

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 09]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1982) OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

3rd Sitting

14:00 hrs

Tuesday, 1982-01-26

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (77)

Speaker (1)

*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P.

Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (64)

Prime Minister (1)

*Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P.,

Prime Minister

Other Vice-President (4)

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P.,

Vice-President, Works and Transport

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,

Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance

Cde. H. Green, M.P.

Vice-President, Public Welfare (Absent)

Cde. B. Ramsarrop, M.P.,

Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations

Senior Ministers (10)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,

Minister of Higher Education

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.,

Minister of Regional Development

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,

Minister of National Development

*Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.,

Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,

Minister of Energy and Mines (Absent)

*Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,

Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Absent)

*Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,

Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent)

*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,

Minister of Agriculture

*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,

Minister of Home Affairs

*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., (Absent)

Minister of Education

*non-elected members

Ministers (8)

- Cde. U. E. Johnson, M.P.,
Minister of Co-operatives
- Cde. J.N. Maitland-Singh, M.P.,
Minister, Consumer Protection, in the
Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection
- Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,
Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture **(Absent)**
- Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of
Economic Planning and Finance
- Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.,
Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry of Agriculture
- *Cde. Y. V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister, in the Office of the Prime Minister
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister, in the Office of the President
- *Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,
Minister of Health, in the Ministry
of Public Welfare **(Absent)**

Ministers of State (3)

- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State for Culture, in the Ministry of
Education, Social Development and Culture
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of State for Youth Sports,
in the Ministry of National Development
- *Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P.,
Minister of State for Construction, in the
Ministry of Works and Transport **(Absent)**

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Women's Affairs
and Housing
- Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Education, Social
Development and Culture
- Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Foreign Affairs.

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
Cde. M. Armogan, M.P.
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.
Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.
Cde. E. B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Frederick, M.P.
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.
Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.
Cde. H.B. Walcott-Nascimento, J.P., M.P.

Government Chief Whip

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam) (Absent on-leave)
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No.7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No.8 – Potaro/Siparuni)
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No.9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No.10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P.,
Minority Leader (Absent)

Deputy Speaker (1)

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

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan M.P. (Absent)
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.
Minority Chief Whip (Absent)
Cde. N. Persaud, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. I. Basir, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P. (Absent)

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, J.P., M.P.
Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

Officers

Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. F.A. Narain, A.A
Deputy clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

14:00 hrs

MOTIONS PRELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF
THE ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

The Speaker: Cde Vice President.

The Vice President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde. Speaker, I wish to propose to this Assembly that we meet today in two sessions, that is, from 14:00 hrs to 17:00hrs and the second session from 17:30 hrs to 20:30 hrs or such time as we may finish. It may be before 20:30 hrs. I move the suspension of the Standing Order accordingly.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IN PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Assembly resumed debate on the following Motion:

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly approves of the Government's policy adumbrated in the President's Address which was made to the Assembly on Friday 1982-01-22.”

The Speaker: Cde. Sallahuddin.

The Minister Finance in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance

(Cde. Sallahuddin): Cde. Speaker, I wish to observe that this nation is indeed charting its own destiny. I wish to observe also that the right of a nation to chart its own destiny is by no means an accidental process, but by the very fact that we have been led to a stage where we could stand proudly in the National Assembly and before this nation and declare that today, as it has been over the past seventeen years, we could chart our own destiny, is indicative of the fact that nation has had over the past seventeen years leadership of the most outstanding quality, not only in a Government formed by the People's National Congress but also under the helmsmanship – if I may use that word – of the Cde. Leader and President, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham.

I want to observe also that the message of the Cde. President which is not the subject of debate and discussion in this honourable Assembly is a charge to us as a body of decision-making. I want to observe also that in all we say and that in all we do, as a Party and as a Government, there is a basic and a fundamental ideological premise informing and guiding our thoughts, our policies and our programmes as a Party and as a Government.

At this point in our political development there can be no doubt at all in the minds of our own

people, as indeed there can be no doubt at all in the minds of the rest of the world, that the People's National Congress Government has pursued over the years, consistently and steadfastly, the socialist path to growth and development, development of and for the whole Guyanese people. Today we could stand at any corner of this country as indeed we could in any corner of the earth and say without any reservation that irrespective of the problems and difficulties we have had, whether we have had those problems and difficulties at home or in the wider political arena, that for not a single second has this Government waived from its pursuits of socialist transformation and reconstruction of the Guyanese society. Neither the adverse economic or political circumstances of the international arena nor the wrestling's and tumbings of the crises at home will ever deter the People's National Congress Government from pursuing its goal of socialism. Before us our perspectives remain just as clear and just as well defined and charted. Fixed as the northern star remain our ideals, our goals and our objectives as a people and as a nation.

In fact, with the passage of time and the unfolding of events we have been able to further define and to further conceptualise that course. The means and the mechanisms which employ, the plans and programmes which we chart, the strategies and the tactics which we pursue in our quest for socialist transformation and reconstruction, will of course be based upon our own historical experiences and circumstances, ...

