

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 6]

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

4th Sitting **2.00 p.m.** **Wednesday, 22nd November, 1972**

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

Members of the Government

People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

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

Dr. The Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National
Development and Agriculture

(Absent – on leave)

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

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Works and Communications

(Absent – on leave)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of Local Government

Appointed Ministers

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

The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Public Affairs

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

The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education **(Absent)**

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

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

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

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

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

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Information
Culture and Youth

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

Other Members

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

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

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

Mr. RamKarran
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C. (Absent – on leave)
Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson (Absent – on leave)
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.
Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bholu Persaud
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P. (Absent)
Mr. L.A. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

United Force

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

Independent

Mr. R.E. Checks (Absent)
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco

Officers

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

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**LEAVE TO MEMBERS**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Minister of Works and Communications Mr. Hoyte for today's sitting, and to the hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye for four weeks from today.

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ADUMBRATED
IN THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

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

Mr. Speaker: The Assembly will resume the debate on the Motion to approve of the Government's policy adumbrated in the President's Address. The hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Guyana is unique in that it is probably the only country in the world that has got two Ministers of Agriculture. While one is in Canada examining applications from Guyanese who want land in Guyana, there is one sitting in the House to probably contribute to this debate. It would be far better if the Ministers find themselves in this country and examine the applications of a large number of Guyanese, who wish land here, instead of running to Canada or other parts of the world under the disguise of examining

applications for land when in fact it was more or less a drive to collect proxies overseas,
[*Interruption*]

I am not against the individual who sits here as Minister of Agriculture, but I ask myself this question as the P.P.P. spokesman on agriculture: which of the Ministers' decision will really be binding if one makes one decision and the other makes another decision, what would be the position? These are questions which must occupy the enquiring mind in a country like this.

If the Government feels that Mr. Kasim is best qualified to be the Minister of Agriculture, in view of the fact that he was a farmer, then appoint him Minister of Agriculture and ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister to take charge of another Ministry. In the President's Speech – The hon. Member asks since when we have the right to decide. We are here as the watchdog for the taxpayers and it is a waste of the taxpayers' money, it is an extravagance to throw away money like this by appointing two Ministers to run one Ministry. Formerly that Ministry had Forests and Mines. That Ministry is now divided –

Mr. Speaker: Please do not interrupt your own Member, Mr. Hamid.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: In the President's Address mention was made about the agricultural bank being established in January next year. This question of an agricultural bank has been suggested to this House some three years ago and as recently as the middle of this year the hon. Minister of Finance said in a press statement appearing in the Government's paper that that bank would have been established and opened in September. We are in November and we are waiting to see what will happen in the month of January.

2.10 p.m.

Sir, so far as agriculture is concerned the Government attempts to let this nation feel, and probably the world, that it is deeply interested in agriculture expansion and that much is being done for the development of agriculture but the facts are definitely against the Government.

[**Hon. Member:** "What facts?"]

The hon. Member asks what facts. Let us deal with item number one, rice. Year after year the Peoples progressive Party has advocated increased prices for rice in this country. The Government refused to budge. In fact, the hon. Minister of Agriculture said if the rice farmers want higher income, that income must come from increased yields. [Hon. Member: "Yes"] During this very year the hon. Minister of Agriculture had to eat up his own words on two separate and distinct occasions when, in fact, the Government was impelled because of the drop in production to announce an increase in the price of rice.

Mr. Speaker, what are the facts? In 1965, production was 164,902 tons, in 1971, the production, according to the government's figure was 120,000 tons; one can see the substantial fall in the production of rice. These are revealing facts which cannot be queried. As a matter of fact, during this year 1972 rice production will fall below 100,000 tons. I say this because the Burma rice mill which is accustomed to producing 400,000 bags of rice at the end of each crop will receive less than 100,000 bags at the end of this crop, so that production at the end of this year will be 100,000 tons or less.

The Government cannot deny that it has been unable to keep the Jamaican market by supplying it with 10,000 tons. I am reliably informed that when the Manager of the Rice Marketing Board, Mr. Sutherland, went abroad he was able to secure markets for rice in Britain but the Government is unable to supply these markets. The fact is the Government has not been able accept these markets in the United States, so what is the position? All the silos which we described some time ago as would be white elephants are empty and useless, because we do not have enough rice to supply the market.

Sir, what is the truth? The truth is that the P.N.C. Government has reduced the price of rice during its term of office. The price the farmers used to get for rice in 1962 were far higher than under the People's National Congress Government. If you read Mr. Kennard's release on rice, I am quoting from the Guyana Graphic of October 1972, and this is what he said:

“The increases are expected to give farmers an additional \$2 million in earnings a year. It is expected that farmers would take immediate advantage of this windfall by planting a bumper spring crop.”

This statement can only have one interpretation, that the Government is aware of the fact that there has been a fall in production, as a result, it offers \$1 increase per bag for rice so that the situation can be changed. Let me say that the Government has come too late with this offer and what is most ridiculous the offer cannot meet present-day cost of production and cost of living. I am calling upon the Government to increase the rice price by \$4 per bag. The price of rice must be increased by \$4 and the price of padi must be increased by \$2 a bag.

Let me make another point. Mr. Speaker, so far as restructuring of the grades is concerned it must be pointed out to the Government that while the rice price has been increased by \$1 per bag the drainage system has been manipulated by the Government so that the farmers are now receiving less than 50 cents of the previous The farmers are in a worse position. The Government has destroyed the rice industry and frustrated the farmers. As a result, there is a decrease in the production of rice.

I move on to the question of milk. What is the position with milk? We have advocated in this House an increase in the price of milk for several years. The Government refused to yield our appeals on behalf of the farmers so that the milk price can be increased.

How did the farmers get this increase? The farmers only got an increase after they withdrew supply of milk to the Milk Pasteurisation Plant. The Farmers in the Mahaica/Mahaicony area went on a virtual strike, the shops were without milk, the Milk Pasteurisation Plant was without milk and it is only then that this hard-headed P.N.C. Government was compelled and forced to announce an increase. As a result of the increase the supply of milk to the Milk Pasteurization Plant more than doubled within one week.

The farmers have got serious problems in this country. So far as milk is concerned the Government has not been making loans available to milk farmers. The Government is providing money for the development of the cattle industry, for beef; but the Government has not until now provided a scheme whereby the farmers involved in the production of milk can receive loans and grants from the Government. The time has come for this to be done. In fact, we can reach a stage of self-sufficiency in many respects so far as milk is concerned. We will be able to produce our own cheese and butter but the government has not really been showing enough interest in this field.

Let us talk now about copra. Coconut is the third largest industry. The hon. Minister cannot sit in the House this afternoon and tell me that he is not in favour of an increase in the price of copra. The position is that millions are being spent each year in the importation of coconut oil from the Caribbean and soya bean from the U.S.A. In 1971 the Government bought from the United States of America, under the PL-480 Agreement, 500 metric tons of soya bean valued at \$386,500. In this Parliament we voted \$468,800 to subsidise the importation of coconut oil from the West Indies. The fact is that in 1964 when the P.P.P. was in Government we bought 581,924 gallons of edible oil from all sources. The P.N.C. Government as at November 1971 bought 9,277,736 gallons of oil valued at \$3,444,790. When this Government boasts of reaching that stage of self-sufficiency the facts and figures do not support the Government's claim.

2.20 p.m.

Instead of the Government involving and indulging in sloganeering and high flown phrases, the Government ought to get down to the work, because in the final analysis, when the figures are examined, the Government will not be able to deny them.

The position with copra is, the highest price for copra is 14½ cents, but rarely farmers receive 14½ cents; they get 12½ and 13½ cents probably, and in the Caribbean countries, farmers are paid 19 cents and over 19 cents per pound for copra. I am calling now on the Government to

state today what is the Government's position in so far as copra prices are concerned. The Government should announce in this House an increase in copra prices. I could suggest another figure. Under the P.P.P., 53,000 nuts were picked according to the figures. That was in 1964. In 1970, the figure was 50,000 according to the Government's own figures, excluding home consumption and water coconuts, so that we can see the Government does not have much to boast about in the field of agriculture. If the consumers go to the market, they will be able to know because this is reality.

When the P.P.P. was in the Government, cassava was 5 and 6 cents per pound, plantains 5 and 6 cents per pound. Under the P.N.C. Government, plantains, cassava, eddoes, 20 cents per pound, but the farmers are not in any better position. Why is the price for ground provisions so high? The price is high because there is a fall in production of ground provisions. I cite the figures in your own book. In 1962, 131,700 pounds, in 1970, 56,632 pound, production in ground provision. There has also been a fall in the production of plantains if one were to examine the figures. When the P.P.P. was in the Government, we used to export plantains to the Caribbean. Under the P.N.C. Government, we do not have enough for home consumption and that is why the price has risen for ground provisions.

The Government cannot even claim as increase in the production of citrus; in 1962, 24,986 pounds; 1964, 25,323 pounds, in 1970 under the P.N.C. Government it had fallen to 18,500 pounds. So there has been a fall in rice, fall in copra, fall in citrus, fall in ground provisions. All we hear from the Government is the false hope the Government is giving to this nation, that by 1976 we will be able to feed ourselves. This is impossible and the Government is merely living in dreams and the Government is attempting to get the Guyanese nation to also live in dreams and live in hope. Amidst all this the Government has got to its credit or discredit the fact of withdrawing certain incentives from this farmers of this country and only in this year 1972 the Government has increased land rental, by an Order, from 25 cents acre to \$2 per acre. One farmer, writing in the Daily Chronicle of 17th August, 1972, Gordon Thompson of 303 Church Street, said:

“I am one of those fortunate persons to have just been granted a lease of State Land but since my application dated back to 1971, my entire cash flow projections were based on the then going rate of 25 cents per acre.

I humbly submit to the Government and particularly the Minister of Agriculture that the new rate of \$2.00 per acre would serve as a disincentive to farming and would certainly not be in keeping with Government’s policy of feeding the nation by 1976.”

By no stretch of imagination is Mr. Gordon Thompson a member of the P.P.P., and he is making the point that the Government cannot achieve its objective by 1976 of feeding the nation. As I said, the Government stands indicted by the farming community of Guyana for not pursuing policies in the interest of the farmers and this statement is supported by the fact that the Government has failed in all the field of agriculture. The time has come for the Government to rethink its whole position on this question because even in so far as drainage and irrigation is concerned the Government has not been pursuing an objective policy. Will the hon. Minister tell us what plans the Government has got to rehabilitate and to give financial assistance to farmers who were flooded out during this year at Pomeroun, Mahaicony, Mahaica, West Bank and other parts of the country? Those persons are frustrated, they are without any financial help to rehabilitate themselves. Let us hear what the Government has in mind for those farmers.

Finally, let me say very forcefully that the Government is guilty of misleading, fooling and robbing the rice farmers, because while it has announced an increase of \$1 per bag for rice, the Government has restructured the grading system and the farmers’ rice which used to be grades as Super, has fallen below that grade. White “A” is not being graded as White “B”, so the farmers are now losing 50 cents per bag. They are in a worse position under the P.N.C. Government. Unless the price is increase substantially, by \$4 per bag for rice and \$2 per bag for padi, the rice industry will fall further and the production will be worse during this year 1972.

The Minister of State for Agriculture (Mr. Kasim): Mr. Speaker, the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud has started off in a very furious mood. As a matter of fact, from the inception, he has started bowling his body-line and bouncers but before I start to hit him to the boundary, I will endeavor to divert myself to the President's Address, and especially to some of the paragraphs on which some comments were made very unjustifiably.

