water. What facilities has the Government got to irrigate the area? There is no reservoir because there is no conservancy beyond Cane Grove. The Minister needs to examine the files a little more so he would not make the mistakes he has made in this debate. Installing pumps is an expensive process and pumps can be used by sugar because they can afford to purchase pumps, but in other areas of agriculture it is uneconomical. He can ask of his experts.

The Hon. Minister said production rose in sugar. We have charges that because the planters are in command of the water conservancy when there is drought, they keep the water to themselves and put it in the cane fields at the expense of rice and every other crop and so cane was properly serviced and rice suffered in the Boeraserie and on the East Coast. We call upon the Government, and we repeat, they have delayed too long in scrapping both the East Demerara Conservancy Board and the Boeraserie Conservancy Board. We want one central organisation for water control not dominated by the planters but the majority of the people must be genuine farmers' representatives who should be in control. What will the answer be? "We do not have all the legal officers available to us to prepare the necessary legislation to enable these things to happen", but these things are more important than other Bills that have been brought into this House, and if they can find officers for a lot of Bills that are not vital to the economy, surely they can find them to work on the East Demerara and Boeraserie Water Conservancies.

I did not say nor is it the policy of the P.P.P to speak against hinterland development. What I said is, hinterland development must not be pursued at the expense of the coastal belt, and I advanced arguments to show that it is more advantageous to give people land on the East Coast or West Coast Berbice, because people are living there, sugar worked retrenched from the various sugar estates, retrenched from sea defence and workers retrenched from all and sundry in the country. You are going to send them away to Timbucktoo where there are no social facilities. The worker who has never done farming will be more attracted if he is put in an area where social facilities exist. It would have been a good starting ground.

By rejecting this Motion I am disappointed; by rejecting this Motion the Government is rejecting the opportunity of developing nearly 469,700 acres of land and, as I said, 208,000 acres of class "A" soil. The Government is rejecting an opportunity to provide arable land for the country. The answer is to use all available lands and put people simultaneously on the land, if possible. The Government establishes this corporation, and that corporation, the bureaucracy here and there. It will be vital and Opposition will support if need be, an application to expand

the Ministry of Agriculture to provide machinery for efficient and speedy distribution of land in all the areas. This is the argument of the P.P.P.

We say that the Government is running the agricultural sector without a plan and without a programme and it makes decisions on the spur of the moment. Imagine the Government is analysing a scheme that has been in the record for so many years and up to 1972 it is still undecided as to what it to be done. This is the Government we have got.

May I ask the Government to reconsider its stand on this matter? I want to appeal to the Government to violate its normal stand of rejecting everything the Opposition brings in the House and on this occasion to recognise that this is an important measure, a measure that should transcend petty political considerations, and a Motion which should be weighed in the light of prevailing circumstances, in the light of Government's own declared objective of producing.

I accuse the Government of a decline in production. The Government envisaged an increase of 30 per cent but there has been a decline. Banning this and that will not force the farmers on the land. You have to encourage people and offer them the necessary incentives to get them on the land. Before there is a further drop in rice production, the Government will have to consider increased rice prices, to offer incentives in other areas of agriculture, to have guaranteed prices for farmers' produce, and to make loans available to the farmers with nominal interest. The time has come for the Government to give serious thought and consideration to the country and for the Government to realise that if it continues to show this approach to agriculture it will stifle the economic progress not only of the people of the region referred to in the Motion but the economic progress of the people generally in the agricultural sector of this country.

5.30 p.m.

I feel that this Motion should have been a non-controversial Motion, that it should have been accepted, and that the scheme implemented as advised by nearly all the available officers to the

Government and the country. I now formally as the Mover of the Motion move that the question be put to the House for the vote to be taken.

[The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply rose to conclude the debate. The Members of the People's Progressive Party left the Chamber.]