(Cde. Sallahuddin continues)

and will of course vary with our changed and constantly changing political and economic environment. Cde. Speaker, there are those who regard the socialist road to development as dogma, as being a set of fixed principles, strategies and tactics which cannot be varied. The People's National Congress as a party shares the view that while the goals and objectives and ideals of socialism will remain as they were charted and determined several decades or hundreds of years ago that it is left to every individual nation based upon its own historical and experiential background to chart its own programmes, strategies and tactics. The programme of activities outlined in the address by the Cde. Leader and President represent some of the areas of emphasis for the year 1982. Areas of emphasis set against the background of the main goal before us this year which has caused the government to designate the year 1982 "the Year of Defence". The implementation Cde. Speaker, of the package activities contained in the Cde. Presidents address must be seen as part of our continuous and continuing thrust towards socialist transformation and reconstruction of our society for the ultimate satisfaction of the material, the cultural, spiritual and the educational needs of our nation. Cde. Speaker, as we take a closer look at the Cde. Presidents' Address, we note that essentially the charge contained therein could be discussed under three broad ideological divisions.

First and foremost, is the defence of our patrimony. Cde. Speaker, the constitution charges us as citizens with the responsibility for the defence of the territory of this nation. But beyond that our ideological base informs our programme that the defence of the patrimony of a nation has much more in it than the defence of her mere borders or her territory. That defence Cde. Speaker, includes the defence of our people's minds against alienation from our own revolution. That defence imposes upon us the task and the responsibility to defend the spirit of the revolution, because without the defence of the revolutionary fervour which we have developed over the years the nation would be lost and so therefore when we examine the Cde. Leaders charge with respect to defence, our thoughts, our policies and our programmes need to go far far beyond putting together the necessary finances for the physical defence of our borders and our territory. We have to ensure Cde. Speaker, ideologically we do not allow any other nation to penetrate, because once another nation were able to penetrate for its own purpose the very fabric of the revolution and once another nation would have succeeded in alienating the spirit of the revolution in our mind all would have been lost. Cde. Speaker, history has informed us that our most important responsibility in terms of the defence of our patrimony lies in the defence of our peoples' mind, lies in our being able to defend the spirit of the revolution, lies in our being able to defend the economy and also lies in our being able to defend the gains of our revolution because while the forces opposed to us, call them colonialist, call them neo-colonialist call them imperialist, and there are several such words that we use from time to time, depending on the circumstances, irrespective of what we use to describe those persons, we understand as the common man in the street out there understands, those forces aim at turning a revolution back. This party and government, as indeed this nation, will not stand on its own two feet with shoulders prepared for physical defence, and allow an alien force, be they Venezuelans or otherwise, to penetrate a single human mind in the Guyanese society. Cde. Speaker, it is common knowledge that those who are opposed to the revolution try to find the most opportune time to strike at your revolution and we must take more than passing notice of the

1982-01-26

14:10 – 14:20 hrs

fact that the Venezuelans have timed their attack on our revolution in a period of history when our very economy is being shaken by problems at home which problems are further compounded by the events – political and otherwise, in the international arena.

14:20 hrs

(Cde. Sallahuddin continues)

And therefore because they seem to sense, because they think that the moral fabric of society is weakening, because they tend to think that because we face economic problems and difficulties they could penetrate, their efforts are falling upon us at even greater pace.

So, essentially, the first and most important charge contained in the Cde. Leader's Address has to do with the defence of our patrimony, the defence of the economy, the defence of the gains of the revolution, the defence of the spirit of the revolution and the defence of our people's mind against infiltration. That is why it becomes increasingly important for us to keep in constant contact with those Guyanese citizens with whom it is easiest for the Venezuelans to make contact and I refer in specific terms to those Guyanese citizens who people our communities along the borders adjacent to the Venezuelan nation.

Earlier I said that ideologically the charge by the Cde. President could be seen in three broad points of discussion. The first I have already alluded to, that is, defence of our patrimony. The second I would say has to do with mobilisation of the national energy for production, not for defence, but also for the continuing satisfaction of the material, cultural, spiritual and educational needs of our people. That is why we see certain points of emphasis in terms of economic development agricultural diversification. Reference is made to industries that are coming on stream or that will come on stream during this year. And reference is made also to forest and mineral potential. I say this because, in that package of economic activities, one recognises a certain relationship between the package of economic activities and the ideological position of the Government.

We take them one after the other very briefly. We take agricultural diversification with special reference to the programme which aims at putting agricultural lands in the hands of those who till the land. It is part of our heritage. We have had landlordism in the past. In 1976, if I recall correctly, we struck a fatal blow in a certain industry which transformed the very nature of the operations of the industry and transferred ownership from aliens to ownership collectively by the people of this nation.

When we talk about land to the tiller we see in that several things, not only the registers which the regions have been asked by the Cde. President to open record all those farmers who need land –

The Speaker: Five minutes more

Cde. Sallahuddin: --- to keep a record of all the land available, to keep a record of areas where special concessions will be granted but, in addition to that, we see our peasants taking hold of the land as they should and we want to regard the land to the tiller proposal as part and parcel of the wider agrarian reform.

Essentially also, we see the participation of the regional system as being in consonance with the overall socialist policy that is sometimes described in classic Marxist/Leninist language as 'proletarian

dictatorship'. For us it simply means state leadership of the working masses and therefore we see the regional system as transforming this socialist principle into meaningful, tangible action for economic development.

We see also the closeness of relationship between the party and state and the working people's organisations. We see also the need for closer relationships between non-management workers and management workers in the entire economic package.

Finally, the third package we see rising out of the Cde. Leader's Address has to do with our relationship with the rest of the world. Any socialist party has as its primary and principle objectives in the conduct of its international affairs, the creation of a world of peace, the creation of a world where those persons who toil and sweat to produce the wealth of the earth will eventually inherit the wealth.