As a matter of fact, the President was congratulating you on the fine manner in which you have guided the House, and I would like to say that those remarks that were made in this House by member from the opposite side reminded me of one of Shakespeare's plays, the merchant of Venice. As a matter of fact, on many occasions, sir, you have overruled this side of the House in favour of the Opposition, and I can remember on one occasion when you overruled the Government side, they were so jubilant – I am sorry the hon. Member Mr. Wilson is not in his seat – that he shouted: "A Daniel has come to judgement." When they were given their pound of justice, they were very jubilant, but when you, sir, decided they must not take one drop of human blood from the Government side, they became annoyed and said you were partial. Shame on these hon. Members! You have performed fearlessly, impartially, and, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of this side of the House, I should like to endorse everything that the President has said in this Speech.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, on page 3 and 4 of the President's Address it is stated – and I should like to read what is stated there because hon. Members opposite said the Address is empty and has not substance, maybe they lack comprehension. I quote:

"My Government recognizes that in this process of nation building we must not have our vision blurred by the traditional concepts of a passing, if not past, era. While we build on what may be good from the past, my Government is ready to embark with fearless imagination on new methods and to use new mechanisms which offer real prospects of development.

Committed to the building of a Co-operative Socialism and inspired by the principles of self-reliance, my Government's energies will be devoted in large measure in the forthcoming session to advancing the national objectives of Feeding, Clothing and Housing Guyana. In the achievement of these goals the role of the co-operative in channeling and canalizing the energies of our people and ensuring the proper distribution of the fruits of that development is of special significance.

The development and diversification of our total agricultural product lies at the basis of my Government's strategy for the development of Guyana. The Session ahead will see an intensification of our national efforts for the improved efficiency and productivity in existing agricultural undertakings and the expansion of the agricultural sector by the introduction of new crops and in new areas."

Mr. Speaker, this Address speaks for itself. As a matter of fact, my hon. Friends on the opposite side cannot understand what is written in this booklet. So Mr. Speaker what I am going to say now is that Guyana has set itself a noble and praiseworthy task of feeding, housing and clothing the nation by 1976. We are sparing no pains in this pursuit.

The hon. Member Mr. Bhola Persaud spoke about squandermania and that the national debts are increasing. He told us just now he is responsible for New Amsterdam. As a matter of fact he has travelled all over the Corentyne going around making propaganda on behalf of his party. He has seen the new highway that the Government has built from New Amsterdam to Corentyne, he has seen a highway on the West Coast Berbice he has seen a highway from Soesdyke to Linden. He has seen a good road on the West Coast Demerara, on the Essequibo Coast, he has seen the sea defence that we have built, he has seen a new airport building and yet he is saying we do not have anything to show for the money spent in the development of this country. This hon. Member is shouting that our national debts are growing, but during the regime of the P.P.P. all these things were neglected and it took this Government to find money to save this country from destruction. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Bhola Persaud while I agree with hecking it is not every time I will permit an interruption. I think you are overdoing the thing.

Mr. Kasim: I will bear with him Mr. Speaker, where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise. There are some people who have eyes but they do not see.

There are five areas that the Ministry of Agriculture is pursuing relentlessly (1) the production of crop and livestock for the domestic and export market. (2) the provision of raw material for manufacture and industrial growth in the field of agro-industry. (3) the earning and saving of foreign exchange for the nation. (4) the production of a satisfactory state of employment for the nation as a whole and particularly the rural areas.

2.40 p.m.

Lastly, and certainly most important, providing a higher standard of living, a better quality of life for those who labour on earth through the opportunities that flow naturally from increased farm incomes.

The hon. Member Mr. Sutton stated that there was a flood in the Pomeroun and we are not doing anything in that area to assist in the drainage facilities. For his information, before that flooding, we had started to dig the Cozier Canal. Work is now being carried on there. It is going on to the sea where we are going to build a sea dam coming down to the mouth of the Pomeroun where we have already started to work on the Aberdeen Canal. When these are finished, the farmers in the Pomeroun will be secure. *[Interruption]* On the Corentyne we have the Black Bush Polder where we have a firm of engineers now carrying out feasibility studies to improve the drainage and irrigation facilities. These areas, when completed, will have proper irrigation and drainage facilities and the farmer will suffer no more. We will be digging the Bellamy Canal, a canal which was started by the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran when he was Minister of Works and Communications, but which was never completed. Now that the farmers brought a delegation to me, we have now decided to complete that canal to give the farmers relief.

We had out for tender electric pumps to facilitate drainage and irrigation and these tenders are now closed. They are now being processed for the award to be made. All over the country we are going to place pumps for drainage at strategic points. These farmers will enjoy better drainage and irrigation facilities. Two will be placed next year at Essequibo, two on the East Coast Demerara, one at Cane Grove, one at West Coast Berbice, and one at Corentyne.

The hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud knows fully well that when he phoned me the other day, I immediately came to the farmers' rescue and put two culverts at Burma and gave them relief. This is the spirit that we need. If we are going to build Guyana, then we should cooperate. The members of the Opposition should speak to us and we should not be vindictive towards them when they are making good recommendations. As a matter of fact, when they come to this House making noise and preaching falsehoods, then the time has come for us to rebut them. On the West coast Demerara, we have started the excavation of trenches in the Potosi-Kamuni area.

We are not jumping on the roof top to shout this. We are working silently but constructively. Excavation of trenches at Hague and installation of drainage boxes at Den Amstel; excavation of trenches at Vergenoegen; designs completed for Look Out area, the place which they were making so much noise about, they should go and see Pln. Look out now, how much we have done to rehabilitate the estate where we are going to settle farmers in a cooperative spirit. On West Coast Berbice we are imploding Ithaca, Schumacher's Lust; construction of two culverts at Burma, the roads Division is constructing the Mahaicony branch road inclusive of several culverts to improve the drainage of the area; on the Essequibo, Three Friends, we have built a new pump there.

As a matter of fact I will not pay attention to a layman like the hon. Member Mr. Bholu Persaud who does not know anything about drainage and irrigation. The previous Director of Works and Hydraulics who is now Minister of Housing and Reconstruction is here and he told

me yesterday that the pump is working effectively. We have sealed off the breaches on the sea dam from Aurora. And numerous other works we are doing in the drainage and irrigation areas.

Going back to the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, the first thing that he stated was that the whole country has produced 50,000 nuts and while he was speaking, I questioned him again to make sure that he cannot deny the figures which he gave me. This showed his lack of knowledge of the industry. A total of 50,000 coconuts can produce only 100 bags of copra so it shows that he is sitting there as Shadow Minister and he does not know what he is talking about. If he does not know about coconut, he should not dabble in industries of which he has no knowledge, or ability to represent.

Your Honour, I want to tell you some of the good things we in the Ministry of Agriculture are doing for the nation. Two years ago when this Government had banned cabbage in this country, the price went up from 50 to 60 to 72 cents per pound. These were the people who told us we cannot produce cabbage in this country. Eventually, we produced so much cabbage that we met our domestic market and the price went down to 15 cents per pound last year. As a matter of fact, the indigenous people of this country have learnt the art of planting cabbage and other crops,

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, my time is limited but I must say it has been asserted that civilisation started when man first learned to till the soil and I want these hon. Members to know – [*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Hamid

Mr. Hamid: I am sorry, sir.

Mr. Kasim: And when they were assured of an adequate supply of food then they started to build towns cities and industries. This is what we are doing in Guyana today. By 1976 we hope that Guyana will be self-sufficient in food so that the people in this country will not have to import any food from abroad.

The hon. Member is saying that we are responsible for shortage of rice. Who is responsible for the shortage of wheat in Russia? They are purchasing wheat from the U.S.A. This is the great socialist country that the P.P.P. is hanging on to its apron strings. Who is responsible for the shortage of wheat in China? They are buying wheat from Canada. India is facing a shortage of food. The hon. Member's conscience is blurred when it comes to the P.N.C. Government. I will tell him this, all the development programmes that we have placed in this country is enough evidence; and at the time of elections they will tell the nation to vote for the Peoples National Congress and we will vote the P.P.P. out entirely for life. [Applause]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, I am sorry to hear that you were ill for the past few days. I hope you are much better. I hope hon. Members will afford you the courtesy by paying attention to what you are saying.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Thank you, sir, I am still not feeling well, but I felt it was important enough for me to come to address this hon. House this afternoon. [*Interruption by Mr. Aaron*] I hope the remark of the last hon. Member is not indicative of the intolerance of the other side of the House. I would hope that one would realize that it is human nature for every one of us to be ill at some time or the other. If a remark like that is indicative of what intolerance is possessed by the other side, I think that Guyana is doomed.

[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, will you please permit the hon. Member to speak?

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, if you went to a sale of paintings and the auctioneer held up an empty frame would you pay out good money for that empty frame even though it may be painted with gold? I am sure that you would not. I would go further and say, judging from your character, that you would be little impressed if the auctioneer were to tell you that there was no risk in paying hard earned cash because in a few months' time he would present you at no extra cost with a masterpiece in oils. Mr. Speaker, again if I may judge your character, I think you might will be tempted to frame him with his own golden frame and move to another auctioneer.

In the President's Address, Mr. Speaker, this hon. House had been offered a frame, a beautiful golden painted frame but no picture, no masterpiece. We are asked to judge the artist's skill by the frame, maker's skill, and to take the rest on trust. We are asked to give extended credit. We say no credit, none at all, cash today credit tomorrow. We had done business in the past with this same firm of auctioneers and we have not found comfort or security in the acceptance of their promises to pay or indeed, their promises to do anything else. As with the empty frame the President's Address is an admirable example of one kind of art, but it is not the kind of art that we want.

The Address like the frame is only notable for what it does not contain. We may admire the little bits of carvings here and there, we may admire the gold paint but, what we want is the true clear picture of what is going on. A mere frame may be good enough for this Government, a Government which does not seem to mind leaving a much wanted cultural Centre without walls or a roof long after it was supposed to be finished.

But a mere frame is not good enough for us in the United Force, and I dare say for the rest of the population in this country. We have been promised that the Budget which is to come will reveal all, but Mr. Speaker, are we to wait on that Budget Speech while the cost of living continues to rise. Or does the Government intends to do something about the cost of living now to aid suffering people in the country? The President's Address says nothing. We have been told in the past that by the barring from our of the many foreign items on which we

formerly relied we would not only aid our balance of payment but we would stimulate local produce.

All this and the inept activities of the E.T.B., all that seems to have happened within recent times is that prices seem to have been stimulated so that prices of local produce have gone up and up: and the housewives know this very well. First, it was ground provision that skyrocketed, then it was greens, then it was fruits and now the fancy prices seem to have gone to the meat market so that very shortly it would appear that the ordinary man will not be able to afford for his children what before he may have been able to feed to his dogs.

What about housing? We are told that the Government is going to create a Mortgage Bank. That is excellent as far as that goes. But a Bank will not act as a substitute for planning. Does the Government not realize that with the growing population and that population' growing expectations people are out-growing the very houses which are being built? The Government is approaching this problem on a piece-meal basis, a little here and a little there by self-help and a little bit out yonder by enterprise. We will build, the Government says, enough houses by such and such time. But where is the overall planning which alone can make this possible? Where is the essential plan? Where is the detailed programme? Have we got anything like that before us?

Much more could be done if there was a sound essential plan to delegate authority, for example, to local government bodies and city councils. They should be more involved in the much needed clearance and rehousing than they are at present moment.

3 p.m.

Our housing problem is not just building houses. We have another problem, a problem of building houses not only for the growing population but rehousing those thousands of people who are struggling along and living in houses that are little better than pig stys. Probably even the pigs in certain quarters have better houses.

I thought that by now the Government would have announced at long last that all this talk about a new hospital was going to become action, but again the President's Speech is silent about a new hospital. Week after week month after month thousands of people play National Radio Bingo and Lottery, and even private enterprise, the *Graphic_Crossword*, that brings in money. What about an announcement in respect of this new hospital? We have had admirable efforts by private enterprise. Are those people not entitled to some announcement in respect of this new hospital? If there is not enough money to build this new hospital, then we are going about things in the wrong way. If there is enough money, where is the money, how much is it, and when are we going to get started.