The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply (Mr. Green) (Concluding the debate): Mr. Speaker, to stand not to attempt in any way to add to what my colleague the Hon. Minister of Agriculture said because he analysed in a very excellent manner the history of what we call today the M.M.A. Scheme. He not only gave a background to the problems encountered in the past, but he attempted to project very ably what we propose in the future. Therefore, for just a few short moments I wish to bring this Hon. House back to the substantive motion which in addition to the resolve clause says:

“Whereas many years ago, Guyanese engineers completed the plans for the implementation of the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary (MMA) Drainage and Irrigation Scheme:...”

It is important to set the record straight because my friends suggested that this was not a controversial Motion. Indeed as the Hon. Minister of Agriculture pointed out, the Government has already taken active steps to implement what is the revised M.M.A. Scheme as put forward by the engineers attached to the Government. Mr. Speaker, in spite of what the Hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud said that we are reluctant and we refused to take the advice of the technical officers, it is because the Government has a great respect for the Guyanese officer that we have had a careful look at several proposals which were put from time to time. We are now working on the proposals put up by a young and brilliant Guyanese engineer. There is no question of the Government not taking or accepting technical advice.

As I said I just wanted to set the record straight and make it clear that we on this side of the House will not, as suggested by the Opposition, merely reject a motion because it was put by

the People's Progressive Party. The Motion as recorded here means nothing (a) because the proposals are in themselves inaccurate, and (b) because the Hon. Member Dr. Reid pointed out we have already started implementation of the revised Scheme.

Mr. Speaker, to correct the other area of inaccuracy. The new scheme upon which we have embarked is intended to provide flood control. The Hon. Member said we ignored completely irrigation, and suggested that my colleague the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister only alluded to the problem of drainage and pumping on the Coast. But the second phase of the scheme will deal primarily with the creation of a storage reservoir of about 240 square miles in extent, and irrigation of about 136,000 net acres of land. A Scheme as expensive as this, taking in the large and substantial acreage as it will, cannot be completed overnight and as I said we have started. I wanted to ensure that when the history of this House is written that inaccuracies mouthed by the Opposition are not left unanswered. For instance, reference was made to places like Louisiana Leguan which, I am sure my Hon. Friend knows, is a private estate and at the moment is not the responsibility of the Government.

The Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran during his contribution – and I found it difficult to make intelligent notes when he was speaking – said that this Government disregarded engineer again. I am not sure why they are harping on this point and suggested that Mr. Bobby Comacho who was then Director of Drainage and Irrigation in Guyana then British Guiana left Guyana because he was frustrated. The Hon. Member is absolutely accurate, and the records should bear out what he said as being accurate that Comacho left here because he was frustrated. But it is to be noted that he left here in 1961 when the very Hon. Member was Minister of Works and Hydraulics.

I am concerned that Motions are brought to this House and that we have this low level debate because a member of the Opposition pointed out to me very recently, this is not the sort of thing to come to this House with a substantive motion, but that Members of the Opposition can use the office which they have provided by this Government to ask intelligent questions and they

will be provided with the answers. For example, if the Mover of this Motion has asked either the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply we would have been only too happy, in fact, most anxious to point out to him and show him what has been done and what the Government proposes to do in the interest of the people of this country and making for the first time a reality of the dream of the people of the coast that the area between Mahaica and Rosignol should be properly drained and left for good and proper agricultural use.

Motion negatived.

INDIAN IMMIGRATION FUND

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly recommends that the Government should reconsider its decision on the use of Indian immigration Fund and in the interest of national accord and unity resume discussions with the Immigration Fund Committee with a view to arriving at a satisfactory solution.” *[Leader of the Opposition]*

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

[The Motion was not moved and was not deferred by the Assembly.]

5.40 p.m.

BILL – SECOND READING

PRIVATE HOSPITALS BILL

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to make provision for the licensing of Private Hospitals and for purposes connected therewith.” *[The Minister of Health]*

26.01.72

National Assembly

5.30- 5.40 p.m.

The Minister of Health (Miss Shirley Field-Ridley): Mr. Speaker, we have discussed this matter with the Opposition. We do not propose to proceed with this Bill now and I move that this Bill be deferred.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill deferred.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That the Assembly do now adjourned to a date to be fixed.” [*Mr. Ramsaroop*]

Adjourned accordingly at 5.42 p.m.