Therefore, in our pursuit of peace, we look to the region. We work towards regional integration and, in the wider world community, we work for international solidarity and peace. At the level of the non-aligned movement, our record cannot be challenged and this party and Government have gone on record on several occasions, as we will continue to go on record, that it is part of our internationalist socialist duty to support the liberation struggles of oppressed peoples everywhere. That we see as part of our wider contribution to the growth and development of socialism in the world at large.

In my final two minutes I want to say that a nation as small as ours does not always make the headlines on the international scene but I say this: that in our own quite and unassuming way we have worked wonders while trying to help the poor and the oppressed in the rest of the world. Some years ago I read this one and you will forgive me if I cannot now quote the source from which I read but it went something like this: "True perfection is a quiet hidden thing: clumsiness always wins an audience." That is how we have pursued our internationalist role as a socialist party in our quest for peace, in our quest for liberation of oppressed people everywhere so that, if in the final analysis, whether we refer to the beatitudes or whether we refer to the Cde. Leader's Address before us, surely one day the poor shall really inherit the earth.

This, as Cde. Leader and President has charged in his Address, is indeed our task, is indeed our duty and our responsibility, and is indeed our honour.

[Applause.]

14:30hrs

The Speaker: Cde. Ainsworth

The Parliamentary Secretary, Education, Social Development and Culture

Cde. Ainsworth: Cde. Speaker, before I begin my actual intervention, I wish to associate myself with the observations made about the great and outstanding qualities of our Leader and President as a politician and statesman. The maturity of our Leader is a direct result of his firm groundings in the ideology of the working people, the working class, which he has tried and tested on the anvil of practice during his service to humanity in general and Guyana in particular. Cde. Speaker, a country like Guyana which is part and parcel of a crisis infested world is extremely fortunate to have at its head at this stage of development, a wise and able man as L. F. S. Burnham. [Applause]

Cde. Speaker, in his presentation before this honourable Assembly, on Friday 22nd January, the Cde. President was able in a very simple yet effective manner, to interpret the world situation, analyse its impact on the development of this nation and at the same time prescribe the necessary actions and activities so necessary for our survival. The fact that amid the confusion and economic recession in the world, Guyana was able to survive 1981, inspite of our poor performances in certain sector of our economy, is testimony of the correctness of our policy and of our determination to be self-reliant. We have put in place the correct structures, but we have not been able to get them to function as effectively and as efficiently as we would have liked. Nonetheless, with our commitment to develop this nation, I am sure that working together, the people of Guyana can make these structures work for their benefit.

As a matured party, Cde. Speaker, we have been engaged in self criticism from time to time, and we have analysed the situation. While we continue to give leadership in this country, we are also struggling for excellence and improved performance so that the socialist society which we all dream about will in fact become a reality during our lifetime. In our continuous struggle for excellence and greater production and productivity, we have recognised that among the variables responsible for our failure to achieve targets, if we were to use the words of the President, “was weak and unimaginative management”. I quote:

“There was weak and unimaginative management, indiscipline and lackadaisical performance at all levels.”

I would however, Cde. Speaker, submit that while better performances at all levels would have enhanced our economic circumstances somewhat, there were other circumstances over which we had no control. Some of these circumstances had adverse effects on the economy. For example, the price of sugar showed a downward trend on the world market. As a matter of fact, the price we got for sugar was less than the cost of production. We could not adequately predict the price we got for sugar on the world market. The Bauxite market was also softened as a result of pressures on the international economic scene. Many of our customers who bought bauxite to be part of the steel and oil based industries cut back on production and that itself affected Guyana’s position somewhat.

Being but a small nation bound hand and feet to a world economic system which is riddled with inequalities, our existence is influenced by a very large measure to the inconsistencies and whims and fancies of the developed nations that control the world economy. Developing nations like ours until such time that we can rid ourselves of the parasitic relationships with those countries are condemned to a perpetual state of dependency. The developed nations have so organised the world that they have an unfair advantage over trade, and the distribution and utilisation of the world's resources.

They have carved up the world into spheres of influences in which they decide which country they must dominate and control. In analysing the world economic situation the faint of heart is likely to surrender and resign himself to pick the crumbs that fall from the tables of the rich. Those men of dignity and honour in spite of the difficulties and dangers concomitant with the struggle for genuine independence they confront the enemy and struggle until final victory. Such is the task to which the P.N.C. has committed itself – to give leadership to the Guyanese people so that we could obtain genuine economic independence, for our political independence is worth nothing until such time as we are economically free.

Cde. Speaker, I wish to posit that for us to be successful in battle, we have to be aware of the total circumstances surrounding the situation we seek to correct. The economic pressures facing Guyana is rooted to a large extent in our historical development. The plantation experience of our country is the main cause of dysfunctional structures which we inherited and which we now seek to change. To fully understand the economic crisis facing us, we must be reminded of our colonial heritage and how we became tied to that unjust world economic system which, even though the colonisers have physically been removed from this part of the world, the structures for control and manipulation of the economy are still very much present.

Cde. Speaker, it is the belief of some people that the present economic difficulties of Guyana are reflections of its own political, economic and cultural structures. This is the view of those who have virtually destroyed our economy, and still seek to dominate us with the aid of their lackeys that are sometimes within our midst. There is, however, Cde. Speaker, sufficient evidence available to show that our development has been restricted largely by our historical past and our continued relationship with the developed metropolitan countries.