It is a known fact that sick people are still packed in the Public Hospital two and even three in a bed, and some on the floor. Are we going to continue asking these people to continue lying on the floor and waiting? Indeed, in some parts of the country, our medical services would be a joke were it not for the fact that it is such a tragedy. One again I ask the question, where is the central planning in respect of our medical services? It seems very sadly lacking and one may ask a further question, what is being done by the Government to encourage our local people to qualify as doctors, as nurses, as medical technicians, etc., so that we would not be as dependent as we are at the present moment, on foreigners coming from abroad to help us out in respect of our medical services?

If I may move on to another aspect on which there seems to have been some silence in respect of roads, what is happening in respect of the road to Brazil? Has it come to a standstill like the cultural centre without a top? Are we making headway with that road? Or is it not time for us to change our technique in respect of that road and put on it the unemployed instead of the holiday makers, the students, and the free-loaders. One may ask a supplementary question. Is this road in fact one of the first essentials? What is it in terms of priority? What about the roads in our city, in the enlarged areas where people are living right now and they have no-existent access to their homes. Some of the roads in our Garden City, extended as it is, would be a shame even to a sixteenth century town.

I am reminded that perhaps this is the wrong forum, but I will remind the hon. Member that the people who occupy the seats in the Town Council are the result of the rigging of both the national and the Local Government Elections, and are in the majority of one political party, one persuasion. A former Minister of Information made the remark that there is a very thin line of demarcation, if indeed any demarcation, between the central government and its satellites and the ruling party, so, the ruling political party must take the blame for what is happening in the municipal and local authorities.

Too often in the past, the ruling party has chosen to announce to its congress and to its forums on the parade ground, matters of national interest, instead of bringing to this honourable House. Many a time in the past this honourable House has been by-passed and the leader of the P.N.C. has said: we are the rulers, we will say it where we like, at first where we like, and when we say it, that is it. One must face the realities of the situation in Guyana. The ruling party has said that it is the mouthpiece. It has rigged the elections in such a way as to give itself majority in those places where we were permitted to put in candidates for Local Government Elections, and in the other places, it has got a complete majority. But I may mention here that even with its complete majority, the hon. Minister of Local Government is dissatisfied. I read in the Guyana Graphic recently that he has threatened his own councillors with dire consequences, he will see that they are removed by December this year. Perhaps he has undated letters of resignation for each of these members of the City Council. As I understand it, they cannot be removed. They are entitled to keep their seats, nevertheless, one sees how grave the dissatisfaction is today where the party's own village councilors are so dissatisfied that they are not bothering to go to attend village council meetings.

This empty Speech, the last sentence of it talks about "national unity will remain a priority in all my Government's efforts." As my hon. Colleague has said before, one solitary sentence with a few words in respect of national unity. How can the P.N.C. talk of national unity, or even promote national unity, when their actions are geared towards promoting strife. What else can one say is the Government's action when in fact, it, by its actions, is restricting the freedom of the press by restricting the importation of newsprint, by denying newsprint even to

the Mirror. The Mirror is entitled to say what it wants. We are the ones who must judge whether to accept what it says or not. Whether it is P.N.C. or P.P.P., we in the United Force believe in democracy, we believe that the people of this country are educated enough and have sense enough to make a sensible choice, and indeed, were it not for the rigging of the last elections, we would have had the P.N.C. sitting over here rather than over there.

What else can one say in respect of the P.N.C.'s policy of national unity but to say that it is a fraud, when in this very House it enacted legislation to so amend the Newspaper Ordinance as to make it possible for a man to have done something when, in fact, before this law was passed the man had no way of knowing that he could have possibly committed an offence. The Government has made directors in publishing companies personally liable for civil libel when, at the time they took their directorships they never would have been liable. Lifting the veil of incorporation, the Government calls it. That kind of legislation, does it promote national unity? It could not possibly do that.

3.10 p.m.

It is fraudulent like so many things that the P.N.C. Government is doing for this Government to come to this house and talk about national unity when in fact its whole policy seems to be geared on creating disruption. It is time for this Government to quit fooling around, and getting down to the task of improving the lot of the ordinary man in Guyana. We have been told that we have to wait on the Budget Speech for the masterpieces. We of the United Force wish to warn this Government that we are anxiously looking to see when the Budget Speech is presented that would be given a masterpiece and not the usual stogans of promises as has been the case in the past.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Speaker, this year's Presidential Address appears to be the worst we have ever heard presented in this National Assembly. It seems to me that the Government

thought that it just had to stick to the rules and observe the Constitution of Guyana, and that is why it presented us with, first of all, the prorogation of Parliament, a new session, and a Presidential Address. I have read this incoherent piece of document several times and I must confess that contrary to my expectations it is regrettably disappointing.

Mr. Speaker, with the twenty-five minutes at my disposal, I will deal briefly with some points about the educational system of Guyana and about youth. I would have thought that with a new parliamentary year, the Government would have brought to this House a revolutionary programme in education. I note that at one time the PNC used to be very critical of the word “revolutionary”, but recently all its Ministers are now talking about revolution and revolutionary changes. At one time they defined revolution as meaning terrorism and violence. Now they speak about a revolution to mean deep-going changes.

I would expect that this revolution the PNC talks about would also be reflected in the educational system of the country. But sadly, the Presidential Address does not expose or draw our attention to the commencement of any revolution in the educational system.

I will deal briefly with two points of the educational system which ought to be tackled very urgently. First of all, the question of the Common Entrance Examination, because I feel that this examination carries with it a very high degree of institutionalized discrimination against the young people of Guyana. It is no good we have a programme on the radio every day, we have educationists, we have the Ministers of the Government, the leaders of the party and the Government talking against the Common Entrance Examination, when the very Government has the machinery at its disposal to dispose of the Common Entrance Examination in the National educational system.

What is important is that we must recognize that the Common Entrance Examination throws off thousands of young people every year. And where are they thrown? They are thrown on to the heap of unemployment which is already 25% of the labour force; they are thrown on to the heap of crime; they are thrown on to the heap of prostitution, and to the heap of beggary.

The Common Entrance Examination really brings about a most contradictory situation in that the person whom it sends to the best schools of the country are those of the wealthy, the better-off. Now those very persons fortunately or unfortunately can send their children to the best schools anyhow because they can afford to pay for education at the best schools. But the best schools are occupied by the children of the wealthy and the worst secondary schools, the unaided secondary schools, the little mushroom schools all over the country are the ones to which the poor people's children have to go. The point is that the poor people's children are shut out of the best schools. These children are not allowed entrance in to the schools, not because they fail the examination is so highly competitive that only those of the better environment and those from the parents who can afford to give them the necessary equipment, the training, the guidance, the best nursery schools, the best kindergarten schools, the necessary food, are able to compete. Therefore, the free secondary education offered to the children of this country is not really given to those who need free secondary education but given to those who can afford to pay. That is why I call for the very urgent abolition of the Common Entrance Examination.

One other point about education is this. I want to touch very briefly on the question of the University of Guyana.

3.20 p.m.

The University of Guyana was founded in very trying and difficult circumstances in 1963. It was then an evening institution. Today, we have the university's own buildings at Turkeyen, we have a campus, but after nine years we still do not have two distinct programmes. We do not have a day programme as completely distinct from an evening programme. I am sorry that the hon. Minister of Education is not here because it would be interesting for her to know that students who have enrolled for the full-time or day-time programme still have to wait until 9.30 and 10.30 every evening for certain courses. So what is needed here is that the University should have more funds at its disposal so that it could have a comprehensive day-time programme which must not be connected at all or dependent on courses and lecturers in the evening programme. Courses like sociology, biology, and some others in the Faculty of Technology, the same lecturers who lecture to the evening students are the very lecturers who

lecture to the day-time students, and the so-called “day-time” students actually receive their lectures in the evening.

Thought the Vice Chancellor has been doing a brilliant job, and I want to record the credit of the Opposition for the gallant job which he has been doing, and though he is highly optimistic about the future of the University, if he is not provided with the funds necessary, he cannot transform the university into the institution he would like to be. Last year, the Vice Chancellor was speaking about being very optimistic about the future. I note that at the last graduation exercise at Queen’s College, the Vice Chancellor has qualified his optimism and is saying we must now talk about cautious optimism, because having seen that the Government is not putting up the funds necessary for the university, he has become very cautious. There are so many things I would like to talk about education but I do not have the time –

Mr. Speaker: You will have time tomorrow.

Mr. Teekah: Yes, sir. I would switch over to a very important thing which is being discussed by many young people in Guyana, a resolution passed at the Trades Union Congress, that is, the vote at 18. Guyana’s population is accepted by the Government at being over 60 per cent under 21 years. It is necessary, therefore, since we have such a large section of our population under 21 years, that we involve them actually and physically in the process of nation building. We hear remarks glibly made by members of the Government about involving the youth of the country in “the exciting process of nation building.” If the youths are not allowed to participate even in the selection of the Government of the country, which is an elementary thing, how could they be really involved in the process of nation building? I am the Chairman of a very powerful youth organization in this country, the Progressive Youth Organisation.

We always refer to the youth of the country as the leaders of tomorrow, but the hon. Prime Minister has now qualified that and said that the youths are the leaders of today. I want to ask the hon. Prime Minister, if the youths are the leaders of today, how could he be the Prime Minister of the Government of Guyana and in this very country, the youths who are the leaders of today do not have the vote at 18? Can Comrade Oscar Clarke explain that?

I have done a research and I found some very interesting statistics which I would now put to this House. It would be interesting to note that of the member countries of the United Nations, I have found the following, and this was given to me by the Public Free Library. It was published in the almanac of 1972 and it shows that there are 48 countries in the world today which have given the youths of their countries the vote at 18: Albania, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil – Fascist Brazil too – Bulgaria, Burma, Canada, Ceylon, Chile, People's Republic of China, Taiwan, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Kinshasa), Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Germany (East), Germany (West), Guatemala – even Fascist Haiti – Honduras, Hungary – Indonesia has the vote at 17 – Israel, Jordan, Laos, Mexico, Mexico, Mongolian People's Republic, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Romania, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, U.S.S.R., United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Yugoslavia, and Zambia.

The breakdown is this: there are 48 countries with the vote at 18, 1 country with the vote at 17, 15 countries with the vote at 20, which would make a total of 64 countries which have given the vote below 21 years, as against 60 countries which have the vote at 21, and 1 country at the age of 25 years.

3.30 p.m.

It means out of 125 countries cited, 64 countries have today given the young people of their countries the vote at 18 and one the vote at 17. There are so many other things I can explain why the vote at 18 should be given to the young people of Guyana – [*Interruption by the Prime Minister*] the hon. Prime Minister loves to inject these irrelevancies. It is no good that some people with the old mentality talking about the young people being irresponsible and so on. It is nonsensical to speak like that.

Mr. Speaker, it means that the case is very strong for the young people to have the vote at 18. But may I qualify in the context of Guyana that in the great need for the electoral reforms, the vote at 18 cannot be divorced from the other urgent electoral reforms now being asked for by the People's Progressive Party. During the Budget debate my other colleagues will enunciate

them. But this is one of the electoral reforms which are urgently needed if Guyana is really to make progress. As a matter of fact, it is one of the electoral reforms being adopted all over the world.

I want to urge the Government to put its words into practice. The Prime Minister has now taken his seat and since he talks about youths being the leaders of today, yes they can be the leaders of today, give them to vote at 18.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member Mr. Chan-A-Sue.

Mr. Chan-A-Sue: Mr. Speaker, development from all points has been one of the main objectives of the P.N.C. Government. Furthermore, the Government has been very determined and consistent in the planning and carrying out of its Development Programme throughout in this Co-operative Republic. This determination comes from caring a lot about the people of this Republic. The Government's consistency comes from the realization that to succeed we must work together and forward without easing up. This is the only way we can succeed in making the Co-operative Republic of Guyana great, within our own context and philosophy.

Mr. Speaker, this year a new dimension is added in one important aspect of our Republic's Development Programme, and I am speaking about hinterland development. It is only since this Government came into office that so much expert attention has been given to the areas making up our hinterlands. In fact, the Government has, time and again, demonstrated in practical form its care and humanitarian feelings, by sending out medical teams to help the people in these remote areas. These teams have been made up of doctors, dentists and nurses. Also a film unit has been provided so that our people will learn how they can safe-guard their health. People have to travel over difficult paths and rivers to the places where the doctors are usually stationed, and the Government realizing this has provided mobile medical teams. If La Cruze cannot go to the Mountain then the Mountain will have to go to La Cruze. For this achievement, Mr. Speaker, we are justly proud. Needless to say too, the residents of those areas are very grateful to the P.N.C. Government.

There is so much involved in this, because it means that in areas already served by medical rangers trained by the P.N.C. Government, the people are now able to get added professional medical attention at their very doorstep. It also means, that, with improved health amongst these residents, will come improved agricultural activities which are very much in keeping the Government's policy to feed, house and clothe the nation.

Of course, besides these medical facilities, the Government has stepped up the B.C.G. campaign in the Rupununi, especially in the South Savannahs.

Our health programme has provided protection against Diphtheria, Tetanus, and Whooping Cough for the people at Moruca, and Barimita, all over the North West District, Upper Mazaruni and Konashen in the Rupununi. So determined has been the P.N.C. Government in safeguarding the nation's health that, in the hinterland it has provided supplementary food programmes as a part of the maternal and child health services in such areas as Acquero, Kwobbanna, Waramuri, Wakapoa, Akawini, Siriki, Hackney, Kamarang, Aishalton, and Konashen to name but a few. The success of the health programme in the hinterlands reflects the undoubted progress that this government is making. This Government is taking no chances. The Malaria vigilance and eradication programmes in these areas have been intensified. Medicated salt is being continually distributed and over 12,000 blood smears have been taken from people visiting the interior, so as to ensure that a continuous check is kept on the health situation.

By educating the people is the base on which this Republic's development lies. The P.N.C. Government has ably demonstrated its desire to provide this commodity to all the citizens of this nation. To this end, attention has been given to the staffing of the schools in the hinterlands. No longer are the teachers of these areas left to the mercies of Tiberius. Hence, about 80 per cent of the Headmasters are fully trained while nearly 50 per cent of the supporting staff are also trained.

3.40 p.m.

There is also an intensified programme to provide more and better housing facilities for teachers. Our Education Officers and specialists are constantly visiting these areas to give

professional and academic help. The people have reflected their appreciation by taking the lead in giving help in building new schools, such as those at Kwebanna in the Moruca and Unity Square in the North West District. Mr. Speaker, the Government also has an undying faith in the young people of the hinterland, and has convincingly demonstrated this by offering a total of 72 scholarships at secondary and technical schools. The break-down of these scholarships reflects our philosophy of providing equal educational opportunities for all. Hence we find that 15 places were awarded at Bishops High School, 13 at North Georgetown Secondary, 9 at South Georgetown Secondary, 17 at Queen's College, 2 at Charlestown Secondary, 1 at Bartica Secondary, 3 at the Carnegie School of Home Economics, 10 at the Government Technical Institute, and 2 at the Guyana School of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, the P.N.C. Government is also proud to know that it provided the opportunity whereby David Gomes, an Amerindian youth, was able to secure one of the highest educational awards of the Republic – the 1972 Guyana Scholarship. This itself is history in the making.

The provision of pure water supply is also praise-worthy and is continuing at a great pace. Two wells were sunk in Moco-Moco, three at Lethem, one at St. Ignatius and two at Aruau – Wauna. Nappi, Massara, Toka, Parishara, Warawatta, Annai, and Baramita villages already have wells and drilling operations are continuing in the North Pakaraimas. Orealla in the Corentyne River has two standpipes, while Bartica, Mabaruma and Hosororo have their own pure water supply systems.

The government has lived up to its policy to provide facilities and reduce the cost of living of the people in the hinterland by establishing trade stores at Baramita, Konashen and Kwebanna, and in the South Rupununi. These trade Stores not only offer goods at very reduced prices, but also outlets for locally-produced items. A factory producing lime oil, lime juice, and other citrus by-products, has been established in the Moruca area. Others are in the final stages of completion in Mabaruma, Morawhanna and Lethem. The Government has also trained people from these areas in running the factories. Of course, these factories will provide added income for the residents.

Mr. Speaker, the Government continues in its programme to provide roads in all areas of the hinterland. There is a network of jeep trails in the North Pakaraimas, connecting the villages of Monkey Mountain, Orinduik, Paramakatoi and Kato. Roads also connect Co-Co Island to Waramuri and Kamwatta to the Kumaka-Kwebanna road. These roads will provide easy and cheap communication links for residents. The network of roads being constructed to connect Mabaruma, Hosororo, Wauna, Yarakita, Port Kaituma, Matthew Ridge and Arakaka, will make available over 9,000 acres of farm lands to the people.

The people of the hinterland, under the guidance of the P.N.C. Government, have moved from subsistence to a more economic form of agriculture. In a little over a year, cabbages, tomatoes, black-eye peas, peanuts and other crops from the interior areas have yielded over 880,000 pounds of produce, bringing the farmers more than \$265,000 in cash.

Help to farmers in these areas includes placing 15 Agricultural Field Assistants at their service, increased quantities of fertilizers, insecticides, planting materials and shipping containers. Besides providing active livestock programmes for most of these areas, the Government also gives farming incentives in the form of freight subsidies, guaranteed market, and prices for produce, and the use of light agricultural machinery.

The Amerindian Captains have been using the guidance given by the Government to improve their villages. This is good training for the introduction of formal local government. Mr. Speaker, there are indeed many refreshing developments in the hinterland areas. The new Mobile dispensary launch for the North West District, the building of the Mabaruma airstrip and plans for community centres in the areas, the building of health centres, schools, roads, water supply systems, holiday resorts, youth camps, all tell a story of success by a Government of the people – the People's National Congress government. Thank you. *[Applause]*

Mr. Stoby: Mr. Speaker, after travelling for more than 150 miles, I was rather disappointed to listen to the President's Address. It was made in very dry tones, not only I was disappointed, but all those Ambassadors and all those who were invited were greatly disappointed to hear a speech that has got very little as far as plans go for the future of Guyana.

The only significant point which I have seen in the President's Address was regarding the agricultural credit bank and agricultural machinery and equipment. That is welcome by me and I think by the party, because this is long overdue but, however, I have noticed that the Government is planning legislation for the reduction of taxes on machinery. I feel that the cost of outboard motor spares should also be reduced. Since, devaluation, a six-horsepower motor which is used in riverain areas, the very smallest motor, is costing more than a thousand dollars whereas, as late as 1964, these motors used to sell for less than \$500 each.

I have noticed that the U.S.A. has given loans to the Caribbean Development Bank, \$10 million at 3 per cent interest, millions of dollars in loans, 30 to 40 years to repay, very low interest, 2 to 3 per cent.

3.50 p.m.

But sir, I should like to ask this question with regard to development of land in the Interior. How could the people of the Interior get agricultural loans from the Credit Bank when there is no security? Because up to now, the pledge that was made by the Prime Minister that land titles would have been given to the Amerindians is still not fulfilled. The Prime Minister does not live up to his promises and pledges. Many people in the Interior are still looking forward to the day when titles would be given to their lands so that money would be got from the Credit Bank so as to develop their farms, to build houses and so on.

The hon. Member Mr. Chan-A-Sue probably had a good dose of opium because all that he was referring to seemed as if he was reading a story that happened in some foreign country. What he has said does not represent the facts at all. Let us look for instance where machinery for the development of lands is concerned. Why could the Government not ask Bookers or Sandbach Parker to donate even one tractor and one plough? Or why could the Government not set up machinery pools whereby each community area would own one machine to plough the land to plant blackeye peas? These people live under primitive conditions, so it would be uneconomical for them to go into agricultural production without having proper mechanical aid.

I am calling upon the government to take more interest in the development of the hinterland. Yesterday, I heard some of the Ministers and Members on the Government side saying that there is no discrimination. But I should like to make certain references to show that the government practices discrimination. For instance, let us look at persons who work in survey parties. Formerly, the majority of the workers who go into the Interior in the mountain areas were recruited from the North West, from the Pomeroun, from Moruca. But now people are recruited from the Labour Exchange. People from Georgetown go to the Interior and they cannot do the work. They take advantage of the Amerindians, they sit in the camps and they get the Amerindians to do the work. This is a kind of slavery. This is the Government which is talking about unity. This is the Government which is talking about integration. But how could we get unity when a large section of the people – the third largest ethnic group in Guyana are the Amerindians – are highly discriminated against.

Let us look at something which is developing in our society. It is caused also by the Government. On account of the rising unemployment today what is happening especially on the Essequibo Coast. Amerindian girls are becoming prostitutes; they are employed at these liquor shops or clubs and hotels. Customers tell the proprietors if they do not employ Amerindian girls they would not get sales. This situation is getting worse every year. All this is because of the negligence of the Government. I feel that the government must do something to curtail prostitution which is getting worse every year.

I want to make reference to conditions of workers on the coconut estates on the Pomeroun. The hon. Minister of State for Agriculture did not say what are the true facts, what is really happening in the Pomeroun. He does not even have time to visit his own estate to see the semi-slavery, I would say. What I am going to say can be checked. An Amerindian has to pick up 1,000 coconuts, burst them, dig them and carry them down to the dryer and he only gets \$4.40, and it takes 2½ days to do this. This works out to something like \$1.76 per day. Yet the Government says that there is a minimum wage of \$4 a day. If the Government wants to have integration in this country and economic development, I feel that the Government should look into these matters.

I wish to raise another matter which has been developing too.

Mr. Speaker: You have three minutes more.

Mr. Stoby: There is a certain proprietor in the Pomeroun who today is whipping his labourers. The days of slavery have past when workers used to be flogged. Why it is? On account of the high unemployment rate the Amerindians are going from River to River in search of work and they grasp at the very little. The conditions of the coconut estates remain the same for many years. I think it is time that the Government does something.

Indeed, I am very sad to come from such a far area and only have the privilege to speak just a few minutes where I cannot express the many ills and sufferings of the people.

Mr. Speaker: You will have opportunity tomorrow.

4 p.m.

Mr. Stoby: In conclusion, I would like to say when an Amerindian secures a permit to buy a box of cartridges, he is allowed one box of cartridges for one year. To buy another box, he has to take all the empty shells back to the police station. The hon. Minister should do something about it. People who are hunting, shooting ducks, friends of the Government, they do not have to give the empty shells. Why are they afraid of the Amerindians? They are quiet and peaceful people and yet the Government does not trust them.

I feel that what the last speaker has said is something far away from the actual facts in the Moruka or the North West or the Pomeroun. The Speech by the President has not got anything of consequence and I think it is time now that the government should present a proper White Paper on Amerindian development so that it could be properly discussed and the public would know what really the Government has for the development of the people in the interior, who have been contributing for many years to the economic development of this country.