Cde. Speaker, in 1964 when the P.N.C. assumed office it inherited a lopsided, bankrupt economy which was no more than an overseas economic unit of Britain. With the full blessings of those who ruled the country at that time, a number of multi-nationals Corporations of Bookers, Alcan, Jessel and Reynolds used this country as a source of cheap raw materials with which they kept their subsidiaries in the metropole in constant motion. The economy, if we could so describe it, was nothing more than a few economic enclaves in which each institution did its own thing oblivious of the needs and the welfare of the Guyanese people. As a matter of fact, our resources contribute meaningfully to the industrialisation and development of the metropole, while we who own the resources were condemned to all the difficulties and deprivations with which under-development is associated. Our economy at that time was tailored to suit the needs of the major industries and not to serve in the interest of the Guyanese people.

14:40 hrs

(Cde. Ainsworth continues)

Even though we have been independent for fifteen years or so we have we have not been able to diversify the economy at the rate we should in order to reduce our dependency on the tripod, rice, sugar and bauxite which are subjected to the vagaries of the weather and other factors over which we have no control. Cde. Speaker, the only serious attempt to integrate the Guyanese economy and make it work on behalf of the people has been made by the People's National Congress. As a matter of policy we are committed to using our resources for the benefit of all the people of Guyana. This process is continuous and our list of achievements towards that end is well known. I need not repeat them at this moment. While we have scored successes we are not prepared to rest on our laurels but to continue to struggle for more gains and victories for the Guyanese people. Our efforts so far are aimed towards creating the pre-conditions for the economic take-off of this country which would generate the kind of wealth which is needed for the provision of a better life to which we are all entitled. Our efforts to lead this nation to economic prosperity have not been without its difficulties. We are subjected to deliberate acts of destabilization by external and internal forces but we will not be deterred in our commitment to be a free and proud people. Cde. Speaker, some people may argue that after seventeen years we have not been able to put in place the necessary institutions and structures to make our ideals a reality. For maids-in-waiting seventeen years is a long time. What we have to contend with is over three hundred years of colonial development which has negatively affected every facet of Guyanese life. Apart from the lop-sided economy and dysfunctional structures which we have inherited we are faced with a large section of our population which has been affected by the dependency psychology of the plantation system and until such time we are able to decolonise the minds of such people our task of development will be so much more difficult. Further, because of how our economy was organised as well as the level of economic activities in which our people are involved it has been made even more difficult for us to mobilise internally the necessary capital for developmental works which we have to undertake.

It therefore means that to mobilise capital which is necessary for putting in place the infrastructure and other related resources we have to increase our income, both local and foreign as well as to attract international assistance. But to do either of the two we have to take into account the international milieu in which we operate. There is no doubt that even the developed countries have been experiencing recession and unemployment. As a matter of fact the Cde. Vice-President of Public Welfare, Cde. Green alluded to the difficulties and hardships facing workers in the various parts of the world as a result of the international crisis, so I need not spend more time on that. Cde. Speaker, while many of the developed nations have been concentrating on curbing inflation which has been in double figures for the longest while, in most cases they have not been able to grapple with it successfully. As a matter of fact we in the developing world have been subjected to the passing on of such high prices as a result of inflation, as a result of our relationship with those developed countries from whom we have to buy many other inputs necessary for our productive sector to continue. The monetary measures implemented by Britain and the U.S., to some extent, while they have resulted in increased interest rates they have not been able to impact on their economies in any real way towards the reducing of inflation. What it has done is to induce recession to some extent. The difficulties are further compounded as there is no guarantee that when the pressure to keep down inflation is removed either inflation will stay low or the economy and employment will rise. As mentioned earlier we import inflation, thus making it very

difficult with our meager resources as a result of low prices we get for whatever raw material we export, to be able to pay the high prices for the manufacturers which we have to use sometimes as well as the necessary inputs to aid out developmental process. In addition the recession resulting from the so-called corrective measures in developed countries is being transmitted to developing countries such as Guyana through reduced markets and reduced aid flows. As a matter of fact, some of these developed nations have been using this excuse to cut back on multilateral and bilateral agreement for support to developing nations. We should note, however, that the policy prescriptions have been ineffective in developed countries so we in developing countries such as Guyana have to find other ways and means of solving our problems. We cannot use any imported model to assist us and therefore we have to pursue an independent, economic passport so as to be able to develop. Cde. Speaker, as we look at some of the problems affecting developing countries, such as Guyana as a result of the unfair practices of international economic scene let me refer to this booklet “Neocolonialism in action” which is published by the Institute of International politics and economics of G.D.R. I wish to refer specifically to the losses that affect countries such as Guyana as a result of shifting and floating of international currencies

“The losses of the developing countries due to the crisis affecting the capitalist monetary system and the frequent revaluation and devaluation of capitalist currencies run into billions. The gradual decline of the dollar primarily affects countries which hold their reserves in U.S. currency and which have foregone changing them into gold and stable currencies as well as countries whose main export products are quoted in dollars”

Cde. Speaker, this example can be held directly with other international currencies with which we have to trade. Development as we all know is not an easy process. It is very difficult and in order to be able to solve many of the problems facing us we need to be able to use the type of technology which will ensure that we are best able to use to the best advantage the imports we have at our disposal. Nevertheless, we are faced with continuous problems of the brain drain as well as the high cost of the transfer of technology. If I am permitted, Cde. Speaker, to quote again from this same booklet I would draw the attention of this Assembly to some of the difficulties under which we have to operate. Why, some people feel the brain drain only affects Guyana. I can assure you it is a problem that affects the world over.

“the difficulties being experienced by developing countries in attempting to solve scientific and technological problems are not being reduced by the transfer of technology. On the contrary, the brain drain organized by the imperialist powers is making matters even worse.”

(Cde. Ainsworth continues)

It also states:

“By 1979 the “brain drain” had attained such proportions that 500,000 specialists were working beyond their national boundaries. This stripped the developing world of much of its trained labour potential, whereas the United States, Canada and Britain were able in large measure to rely on immigration from the developing countries to meet there demand for highly skilled personnel.”

The population of Guyana is a little more than 500,000 so we must see clearly that the question of the brain drain is not the only phenomenon affecting us. If we are to correct the situation and to be able to chart our own destiny we need to pursue, as I said, a course of independent economic development and in order to be able to do that we must improve on production and productivity. We have to stop the brain drain. Self-reliance should not only be a word but we should work hand in hand with all institutions and individuals in this country to make self-reliance a way of life.

The diversification of agriculture has been mentioned as a pre-requisite for independent development. We need to link industries in the country, we need to have both forward and backward linkages if we are to get out of some of the problems facing us as well as the uncertainty of international pressures. Our education must more now than ever be thrust in an area where it should be for the mobilisation of people not only for the acquisition of knowledge but to put skills and the knowledge gained at the disposal of the nation. We should continue rapidly to increase our path of import replacement. We need to mobilise our domestic savings and at the same time strain every muscle to ensure that we are able to defend our socialist gains.

We also need to look at the question of the type of technology we use so as to be able to follow the advice given by Cde. Jack of last evening that we should cut back on the amount of hydrocarbon fuels used and in a general way be able to mobilise our every resource that the people of Guyana would truly benefit from their efforts and with dignity, hard work and dedication by the whole nation we would perhaps be able to, as our Cde. Leader has said, chart our own destiny.

Cde. Armogan: Cde_Speaker, as a man of experience you, and those who have over the years charted the course in the Assembly, would know of the shyness each new comer to this high forum must feel. I feel strongly confident to speak because of the follow facts.

The world and Guyana are in turbulent economic waters. Agriculture offers the single most immediate step for our escape. For the sake of proper brevity that befits the new comer, I wish to single out merely two areas. One, the concept of land to the tiller and, two, the Black Bush Polder farming history in region six. The People's National Congress Government inherited many landlords in Guyana who lease large tracts of land from Government and pay a small fee and rent those lands to small farmers at exorbitant prices. They fail to do any improvement work on the land. For example, drainage and irrigation and all infrastructural works neglected by them. Before the reign of the People's National Congress Black Bush Polder land was given to farmers. These lands were given through political affiliation who in turn sold their plots after the shortest while. In certain instances owners of large plots in turn employed many persons to work for them, hence became employers. Some joined co-ops to acquire shares of large plots but they are not really farmers but have been servants of the society. They shortly after sold their shares for profit. Today, the People' National Congress Government believes in land to the tiller as is embodied in the People's New Constitution Chapter II, Article 18 which states as follows:

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

Today, because of Government's interest in the farmers and their confidence in the Government, over 95 per cent of all land for farming in Region 6 is under cultivation with rice, legumes, provision and other cash crops. With the hydro-flow pump now available, farmers are guaranteed irrigation which has served the farmer as that has never been served in the past, hence a record crop is envisaged in Region 6 with general farm produce. Because of Government's agriculture programme and land to the tiller, public servants are taking to agriculture, some giving up their jobs to be full-time farmers in Regions 6.

For never in the history of Guyana have the farmers have been so respected. Land to the tiller from the People's New Constitution will be implemented this year. This provision states that land is for social use and must go the tiller. What does this means? It means that people who work the land will own the land and no longer will have absentee farmers owning large estates of land and renting these out to tenant at exorbitant rates. It means an end to exploitation. It means more leases to farmers, more security and satisfaction for farmers, in the consequence, more production.