Mr. Speaker: I think this is a convenient time for us to take the suspension. The Sitting is suspended for 30 minutes.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On resumption --

Mr. Ackman: Mr. Speaker, I sat and I listened attentively to a member of the mini Opposition talking about auctioneering, and photo frame. I was trying seriously to follow, but I could not. I therefore had no alternative but to arrive at my own conclusion, to say that if even we had a thousand auctioneers I do not think that that hon. Member could have earned himself a dollar. However, I must congratulate the members of the Government who have seen it fit and wise to support a wonderful presentation made by our President of his Speech on policy.

As we have promised, the people in Guyana, the Caribbean, and representatives of the non-aligned nations saw in 1972, the first year in the new development programme, a programme that was carefully planned to harness our forces and our resources for the benefit of the people of this country. The housing programme, for instance, Mr. Speaker, it involves Government agencies and all the institutions necessary to make the programme a worthwhile one. We have seen that the people of this country, the once downtrodden people prior to 1964, they have emerged with the advent of this Government to be able to own houses. They have been able because of Government's vision. Today, places that we know, they were one-time sugar plantations, now emerging out of those sugar plantation plots are beautiful houses, not owned by the big shots of this country, but houses owned by the small man, the small people.

Our Government has provided the opportunity to those people to own their own houses, to own their own lands, and because of this, we were able to utilize our land to enhance the economy of individuals. Never before did the people think about using land to their own benefit but with our Government, we are able to teach the people that they must utilize every square inch of their land that they have got around the homes that they own today, to grow catch crops that will enhance the economy. They can buy their children's school books out of the catch crops that they grow and sell. This itself shows the vision and planning that was put into our housing programme. We have kept our promise in that we said every year we will provide not less than

1,000 homes for the people and this has been done. In the year 1972, this Government has provided not less than 1,000 housing units; in truth and in fact we have been able to house not less than 2,000 families.

The local authorities, they too are playing their part in providing home under the Municipal and District Councils Act, which vests the necessary authority to engage in housing development. They have been asked through the Guyana Association of Local Authorities to carry out assessments of their housing needs in their particular areas, to determine how this need can be met either by (a) identifying lands suitable for development for sale as house lots or as a unit comprising house and land, never before did this thought ever dawn on our predecessors, (b) assisting jointly in the erection and operation of the clay products factories with a view to providing suitable material, and (c) building houses for sale or rental to the residents of the district concerned.

We also have in Harry Lall's area, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee. It continues to expand its housing programme of developing suitable lands for use by sugar workers and making available loans for the construction of houses for these workers. Co-operators are gearing themselves to play a larger part in this programme by developing lands and housing, producing clay products for building houses, with the necessary governmental technical supervision. We are not only telling people to build houses, but we are providing for these people who are willing and ready, the technical aid to the self helpers. This itself has taken up quite a lot of our inadequate housing programme that we inherited as a legacy. What we did have was: don't pay rent. But today, people are told they must pay their rents because it is the only means of development and they have been paying their rents and they have seen the development. So rapid is the development in the housing sector that I am afraid my friends on the opposite side cannot keep abreast of it.

We look after the health of our people because we know that a healthy nation is an important nation, and this is why we are not sectional in this but we look after all Guyanese. Those of you who do not move around, may I enjoin upon you, to move through our schemes, move through into North Ruimveldt, find out and see who own those places, and go into

Carifesta City and find out who own those beautiful places, and then you will be able to come here and support, instead of criticizing Government's carefully thought-out program. Government proposes to acquire directly or cause to be acquired, all lands which are preferably not under cultivation and are suitable for housing. All the time, many lands around lay covered with bush. It was this Government that saw it fit to tell the people: those lands must be used, have those lands, make your homes. It was this Government that encouraged the people to dabble in new skills. *[Interruption]* If the people of Black Bush Polder will only do as they are told to do, and not to get there to boycott Government's programmes, they will enjoy everything, the same things which everybody else is enjoying.

In order to accommodate the growing need for more residential areas in Greater Georgetown, priority will be given to revise the present Georgetown planning scheme to provide for a change, for use of lands to fulfil the needs of housing, recreational, educational and other institutional facilities. Many areas on the coastlands and the hinterlands have also been planned and laid out for housing purposes and steps have already been taken to settle persons in many parts of the hinterland.

4.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Housing will make available, at a small fee to prospective builders of low income houses, suitable plans and designs which are available at the Ministry. I heard one hon. Member say that we did not have plans and designs and that we needed, just as the speaker himself needed, a blood transfusion, but you can check with the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction and you may be able to have all your plans and designs made to order.

In addition, the Guyana Association of Architects and the Guyana Association of Professional Engineers have been asked to consider, as a contribution to the national effort, the production of designs of low-cost housing and the improvement of techniques in the production of low-cost housing utilizing clay products and other suitable locally produced material other than the traditional ones.

If we are to use what we have, if we are to use our clay to produce our houses, it means that the cost must be negligible. It also means that our timber industry will grow from strength to strength. Arrangements have been made from the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, in consultation with the Ministry of Health, to issue guidelines setting out the minimum standards required in developing land and houses.

In addition, if necessary, the existing legislation will be amended to expedite the processing of plans for building purposes. The programme will create employment for thousands of persons, not only in the building industry, but in all the various aspects of material production and house furnishing. Carpenters will get more work: the overall unemployment will be reduced. Carpenters, masons, builders, electricians, plumbers and all the people with that type of skill that is required will be able to find jobs. Window markers, furniture manufacturers will be required in larger numbers throughout the country. During 1972 many of the persons displaced after the crisis created by the P.P.P. received assistance from the National Aid Board to provide new homes for themselves. This was/real step forward in obtaining lands for the squatters who were displaced during the P.P.P. regime.

Mr. Speaker, I quote from page 4 paragraph 6:

“My Government will also present to Parliament early in this Session legislative proposals for the institution of a Mortgage Finance Bank. These if approved will facilitate the programme of housing ourselves by 1976.”

Our plans are not half-way plans; they are not made willy-nilly: they follow a pattern and they have a sequence whereby we work. This will mean a facility where-by the small man will have absolutely no difficulty in getting money to obtain his home. The operative word is “ownership” something that never existed in the past.

The stage has been set for this Government’s ambitious programme of housing ourselves by 1976. We see schemes like Amelia’s Ward at Linden, where we have approximately 239 houses to be completed by year end. We see Tucville, we see Tucber, we see schemes all over the place. These schemes have come just in the nick of time to house the small people and not to

make the rich more comfortable. It is in this way the nation will be able to grow from strength to strength.

I know that by 1976 the entire programme of Feeding Clothing and Housing ourselves will be accomplished. From the brave start already made by the public and private sectors the success of this programme is reasonably well assured. The cooperative sector plays a very dominant part without which we could not have had so much money circulating in our country. We have the Builders Co-operative which is not a monopoly of one or two people. We have the co-operative that really finds employment, really finds sustenance for a number of persons. We have a number of co-operatives successfully run, effectively run, properly managed, which really contribute to the success of our housing programme. We have the contribution of the private sector. They also play a very important part and we welcome this. We hope that, through our Mortgage Bank, many more plans and schemes will be achieved with the association of our private enterprise.

I will now turn to Carifesta for a brief moment. The proposal to hold the Festival arose out of a discussion between the Prime Minister of Guyana, the hon. L.F.S. Burnham, and two successive conferences of Caribbean authors and artists which took place in Georgetown and the 1970 Republic Celebrations respectively. On both occasions the Prime Minister indicated his wish that a full scale festival should be held in Guyana at which the creative art of the Caribbean people would be put on show. These proposals materialized despite the many doubting Thomases and the infamous architects of boycotts, "Carifesta 1972" was a historical event which will be indelibly engraved on the minds of all true Guyanese.

Carifesta is not an event that one can easily assess in financial terms. It was never conceived as an event for major profit; its objective was not to make money; it was a cultural exercise, an operation of far-reaching national and regional importance. It has been a trail-blazing operation opening new pathways to regional integration at the people's level. We saw the coming together, as never before, of people from various countries, people in quest of a common culture. We saw the fostering of racial unity and this spelt out Carifesta.

The expenses were not high, but not in the circumstances exorbitant or extravagant. Many people benefited from Carifesta. For instance, hotels. The Pegasus was able to employ additional staff numbering fourteen persons, who still remain in the employment on to today. Even Gimpex benefited from Carifesta. Bookers, Fogarty's Kirpalani's, Designs and Graphics, the newspapers, Demico House, they all benefited, jewellery shops and boutiques, and not only these businesses benefited, for I can tell you that we had at Carifesta city many co-ops and they all made minimum profits of \$2,000 odd. The other co-ops that benefited were those from the Ruimveldt area and the La Penitence area. Those two co-ops were able to work for not less than \$500 and \$900 respectively in sewing for Carifesta, so all in all Carifesta has proved a boom to Guyana.

It has proved to those of you who thought that Carifesta could not have come off, it has proved how stupid you were to even think of it, that it could not have come off. It came off with a hang and it assisted thousands of Guyanese. We have seen many people from various countries, not even the language barrier was really a barrier, the way how we were so closely knitted. Thanks to the Prime Minister of this country, who had the foreight. I would ask Mr. Feilden Singh to listen to his radio – he listens to his radio conveniently – and he will see that work on the cultural site will begin on 1st December.

Mr. Speaker, all in all, may I take this opportunity to congratulate the committee of Carifesta for a wonderful job well done. Thank you.

Mr. Ram Karran: Much has been said really about His Excellency's first paragraph in his gracious address to this House and I do not wish to say more, except to deplore the fact that the Government has used the captive Head of State to involve him in a most controversial matter, the running of this House. Already, the Head of State is sent into the remote areas, he is made into an errand boy while the photograph of the Head of the Government blazes from each shop window in the city and elsewhere. That is not how you treat the President of Guyana. But one can expect nothing better from this Government.

While agreeing with every word that has been said on this controversial first paragraph, especially by my friend Mr. Sutton, I wish to say this with respect to paragraph 1, the second part. I wish to make this paraphrase, if I may, that His Excellency's speech expresses Government's admiration for the deliberate omission from this House of Members' Motions and questions for this period. That is how, perhaps, the Government wishes to thank the Speaker of this House with respect to the omission of Opposition Members' Motions and Questions from the Order Paper and from the Notice Paper. You have done well, sir, I, too, wish to congratulate you in respect of this function.

Let me remind this House that the English tradition for people who have been used and abused, is to be elevated to the House of Lords. In Guyana, our tradition is different, and on the parapets of political obscurity, one can find a long list. Shall I call some? Bissember, Merriman, Llewellyn John, Jordan, Tello, McDavid, Budhoo, Codrington, Martin Carter, Sydney King, and Saffee. They are all there on this parapet of obscurity.

We heard and we read this empty address, bereft of hard words, no corks, no portable water, indeed empty, and that is why we can find no material in the gracious address itself to which to direct our attention, and that is why I wish to deal, if I may, with the hon. Member Mr. Jack, the Minister for Mines and Forests, who seemed to be living in a world all by himself, living oblivion. If I may deal with some of the things. If a stranger was sitting in the Gallery of this House, after listening to the hon. Minister, he would have got the impression that the Government is really trying to perform, but the Opposition is preventing it from doing so. I am glad however that the Minister has admitted defeat in so far as their programme are concerned, he did, but they are trying to put the blame on the Opposition, that we are hindering, that we are not coming up with anything constructive. That is ridiculous and if I may quote what a captain friend of mine said when he described ridiculous in the superlative degree, the word would be "*recomprecolous*."

The hon. Minister adeptly deals with the theory of plural societies. He has travelled all over the world, he went to India, he went to all the areas where he alleged that plural societies

make it difficult for Governments. But my friend did not during his lengthy speech for one minute address his mind to the evils of imperialism. In fact, he seemed to have forgotten that, but I wish today with the limited time at my disposal, to remind my friend – if he was here, he would have been addressed as “Ho, Jack” – that there was a time when plural societies did not inflict any hardship on the unity of the Guyanese people. Perhaps he was abroad but his colleague, the hon. Prime Minister, will remember that in 1953 there were different criteria for the unification of the Guyanese people.