(Cde. Armogan continues): How will this decision by our great Leader and President affect us at Black Bush Polder. It means that people who have land in Black Bush Polder and have taken up residence in foreign countries and are renting these lands to farmers will lose the land and the land will be given to who is working the land and land will be given to all those who are willing to work it. 'Land to the tiller' means that people who already have been allocated land will lose the land if they do not work on it. 'Land to the tiller' is very good news to us the farmers of Black Bush Polder and will stimulate more production and greater prosperity for us all. While there are many Guyanese who own large tracts of land and do not make use of them, there are thousands of Guyanese needy framers who are without, who if given the opportunity will make full use of them for their livelihood. Government is presently embarking on very extensive project in order to provide drainage and irrigation facilities between Bloomfield and No. 51 Village on the Corentyne including Black Bush Polder. This scheme will bring 48,000 acres more arable land under the scheme. As part of the works to be carried out the government will construct two new pumping stations at Black Bush Polder to replace the one at Black Bush and Manaribisi. The Black Bush Farmers will benefit from a marketing centre from the Government of Guyana with the assistance from the Inter American Bank. This marketing centre will have a grading, washing and packing system. This facility will enable farmers to reduce transportation cost to market their produce and will expand their production for consumption in the other parts of the country as well as export. Farmers in Black Bush Polder have taken up the challenge to make full use of all land available in Black Bush Polder like so many other intentions was diverted to point headward. Their vast majority of regional select team gives the impression that their plots were political reward. The result of this was nonpayment of rent, trading in plots, absentee farmers, breach of regulations, destruction of infrastructural work, abuse of the water control system, renting of plots to large rice farmers. Hence, before we have a recurrence of the past experience at Black Bush Polder, the Regional Land Selection Committee of Region six makes sure that tenants who have been living out of the Polder and who do not cultivate the land also who have rented their holdings are dispossessed. The Committee seeks to ensure that only genuine titles of the land have claim to the land. The Committee is prepared to end all practices of one big farmer controlling the plots of a number of small farmers who are reduced to a mere front. Where a tenant for several years lived away from Black Bush Polder but had some staying on the land on his behalf the land will be given to the man who held and cultivated it. The whole purpose is to make sure that maximum production is realised, while land no longer remains a symbol of prestige and a weapon for selfish exploitation. But already the sign of advance is approved, the present spring crop promises to be special in the number of acres which went under the plough in the Black Bush Polder recently. Cde. Speaker, very often emphasis is placed on agricultural endeavours such as rice and sugar. At the moment I want to bring to the attention of this Assembly that cash crops agricultural endeavours are equally important. I however wish to mention that by cash crops agricultural activities, I mean those activities that are commonly referred to as periodical and seasonal crops. Throughout our country agricultural self reliance is evident in such places as in backyards, roads parapets, dams, reefs, and other suitable places which can be farmed. The cash crops are numerous, there being ochroes, bora, pumpkin, black eye peas, cassava, sweet potatoes, eschallot, squash, pepper, melons, vegetables and certainly a long list too numerous to mention. Cash crops at the moment are economic ventures and offers employment and decent living conditions to the farming oriented.

Cash crops growing is a perfect example of the contagious green revolution. Today Cde. Speaker, because of the People's National Congress Government's perception of self employment and self reliance that standards of living of individuals and families have significantly been uplifted and modified. In fact cash crops have resulted in savings and thrift and have given the opportunity for many people to acquire other necessities vital for survival. It is in the small man's base and living for a living and income. Cde. Speaker, a quantification of the amount in pounds is somewhat difficult to render at this time, reveals that cash crops has always been produced in enormous quantities throughout our country. Never before have there been such a taking to the land as now under the People's National Congress government. The economic values of the cash crops have been given a decent place in agricultural production and price increases. Incentives and motivation for people to rely upon themselves, no doubt it is an encouragement to cash crop growers. Cde. Speaker, on Friday last this Assembly listened with rapt attention as our Cde. President outlined the general economic situations that our country now finds itself in. We are facing an uphill task to put ourselves out of the gloom that has descended on us and one of the ways in which we can do this, some may think it is the only way ---

Cde. Armogan continues

15:10 hrs

One of the ways in which we can do this – some think it is the only way – is to increase our production and productivity within all areas. In the agricultural sectors there is much potential for us to make better use of our resources and accelerate our drive towards economic well-being but, unfortunately, there are also a few checks and obstacles that stand in our way towards realising this potential. A concerted effort is being made by regional democratic councils, in consultation with the Ministry of Agriculture, to remove most, if not all, of these obstacles to enable farmers to enjoy their livelihood.

If I may refer to Black Bush, statistics will reveal that nearly 90 per cent of the people who were allocated lands there have either rented these lands to other or left the polder. The second instance represents a disgraceful waste of our agricultural resources. While hundreds of our farmers are in need of land to put under the plough, these landowners are heedless of the Government's plans and programme and of the aspirations of our people.

As I mentioned earlier, our agricultural sector can make a great impact on our economy. Our farmers can equal and surpass every farmer everywhere but we must put an end to their exploitation and frustration. A farmer who owns the land he works, unfettered by absentee landlord or boss man, will give that little bit more to ensure his personal prosperity in the short run and the nation's prosperity in the long run. [Applause]

Government's intention is to ensure that all our farmers are given the necessary incentives to maximize production. As is provided in our new Constitution which was adopted in February, 1980, land is for social use and must go to the tiller. Government's decision to implement this provision will come as a boon to our farmers. The transfer of land to the tiller is an act that will reassure those who work on the land and will stimulate greater effort to maximize production. Earnings by our farmers will naturally be increased and others who are presently hesitant will take to the land regardless of their area of specialization, be it rice, legumes or otherwise.

In time, as our farmers get more bold and their ranks are increased, larger agricultural schemes will be built and existing virgin land will be put under the plough. This can only spell progress as people will be afforded the opportunity to do what they know best – farming. Absentee ownership, landlordism, and the like by people with no inclination to till the soil would have been ended. A new day will dawn in Guyana.

A lot has been said about the year of Defence by previous speakers. Let me say this to one and all: Defence to me does not only mean against the enemy with arms and ammunition, but defence against saboteurs of our revolution, defence against those who discourage our people from enjoying and sharing the fruit of their labour as independent farmers, defence against poverty and waste of man hours at our work place, against misusers of our valuable machinery that we have to pay so much for and finally defence against traitors to the cause of our freedom and this revolution. Under the banner of the People's National Congress Government and our great leader, Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Rashid

The Minister, Office of the President (Cde. Rashid): Cde. Speaker, after many years of relative calm and stability, unprecedented economic growth and technological innovation, the world economy within the last decade has plunged into turbulence. Fifteen years or so ago the concept of planning served as a useful and vital tool in promoting economic and social development. The trend of yesterday were simply projected into the future, using the same elements, using the same configuration. Today, in an era of turbulence, it is almost impossible to plan and for sure it is almost impossible to anticipate for events that are unique. Statistics emanating from various parts of the globe within recent times have sounded a progressively gloomier note – uncontrollable inflation, low growth rates, rising unemployment, escalating interest rates, energy crisis are just a few of the more important symptoms that the global economy suffers from severe hemorrhage. It is predicted that unless drastic initiatives are taken now starvation by the year 2000 will be even more serious than today, even though the world has the potential for providing adequate food to its entire inhabitants.