In 1953 there was unity and in passing I might make this observation that prior to 1953, unlike what we are having during this period and periods before, was a period of calm. I remember in those days, very often, the white gloves in the stores were sold out because the police had to offer white gloves to the magistrate because there were no police cases to offer. Such a phenomenon does not seem to appear since our friends across the Table have taken up, because every day, not only police cases, criminal cases, murder cases, serious cases –

Mr. Speaker: Those are not criminal cases?

5 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: Today they have those cases. I am suggesting that in the period prior to 1953 occasioned by war conditions, tragic conditions nevertheless, unemployment was almost unknown in this country, as a result of which crime had been reduced to the stage where the policemen had to rush all over the town to get white gloves to buy to give to the magistrates.

Such a situation does exist today, because unemployment has been one of the many factors perhaps which is responsible for the disunity among the people. But I wish particularly to call my friend’s attention to the part which has been played by his party and his leader in so far as the disunity which exists in our community is concerned. But before I do so I wish to ask what is the solution to the so-called re-unification of the Guyanese people. I should like to find out from my hon. Friend. Is it by bringing countless numbers of West Indians to take away our jobs? Is it by the tilack system? My friend the Minister for Public Service, Mr. Mingo, is aware

of the fact that during that recent period when elections were going on threats were made all over the place that they are going to marry them by tilack. That is possibly one way of integration. I think my friend the hon. Minister for Housing can dilate on that question.

But one does not know what the P.N.C. means when they express themselves. There was a time in Guyana before when the plural society myth was discovered, when Guyanese were united. Perhaps I should like to refer to that period by quoting from the *Thunder* of February 1953. The article I wish to read was written by Mr. L.F.S. Burnham, Chairman of the People Progressive party. This is what he said and this was the period before mythology of the plural society was known. I quote:

“Conscious of our closely knit party structure and our efficient organization and recognizing the effectiveness of their scurrilous attacks our enemies have resorted to rumours of a split in our Party. They have suggested that one section led by me may soon part company with another irresponsible section. I have been interviewed at all hours of the day, night and morning even. I have been offered everything from money to political support by the big sahibs and their creatures. Let me say here that there are no splits, complete or impending. The P.P.P. is my choice and there I will stay.”

This is what he said before the split in 1953. Then something happened. Of course, we won the elections, we swept the polls when some of these political infants were still at the breast. Her Majesty's Government, as we all know it is now history, suspended our Constitution and then something happened – the Reverend Donald Soper came to Guyana and made the discovery that this country was peopled by Christians and heathens. Mr. R.B.O. Hart, the Editor of Booker News, a post held by two Ministers of the P.N.C. Government Mrs. Winifred Gaskin and Martin Carter, and I am not mentioning the hon. Member Dr. Reid, Minister of Agriculture and so many other things who are now soliciting votes in the U.S.A. and elsewhere allegedly seeking lands to be delivered to people in Canada. [An hon. Member: “Is that bothering you?”] Yes. It is bother posterity. What did Mr. R.B.O. Hart say? He said Burnham and Latchmansingh who are no spring chickens can create a non-communist victory in the sugar industry. The Robertson Commission headed by the Sir George Robertson on which commission served the chief rigger now living in our country, Sir Donald Jackson, said –

Mr. Speaker: Please withdraw that remark, hon. Member.

Mr. Ram Karran: I withdraw it sir. Sir Donald Jackson who sat on that Commission reported that so long as the P.P.P. maintains the present leadership and policy so long will we be marking time. That is how we came to think of plural society.

I refer to the comic and the comic book on page 21, The Burnham Story in comics. “On their return to British Guiana, however, certain major differences developed between –

Mr. Speaker: That is not the title of the book.

Mr. Ram Karran: Yes, sir. The Burnham Story, it is in comics and the characters inside are the comics. “On their return to British Guiana, however, certain major differences developed between Dr. Jagan and Mr. Burnham. Mr. Burnham himself claimed that Dr. Jagan had become obsessed with his own international image and was no longer thinking in Guyanese terms.” Who is thinking of whose image in the shop windows? Who wants when passing here we as Members of Parliament we are told we must stand when the Prime Minister is passing? What rubbish? Who is thinking of whose image? [An hon. Member: “Who told you that?”] I was told to stand, I told them go to hell – I beg your pardon, sir. Where do we go? What solution do you want from us? What contribution do you want from us? You bulldoze our country men houses at Black Bush Polder. You give them drinking water from trenches.

This is a Government document admitted in the Year of Our Lord 1972, Notes of the 10th Meeting of the Black Bush Polder Settlers Advisory Committee held on Tuesday 24th September, 1968 at 1 p.m. at Mibikuri, Black Bush Polder.

5.10 p.m.

This is what one of the paragraphs on page 2 states:

“Water in water courses used for drinking purposes. Mr. Venkersammy spoke about erecting notice boards in the housing areas where the water is being used for drinking purposes

warning persons not to throw nets, or otherwise found polluting the water.” And while this is going on to settlers who have been living in Black Bush Polder for as long as the settlement was created, other settlers living at Zambia are supplied with water from Public Works vehicles. Why the discrimination? What do you want us to talk about, Mr. Jack, but things like these?

They pulled down their houses and they do not bother with the people who owe rents in Campvellingville, in Ruimveldt, in La Penitence, and we have made our position clear on that, in so far as this Parliament is concerned, that if the people cannot pay, you cannot throw them on the roads. Why do you have double standards? Why do you treat them in Georgetown like this – which has our support – and you bulldoze the houses in Black Bush Polder? Let the honourable lady spokesman for housing, keeping silent the Minister for Housing, deal with it. She seems to be a bigger authority on housing than the hon. Minister himself. You refuse to heed demands of the farmers, rice farmers, milk farmers, and others, in so far as prices are concerned. You break up their associations, you destroy them, and you loose the dogs of war on them when they protest, as they did at the Rice Marketing Board, and then Comrade Jack tells us that we are not putting up suggestions.

You flood out the Essequibians as a result of negligence. The dams are breached and the Prime Minister sets himself up as an authority. “You are a nation of compensation seekers. You will have none.” He abridges the functions and the responsibilities of the Court. You break up the Maha Sabha. You make its President and its officers stooges of the Government. You break it up with police interference. You destroy that Sad’r Anjuman Islam of Guyana and you put in your Nassers and your Sheik Saffees. How are we going to be able to talk? This is not the language that we can come to a common platform and debate. You pack the Police Force and G.D.F. with one ethnic group despite the I.C.J. recommendations. You ask our girls, our hungry children, our dearly beloved children, when they seek jobs to fill their empty stomachs, if they can bear weight and they must come to your after 4 o’clock. I got this from a prominent medical practitioner. I can call his name, a former Member of this honourable House, who said so. R.S. Hanoman Singh, your friend. Shall I name more areas of controversy and friction?

Only today, we see in the Evening Post, a move by the Government's stooge organization to defer Local Government Elections. I said over and over in this House that this Government is allergic to elections and when it comes to free and fair elections, it catches fits if elections catch up with it. Let us take the case of the assessment court that is going on. A lot of people in the Greater Georgetown area are going to be forced to sell out their houses. We have already been told it is 12½ per cent. The assessment has been very high in relation to what is in Georgetown, high in relation to Kitty, and all the other areas. But what happened? The people appealed, as they were told they had a right under the Constitution, and some people have had their assessments increased. They appealed for a reduction and they are told it is going to be increased, as a means of terrifying the rest that if they pursue their appeals their assessments will be increased, so they have all withdrawn.

This is the political weapon which the Government uses against the people and now it asks for the postponement of elections allegedly because the big boys have frustrated the elections. They assess Bookers for \$200 a lot, allegedly, not building land, but when it comes to the small man, small in stature as well as everything else, \$700 a lot, and the assessment committee is going into the few, five or six of them, who have persisted but they are threatening them now with costs.

Let me say that the People's Progressive Party is willing at any hour of the day or night to stretch forward its hand to the Government whenever the Government moves in the direction of helping the Guyanese people and benefiting our beloved country, as we did the other day on the bauxite issue, except as has been distorted by Senator Eagleton, I beg your pardon, sir, the hon. Minister Desmond Hoyte, who sought to twist and fabricate as this Government always does, to say that the P.P.P. tried to extract from the Government things that were not deserving and even to distort it by untruths. But that has already been dealt with by my colleague, the hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The hon. Minister Mr. Hoyte and his Government can always go down to the level of the Greek Character, Oedipus. Whenever the party is ready to enhance the prestige of Guyana and to benefit the working people, the masses of Guyana, we are ready also regardless of the time,

day, or night. But we bear in mind the double-faced character we are dealing with – I have dealt with some of it already – who in 1953, initiated or attempted to initiate action to put an end to the dual control in schools, and ho, when an opportunity presented itself for it to be presented in this honourable House or the House that preceded it, said: a man can change his mind.

5.20 p.m.

He did not attack the measure so as to be in the good graces of the reactionary churches which up to now, bedevils the situation in so far as our teachers are concerned.

While in this same seat, the seat near to here he crowed loud about free radio time, today you cannot go near the radio station. [**The Prime Minister:** “But did I get?”] You spoke on the radio; the records are there. [**The Prime Minister:** “You will not get time.”] He decides against this facility for his successor.

Sir, the Prime Minister wanted to vote on the appointment of members to the Service Commissions. Today, he tells me, “I consult you only because the Constitution says so.” He is not prepared to carry out the recommendations. A couple years ago – I do not know if the hon. Prime Minister has blinders but he saw a thousand Cubans on the foreshore on the East Coast. Today, he is not seeing the millions of American dollars which are coming to enslave our people, he is not seeing the dope that is coming with it, to put an end to it so that this country can move forward freely.

He was talking about freedom of the press. He was complaining about inadequate reporting. Today, like Franco, like Hitler, like Mussolini, he gags the press and he is talking about freedom of expression. The Mirror will not be published for a little while because the licences have been humbugged.

I am sure we all know the story of the man who was going home from work early one morning very tired. He saw a woman beckoning him from a window, “Hello Mister, you have the time?” The poor chap said “Madam, I have neither the time nor the inclination.” This Government has asked for the time. As far as we are concerned we have enough time. Mao Tse-

Tung said in his guerilla warfare that all you need is time, the will and the space. We have all of that and we are willing to give this Government when it comes to servicing the needs of the Guyanese people. The Greek character I refer to, Oedipus, was subject to conditions for which he was not responsible. He was born with the curse that he would slay his father and marry his mother. Our characters in this hon. Chamber are not cursed even though some of them wear tabige, but every act done by them will be sought out by the Guyanese people of today and they would not have an easy time as the character to which I referred to seek and oblivion to seek a solution to his suffering by running into a picket. The people are going to catch up with them and when that time shall have come I will tell you what brother Paddy said, it will be a serious situation. *[Applause]*

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Prime Minister

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): Mr. Speaker, it seems not have been understood that the outline of Government's policy in the president's Address in Sessional Paper NO. 1 of 1972 was not intended to be a detailed outline; it seems to have been imagined that the President's Address would go into a great deal of minutes. But the purpose of the President's Address is merely to give an outline of the legislation, substantive and delegated, proposed for the Session, and as was observed by His Excellency in paragraph 2, the full debate on the details is expected to take place on the Budget Statement which will be coming very shortly.

I suppose, though we are not to be blamed for the misunderstanding, it is yet necessary for us to discuss and explain those aspects of the Government's policy to which reference or allusion has been made over the past three days. It is necessary also, I submit, to correct some of the inaccuracies, which inaccuracies cannot be pardoned because the slightest bit of research would have disclosed the facts to the declaimers.

May I observe at this stage, before I deal with certain aspects of policy and certain palpable facts, that what was very interesting about this debate was the fact that we have two panaceas proposed for righting the ills and correcting the difficulties of Guyana equally naïve and uniformed, but coming from two extremes of the political spectrum, there was the suggestion

from the less small of the Opposition parties, through its spokesman the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, that unemployment could be brought to an end, and rapid economic development assured if we were to nationalize the commanding heights of the economy.

5.30 p.m.

The less large of the Opposition parties through its spokeswoman, the hon. Member Mrs. Eleanor DaSilva, suggested that we would inherit the Kingdom if we were to throw open our doors to foreign investors, who would set up factories, who would provide a great deal of employment for our people in Guyana and enrich our economy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what seems not to be understood by those who merely propose the nationalization of the commanding heights is, first of all, that you have to identify these heights and *ex nihilo nihil fit*. If a combination of what are the heights in our economy were to amount to little or nothing, the mere fact of nationalization will not make any appreciable or significant contribution. We must not confuse ideology and tactics with facts.

It was noteworthy perhaps that the person who suggested the nationalization of the commanding heights forgot to mention sugar. I do not know whether there has been a change of heart on his party's part, or whether this is a case of reversion to the undertaking given by the then Premier of British Guiana in 1961, to President Kennedy, to wit, that neither sugar nor bauxite would be nationalized by the People's Progressive Party Government, repeated in the 1964 rag called the P.P.P.'s manifesto, printed on inferior paper when there were no licences.

The Government is attacked from the *soidisant* left and the admitted right. For instance, has this Government not announced and sought to carry out its programme of insisting on majority ownership where the exploitation of our natural resources is concerned? Has this Government not nationalized – *[Interruption]* He was in less trouble than Allende, and Allende showed much more perspicacity, perspicuity, and ability than Cheddi Jagan did in 1962, and 1967, when he had Bookers write his third Budget for 1962. This Government has never had Bookers write its Budget. **[Mr. Ram Karran:** “What about Reid? Is Reid not Bookers' Director?”] Reid is neither Caucasian nor a native of Britain brought down specially to write the

third Budget. This Government that was, made history. Three Budgets in one year, one written by Jacob, the next one written by Janet Jagan, the third one written by a white Bookers Director brought from London specially. But Mr. Speaker, shall I return.

That policy has been announced, DEMBA has been nationalized, Guyana Timbers Ltd. has been taken over, and those who feel, that you must do everything all at the same time, are the same persons who head the German Democratic Republic-Guyana Friendship Association. Now I was having a discussion the other day with one Mr. Heinold from the German Democratic Republic. There can be no doubt that the East Germans declare themselves not only socialist but communist. Mr. Heinold, admitted confirming a statement by the hon. Leader of the Opposition that in East Germany there are still significant industries that are privately owned which, however, have to operate within the context of a central government policy. If it is a matter of necessity, a matter of conviction, a matter of tactics, it is done in East Germany; what is all the fuss here that we do not go nationalising everything we can cast our eyes on, every industry and every undertaking. But herein lies the contradiction. Let us assume therefore that they want to be consistent.

When the legislation was being introduced for the nationalization of DEMBA and a proposal was made by this Government that in place of the phrase, “prompt and adequate compensation,” should be written the word, “reasonable,” the hon. Leader of the Opposition, quotation marks, “this revolutionary leader of a revolutionary party,” end of sarcastic quotation marks, objected to that substitution and said he was only prepared to change “prompt and adequate” to “reasonable” in the case of bauxite. The least the Government can expect of a responsible Opposition is some conceptual and philosophical consistency, but it is understandable because, sir, I learnt with alarm and sadness that in a certain limited liability company, the New Guyana Company Ltd. with a hundred shares, had forty-nine shares belonging to one Cheddi Jagan and forty-six shares belonging to one Boysie Ram Karran.

Then a little bit of further research showed that out of a total of 6,300 shares in Simpex, a private company, over 5,000 were held directly by Cheddi Jagan and/or his nominee. Lest it be suggested that they were held on behalf of the party, let me say that in the same Gimpex the party has its holdings in the names of Janet Jagan and Boysie Ram Karran, the P.P.P. trust. So there is no question of Cheddi Jagan owning the 5,000 shares on behalf of the party, it is on behalf of himself. When the party is to be the *cestui que* trust, it is declared 500 shares to the party in the names of Janet Jagan and Boysie Ram Karran.

What is interesting, therefore, is that it is a case of self service when one finds that the Leader of the Opposition, despite his declarations, is unwilling to substitute the word “reasonable” for the phrase “prompt and adequate” before the substantive, “compensation,” in the relevant article. He is saving his own skin clearly. And he admitted to me that he owns the New Guyana Company Limited. What he admitted more is that the machinery in the New Guyana Limited is owned by an English company and rented to him. I now begin to understand the personal interests which contribute to the inconsistency.

Let me deal with the point of view of the United Force. Says the United Force: “Get foreign investors to put up a lot of industries.” Is the hon. Member unaware of the fact that those industries require an investment of about \$15,000 per person employed? That is the first point. The second point is that, in the circumstances of Guyana, is it sensible to embark upon a number of screwdriver industries where the value added is minimal and peripheral. In the third place, meaning absolutely no criticisms of those developing countries which have used that particular technique, does not the hon. Member know of the continued high unemployment in those countries and the problems that they have?

Is the hon. Member unaware of a study which was made by two West Indian economists recently, which study disclosed that the granting of these fantastic concessions for the setting up of these industries in the final analysis was responsible for a greater loss to the economy than the apparent accretion?

Mr. Speaker, it is true that it is not given to everyone to contribute to the running of the country from the Cabinet. But at the same time it is necessary, if criticism is to be informed, that there must be some more study, some more reading and the employment of a more competent back-room so that there should not disfigure the Hansard of this House such inept, ill-considered and ignorant proposals for finding a way out of our economic problems.

On the other hand, endemic in the President's Speech is the proposal for tackling the problems of unemployment and a low level of economic development. It has been said that there is repeated the objective, misdescribed by some as a slogan, of feeding, clothing and housing ourselves. Feeding ourselves, as we have said over and over again and repeated in part of this Speech, promises a development and diversification of our agriculture. It seems that we shall be developing local resources, providing employment not only in the production of agricultural crops but employment in the fields of industries which have to service agriculture, employment in the fields of manufacturing based on agriculture and, at the same time, ensuring that there is a surplus which can then be exported and for which there is a ready market. There are problems of orientation, there are problems of false pride and an assumption based on past history that agriculture is something demeaning.

We should have expected from the Opposition, maxi and mini, a critique of this tactic. Is it sound sense, conceptually? We would have expected either a criticism of that tactic or an observation that the necessary infrastructure is not being laid.

5.50 p.m.

The hon. Minister of State for Agriculture, Acting Minister of National Development and Agriculture, has sought to show where greater emphasis is being placed on the concomitant services of drainage and irrigation, the provision of the means of getting rid of water when it is in excess and putting water in the fields when they need. If it is suggested that we have not attempted to gear the education system, formal and informal, for the necessary re-orientation and re-direction, that would have been a plausible criticism, but instead, they tell us about

Hutchinson, they tell us about a number of things except whether or not the thrust in agriculture will make sense. Agriculture in those circumstances is labour intensive.

At the same time, the Government has, in pursuit of this policy, relieved of duty levies, agricultural equipment. It has further controlled the prices of agricultural equipment and parts.

The Government also proposes that there should be a thrust towards clothing ourselves, based on the production of cotton and its being processed to fabric and subsequently to clothing. The Government proposes also, a programme of housing the nation out of local materials and it is not a question only of using clay, wood, but subsequently being able to produce in Guyana the mortar for holding the clay bricks together and manufacturing and providing the appurtenances to what may be considered the average home, including things like wash basins and toilet fittings, from our iron resources and from our kaolin resources, which we propose to exploit.

With respect to the exploitation of the latter, kaolin, arrangements have already been made. It is this Government's contention that the public sector and/or the co-operative must have the controlling interest in any undertaking based upon the exploitation of our natural resources. The mere nationalization of what you have is not the answer. There is also the question of developing such resources as are at your disposal. Housing itself creates myriads of industries. It provides a terrific number of employment opportunities and it is the Government's contention that the resolute pursuit of these three objectives will provide employment opportunities.

I note that we got no assistance from the Opposition. One says, nationalize everything; one says, bring in the foreign businessmen, give them holidays forever and forever amen, and history is replete with the failure of either technique *per se* to produce the desired results. We have heard in this House and out of this House for instance that the cost of living in Guyana is terribly high, the cost of living is crushing. There are two comments I should like to make on that.

If our concentration were to be on the production of commodities based on our resources, the cost of living would be controllable within Guyana but as I have had reason to remark before,

if we are going to buy potatoes from abroad, if we are going to buy milk from abroad, if we are going to buy peas from abroad, if we are going to buy meat from abroad, if we are going to buy fish from abroad, the capacity of this nation to control the cost of living is to that extent diminished and is merely peripheral. Therefore, the programme proposed by the Government is aimed not merely at providing employment – and no one can doubt that if this programme were to move on and the objectives achieved that unemployment could in the circumstances of Guyana be abolished, except frictional unemployment – but the programme also can substantially affect the rate of inflation in Guyana so far as prices are concerned.

6 p.m.

For instance, if we have to buy so much of what we consume from a country like the United Kingdom where, in 1971, they had a growth rate of 12 per cent, and an inflation of 11 per cent, where are we going to get?

The other observation I want to make is that in spite of the problems and difficulties if one were to compare the cost of living, and the cost of commodities in Guyana with the cost of living and the cost of commodities in the neighbouring countries one would see – [*Interruption*] If one were to compare the cost of foodstuffs in Guyana with the cost of foodstuffs in our neighbouring Caribbean and even continental countries, one would see that there has been an element of success in holding the cost of living, not that there has been a success in preventing the cost of articles from rising because, as I said before, since so much of the input into the cost of living is imported you cannot effectively prevent it from rising, but you can prevent it from rising too much.

Take for instance, sugar, in Guyana it sells at 6½ cents per pound; in Barbados 17 cents, in Trinidad 19 cents, in Jamaica 21 cents. The price of sugar in Guyana, as a result of the policy of three succeeding Governments, has not risen since 1951. Significantly, sugar is produced locally. Flour in Guyana sells at 13½ cents per pound, in Barbados it is 17 cents per pound, in Trinidad it is 10 cents per pound, in Jamaica it is 34 cents per pound. Recently we have seen that the price of tinned milk imported has been reduced while an incentive has been given to the local

milk producers, with the conviction that this increase would encourage them, to place greater emphasis on dairy farming.

Cooking oil in Guyana is 37 cents per pint, in Barbados it is 57 cents, in Trinidad it is 63 cents, in Jamaica it is 68 cents. Significantly also, when there was devaluation in 1967, in spite of the fact that the distributors of gasoline asked for an increase because there was a devaluation of all Commonwealth Caribbean currencies as against the American dollar, in which currency the price of oil is quoted, in spite of that devaluation and a request by the distributors for an increase, Guyana was the only Commonwealth Caribbean country which did not give an increase and which up to today has not given an increase in spite of a subsequent devaluation and *a de facto* devaluation as a result of the floating of the pound.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that only in Trinidad and Tobago, where not only is oil produced but where also there are refineries, is the price per gallon of petrol lower than in Guyana; even in Antigua where there is a refinery the price per gallon is 3.9 cents higher than in Guyana. Therefore, it does not befit responsible persons merely to be shouting that the cost of living has gone up unless they first can establish that this Government has not done its best to keep that cost of living down.