The year 1981, you will recall, Cde. Speaker, was designated International Year of the Child. Of the 122 million children who were born in that year one in every ten is now dead. It is estimated that of the 780 million people who live in poverty today over 300 million are children and, paradoxically, in 1981 the world spent \$525 billion (U.S.) on armaments, that is, over one billion dollars (U.S.) a day on the production of weapons that are designed to destroy humanity. The O.E.C.D., that is, the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development, recently published data that revealed that unemployment in the western industrialised countries of the world will increase rather than decrease in this year 1982.

(Cde. Rashid continued)

In France, the figure has just passed the two million mark. In the Federal Republic of Germany the figure is approaching two million. In the United States of America, over 9.5 million people were seeking jobs at the end of last year. In Britain, the official count disclosed that the figure is approaching three million, even though unofficially it is said that this figure under-estimates the real unemployment rate. In Eastern Europe, the situation is equally bleak. We are all aware of the almost unsurmountable problems in Poland. The recent analysis by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe disclosed that Eastern Europe owes the West over \$80 billion U.S., and in 1980 alone, the debt rose by over 17 per cent. In Czechoslovakia power cuts and reduction of street lighting in Prague to a bare minimum, are indications of a very acute energy situation. In Romania, food shortages have led to waves of strikes and demonstrations.

It is satisfying to learn to observe, Cde. Speaker, that in his contribution yesterday, the Leader of the Minority Party at least acknowledge that the crisis, the world crisis, has not escaped Eastern Europe. I think this is an important admission to date, since we all are aware that the impression the People's Progressive Party, the Minority Party, has been giving is that Eastern Europe is insulated from the crisis of capitalism. The admission yesterday was indeed a great step forward as far as the People's Progressive Party is concerned.

The position of the counties of the South, of which Guyana is a part, is even more difficult and for most countries of this group, the catastrophic effects of the world's crisis is threatening the very existence of these nations. For these countries, the key word is not development but survival.

Cde. Speaker, if I have painted a gloomy picture, it is not to frighten our people, or to weaken their resolve to overcome the present difficulties we are experiencing, but rather it is to warn against the tendency and temptation to deny reality and to become complacent.

We in the Government, we in the People's National Congress Party and Government, we are not pessimists. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, Cde. Speaker, as a nation, as a people, we must accept the difficult and sometimes unpleasant challenges which face us. The price of failure will be enormous, but the rewards of success will be exciting and most satisfying.

In the ensuing period our attention must focus increasingly on micro-economics in order to improve production and productivity in every unit of production. In our factories, in the Corporations, in the Departments, in the Offices, in the Ministries, all these units are important if we are to survive, if we are to develop and if we are to prosper.

Increasing production and productivity, I am sure, Cde. Speaker, you will agree with me, is a task for all of us, everyone of us in this Assembly, everyone in this nation, in every area of our land. It is my contention that if this is a task for us then it is also the supreme task of our managers and all those who exercise managerial functions. The burden of seeing that production and productivity is increased in every sector is the supreme responsibility of our managers at every level. When I speak of managers, I am speaking of managers in the Ministries and include those in the service sectors. It is the task of these managers to ensure that production and productivity is increased.

Cde. Speaker, permit me to take this opportunity to commend those managers who have responded to the difficult situation we are experiencing with extra-ordinary skills and converted loss situations into outstanding successes. The people of Guyana are indeed proud of you, proud of those who have shown initiative, those who have demonstrated imagination. However, there are within certain areas of production, some of our managerial leaders who continue to demonstrate a lack of imagination and initiative in tackling even the most rudimentary problems that is leading our society to experience unnecessary losses. Only recently, investigations revealed that many of the items that were imported were left on the bonds to deteriorate. Many of these items including spare parts which are crucial for the development – the continued development of our society. Spare parts which are needed to solve many of the problems in industries have been left to idle on the wharf and in the bonds.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(Cde. Haroon Rashid continues)

These are some of the problems which our Managers must accept responsibility for. And it is to the manager that we look to ensure that these bottlenecks are removed in the future and do not recur. It is also important to observe that among some of our group of managers that there is a tendency to insist that we continue to import commodities when Guyana possesses both the resources and technical know-how to produce these items or to manufacture suitable alternatives. We in the Government, in the political government call on the Managers, demand of the managers, to rise up to their responsibilities and to ensure that this nation comes out successfully from these difficult times. Then there are those who are simply satisfied in allocating the enterprise's resources according to inertia rather than results. In our society there are attractive possibilities, attractive opportunities in the non-traditional sector. Our productivity conscious managers must implement measures that will shift resources, away from the service sector into productive sector. There are unlimited opportunities in forestry, in agriculture and in manufacture and also in mining. Our resources, men, material and money must be made mobile. This is a task this is a responsibility, I contend, for our managers in industry. Moreover, Cde. Speaker, managers in both the productive and service sectors must put in train policies that will reward high performance and the committee, and penalise those who are bent on subverting our revolution. In short, Cde. Speaker, it is the duty of all managers to increase the productivity of all the factors of production, that is, to produce more with the same resources. This necessary, Cde. Speaker, and it is possible. Sometimes, we tend to adopt the easy way out by passing on increased cost as a result of inefficiency to consumers. This is a situation totally unacceptable to the political government. Managers must know their teams and must inspire the team to perform, must inspire the workers to do better at the work place.