I remember being interviewed on behalf of one of the TV stations in the Caribbean and being asked this question: "How on earth does Guyana succeed in keeping its cost of articles and commodities this low?" For instance, one found that even Gimpex did a rip-roaring business during Carifesta, as did all of the other businesses in Georgetown. This was not merely because there was an influx of persons but also because the comparable prices in Georgetown were much lower than those other countries from which our guests came. Of course, the biggest buyers were our comrades the Cubans. It has been suggested that they had other reasons, apart from prices, for buying so lavishly.

Let us face the facts that throughout the world there is a tendency to inflation. Let us see what can be done here to keep that inflation to the very minimum. Or let us have proposals. We hear about the outstretched hand. Let this outstretched hand bring with it a proposal about how

we can hold inflation. And let us not fool ourselves, not only is inflation rampant in North America, In Western Europe but also Eastern Europe. That saw the end of Gomulka in Poland. If these illiterates who masquerade as being literate and enter this House were to read these documents and periodicals that come from Eastern Europe they would see that what I am saying is the case. [Mr. Ram Karran: "You are begging the question. Reduce the cost of living, give us the vote at 18."] When some people were mere agitator I could have understood a plea to Almighty Forbes to reduce the cost of living. Many are my abilities, but I am neither an obeah man nor Hundini.

6.10 p.m.

Reduce the cost of living. How do we do it? By a concentration on local production, and in so far as we have to import, keeping the prices no higher than they reasonably ought to be.

During the course of this debate, there have been allusions to self-help and my hon. Friend – what with his diction and delivery I almost called him my hon. and learned Friend, the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, seemed to take umbrage at the fact that the wife of the Prime Minister indulges with her comrades in self-help activities because, says he, these self-help activities rob people of employment. Now let us examine that false thesis. For what purpose is a drain cleaned, or a trench, but to allow for the free flow of water? Sir, in the areas in which these trenches are cleaned by self-help, what do you find? Agricultural settlements. If the internal drainage is improved, is not the greater productivity of the land, all other things being equal, assured? If the agricultural lands were cleared of excess water, is there not an opportunity for the people in the area to use those lands?

The problem we have in Guyana is job as distinct from employment orientation. There is the problem of job orientation as distinct from employment orientation. The cleaning of drains and trenches by self help, far from taking employment from people, makes employment in agriculture a safer undertaking. These soi-disant revolutionaries would tell us of the tremendous exploits of the Chinese building their railway as a national self-help undertaking. They would remind us of the Yugoslav railway which again was a self-help exercise, but which of them has

been on the self-help road? And may I remind you, sir, that the hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall said: "Well, a national project like the road is all right."

Mr. Speaker, let me say this. A certain young gentleman, an employee of the Mirror newspaper, was dismissed because he worked on the self-help road. He went to East Germany, and the hon. Member Mr. Teekah knows that, and he is smiling – [Interruption] [Mr. Hamid: "His name is Skerret, and he had already left the job when he went to work on the road."]
[Interruption] There was in the course of this debate a tendency to blame everything on the Government. When in the early sixties the sea defences on the East Coast broke, and the People's Progressive Party was in office, no one blamed them. Mr. Speaker, when there were floods in previous years as a result of abnormal rainfall, no one blamed the Government. Earlier this year, we had unusual rainfall. Certain dams broke, in the same way as there were floods in North Vietnam, even before the bombing of the dykes, because of high rainfall; there were floods in the United States of America, and when a country suffers these catastrophes it is easy from a position of hindsight to say, this should have been done or that should have been done.

Why is it that after 55 years in office, the Government of the Soviet Union is importing millions of tons of wheat from the United States of America? No one criticizes them for that. Why is it that the People's Republic of China has to import grain? Why it is in India, this year, there is a shortfall in their grain production? But these political neophytes with no policies to put forward, no programme to adumbrate, would catch at straws, even spider webs, and blame the Government for everything. We are God's children but we lay no claim to being as powerful as God.

6.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, especially in a country with resources as limited as are those of Guyana, very frequently there has to be a decision on priorities. For while you may be strengthening your sea defences you cannot devote as much money to your dams for the keeping out of the flood waters. But what shook me during the last few days was to hear the suggestion that there were, after the problems in Pomeroun and on the Essequibo Coast, sets of discrimination. Medical aid

was sent, food packages were sent, seeds were given. I did say that this was not a case for compensation but I spoke as a lawyer. The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran would not understand; maybe in a few years Mr. Teekah would. It is a question of assistance; giving compensation is payment for a wrong, not a damage.

What one found on the Essequibo Coast was that some political agitators were stirring up the people to say they lost more than they did. I was there at Cullen one Saturday night, and there was a certain political activist at the meeting. I asked another man "How many bags did you cut?" He said 112. I said "How many bags did you lose?" He said 30. The political activist told him, "Nah man, nah man, you lose everything." I was there and it happened before my very eyes and in my hearing. It is people like those who are represented as being discriminated against.

The Agricultural Officer, Mr. Ragnauth, investigated the losses and in the light of his investigations and report there was assistance one way or another. It is absolutely irresponsible to suggest that there was discrimination.

We come now to discuss, for a moment, the question which pertains to the foreign policy as referred to in the President's Address. This is not a foreign policy debate, but I think it is good, as the President's Address sought to do, that the domestic policy be set in the milieu of the foreign policy. Guyana's membership of the Non-Aligned Movement, Guyana's membership of the Non-Aligned Movement, Guyana's contribution to the action programme, the guiding principle of which is self-reliance and co-operation between the developing countries at world level and at regional level is well known, and so far as the President's Address is concerned there was no intention of seeking to differentiate between the various members of the non-aligned movement.

But we hear the old record about which members of the non-aligned movement are reactionary and which are not reactionary. The weakness, however, in whatever criticism was put forward is this, that if, for instance, it is said that Cuba is not reactionary but is progressive; Tanzania is not reactionary but is progressive; Egypt is not reactionary but is progressive;

Zambia is not reactionary but is progressive; Guinea is not reactionary but is progressive and those same progressive countries remain part of the movement, contribute to the deliberations of the movement, subscribe to the action programme and undertake to implement that action programme within the respective regions and spheres of influence, who is the little pigmy to tell us that because a country with those internal political organization he does not agree is in the movement, we should be out of the movement?

It is interesting to remember recent history. One will recall the words of the Opposition a few weeks before the Non-Aligned Conference was to take place. It was described as a circus, but then there came an edict from Moscow. It has been issued before the statement about the circus was made, but the poverty of communication was such that the stooge, the satellite, had not received a copy of it. There came an edict from Moscow, that whatever may be said about the Non-Aligned Movement, since basically it is anti-imperialist, it is a movement to be supported. By the time the Conference was to begin the Leader of the Opposition was shouting across this Table attempting to embrace his fellow student from Auchlyne, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to say that he too welcomed the advent of this conference in Guyana.

Mr. Speaker, it is not proper for me to call upon you to testify in this forum but, if perchance the Deputy Leader of what there is of the Opposition wanted us to have an investigation of this matter, in your private capacity I am sure that you can testify to the accuracy of my allegation.

What must be understood – and there must be no attempt to confuse the minds of the people – is that one of the basic principles within the Non-Aligned Movement is that there be no interference in the domestic politics of the members of the movement by other members. It is not for us to criticize. We may have our own personal views as to the state structure in one country or another. You may agree or disagree with the economic philosophy expressed in the domestic policy of one country or another but that is not relevant in the context of the movement. How else could you get Ethiopia and Yugoslavia in the same movement?

How else could you, for instance, get Malaysia and say Tanzania, Kenya and Zambia, Cuba and Singapore? The bond which seems to be misunderstood by the Opposition is not the pursuit of a particular internal organization but the desire for economic independence, the desire to settle important questions without being bullied or coerced by the major powers, and the desire to develop the resources of these countries for the benefit of the peoples in these countries.

It is about time that the Opposition ceases attempting to tell this Government that you must side with "X" or "Y" or you must do as "X" does or "Y" does. This Government pursues a policy which is relevant to Guyana and in the interest of Guyana and if they would but read they would see that there is nothing exceptional about this. Didn't Nixon mine Hiphong and bomb Hanoi and then go clinking champagne glasses with Brezhnev in Moscow, wasn't Brezhnev at that point pursuing the interests of the Soviet Union as he saw it? No one criticized. Therefore, let us stop being colonial in our mentality.

So far as Cuba is concerned, we have no row with Cuba. Cuba posits this thesis, that to speak of the big powers, as one group is not right, that one must examine the attitudes of each power to decide whether or not one must lump the large powers together. Cuba may be pursuing her own interests by seeking to establish a dichotomy in this context and in this instance between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. That is Cuba's business. We do not criticize Cuba but that does not mean that we must adopt the Cuban analysis on a question which is not relevant to whether or not you are a member of the non-aligned movement. It seems to me, therefore, that we must so far as the Opposition is concerned either shut up, or in discussing the question of non-alignment make observations, criticisms, or proposals that have a bearing on the interests of Guyana.

In the President's Address, what is emphasized is that in the action programme, it is proposed to the members that there be an emphasis on the development of regional institutions and regional co-operation, which the Government of Guyana, through lips of the President, says it is pursuing. Is it or is it not a principle adumbrated in the action programme? Is it a fact or is it not a fact that the Government of Guyana is pursuing that programme? Is it successful or unsuccessful? That would be relevant to the debate, not what Foreign Minister Rao of Cuba says

about Russia or about the United States of America. Perhaps there could have been the criticism that we are misguided in pursuing regionalism or that the way it is being pursued for reasons “A”, “B” and “C”, is likely to lead to failure, but no, we are going to have a lecture by the illiterate on the principles of Marxism, and neo colonialism and neo imperialism.

We come now to certain remarks that have been made by the hon. Member Mr. Teekah. If I understood and heard Mr. Teekah correctly, he is seeking to persuade this Government on the basis of statistics which he purported to produce, that the voting age in Guyana should be 18 years. I am not disposed, even if I may be in a position to do so, to question the statistics of my hon. Friend. I merely observe an passant that there is a country where the voting age is 25, and that country is Ghana, unless my hon. Friend has found another country, and the age of 25 was established voting age during the presidency of Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Therefore, it does not seem to me, since the Opposition dare not say that Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was a reactionary, that the voting age necessarily has anything to do with whether you are progressive or not progressive.

What have not been recognized in Guyana over the past year are two significant bits of legislation, the one with respect to teachers’ pensions and the other with respect to civil servants’ pensions. In each case, pensionable service prior to the passage of that legislation started to count from 21 years in the case of civil servants and 20 years in the case of teachers, and this Government reduced the age to 18.

6.40 p.m.

This Government does not believe in mere gimmickry; this Government does not subscribe to gimmickry, at this time, of merely saying, “Give the vote at 18.” One must understand the rationale of establishing a voting age. When the voting age in Guyana was 21, 21 was also the age of consent except in certain special cases of consent. It was the age at which contractual arrangement could be entered into for goods and services other than necessities. Therefore, the voting age of 21 has nothing intrinsically to do with voting; it has to do with what the society and

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the community accept, from experience, as the age of maturity and the age at which one is able to exercise a judgment. It is on this basis that we must approach the question.

I am rather disappointed that this young and rising hope of the People's Progressive Party should have been so narrow in his arguments as to merely emphasise voting at 18. There is nothing in voting *per se*. Voting is a concomitant of maturity. We must ask ourselves in the context of Guyana, what with technological advances, what with the increased sophistication, what with the greater ability of our young people as against the young people of a former generation, whether or not the age of majority ought not to be reduced.

This Government has considered the question and has come to the conclusion that in Guyana, for all purposes, the age of majority should be 18. [*Applause*]

Question put and agreed to

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do stand adjourned to Thursday, 23rd November, 1972 at 2 p.m. [**Mr. Ramsaroop**]

Sitting adjourned accordingly at 6.45 p.m.