In these days of stress the managers must be able to recognise declining opportunities and shift resources to growth areas. Moreover, management must comply with political directive to introduce democracy at the work place. This is not merely an ideological necessity. This is a policy that makes practical sense. If workers are to grasp the essentials of increased production and productivity then they must be informed and be involved. Those who are committed will give better services and better services will benefit the entire nation. Finally, Cde. Speaker, if we are to survive, if we are to prosper, if we are to develop then this challenge or the challenges which we face today must be responded to not by a few men and women but by all Guyanese. It must be a collective effort. Indulging in polemical debates are as fruitless as the medieval debates as to the sex of angels. If those who are anointed with "conventional wisdom" are really sincere in their commitment to Guyanese people, if they are really concerned in the welfare of our people then they must stop their slander against the revolution. They must cease attempting to mislead the Guyanese people. Indeed, Cde. Speaker, if they are really concerned with solving the problems of our nation, well then it is important that they devote their time, and they devote their energies to creating a fund of good will.

[Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Davidson

Cde. Davidson: Thank you. Cde. Speaker, permit me first of all to say how happy I am to be afforded this opportunity to speak for the second time in this honourable Assembly under the banner of the People's National Congress, the only Party, Cde. Speaker, who is really interested in production and productivity. It is more that a formality when I say that I am particularly pleased to be speaking in this forum especially after that dynamic address given to us a few days ago by one of the world's greatest leaders and the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, *[Applause]* a speaker, a leader, who speaks for hours and end without losing his voice, *[Applause]*. In Guyana today we are charting our destiny, but this destiny can only be charted through production and productivity. I would like to draw attention to Page 7, paragraphs 3 and 4 of the document "Charting our Destiny" to relate how we can achieve self sufficiency using all our local products to ensure maximum production and productivity and I quote:

"A relatively small economy such as Guyana's may suffer the disadvantage of being unable to influence world trends decisively but sometimes, Cde. Speaker, small is not only beautiful but also potential effective. If we to exploit and develop our relevant resources intelligently and efficiently we can survive and even prosper in the context of the world's needs, crisis or no crisis. It is not that I suggest or posit that Guyana can be an insulated or isolated entity, but at all times the world and our immediate neighbours more particularly need what we can produce for ourselves and for them. For instance the world, unless it disappears, will always need food. For instance the world will always need wood and wood products. For instance the world will always need the metals whose ores lie in the bowels of our earth and their derivatives. For instance, we have the potential, thanks to our natural resources for being self sufficient in many areas of basic needs."

(Cde. Davidson continues)

Cde. Speaker, when we speak about food I would like to refer to the food crop production and marketing project which involves the establishment of six marketing and five extension centres at a total cost of \$11,775,000. Agriculture is the key to our development. By agriculture I refer not only to crops and livestock, to the plants we grow to provide food for ourselves and to generate export earnings and to the animals we rear to provide us with meat and milk, and eggs. I refer also to fisheries production, to fish from our seas and from our inland waters as well as our vast forestry resources. Seventy per cent of our land is covered by forest containing valuable timber which we can and must exploit more fully for our development. We have the resources of the sea, almost 50,000 square miles, resources which are ours to exploit for our own benefit and development.

A very high percentage of our population depends on agriculture for their existence. A nationwide survey conducted in 1978 showed that there were about 25,000 farming families with an average of a little over six persons per family and about 160,000 people whose existence depends exclusively on agriculture. We depend heavily on agriculture not only for the jobs it provides for the livelihood of tens of thousands of people, but we depend upon it also very crucially for our foreign exchange earnings. If we lift the levels of our productivity we shall underwriting the development of this country in the securest possible way. Agriculture is in a very vital sense the cornerstone of our development.

In the livestock sub-sector, production generally has kept pace with targets set. The sub-sector has contributed significantly to improve nutrition in the country. The average domestic consumption of meat has risen by 35 per cent between the years 1971 to 1981. The poultry industry has registered what is perhaps the most outstanding achievement over the last ten years. In the 1950s poultry meat was imported in large quantities in Guyana. In 1960, meat imports were replaced by day-old broiler chicks. In the 1970s imports were switched from day-old chicks to broile eggs to be incubated locally. In 1980 we commenced the production of broile hatching eggs and this year we expect to take a significant step towards the production of the major share of our hatching eggs requirement. The increase of 135 per cent in the production of commercial or table eggs over the last ten years from 25.51 million to 50 million and a projected 50 per cent increase in 1981 over production in 1980 is indicative of the efficiency of eggs producers and the effectiveness of our agricultural programme in this area.

I could go on and on in reviewing the agricultural sector to list the problems, to recount the successes, but I prefer not to turn form this sterile exercise and say something about the positive action we should take to deal with the problems and constraints affecting agriculture. Guyana is blessed with an abundance of natural resources. If we are to achieve self-sufficiency using all our local products to ensure maximum production and productivity, we must appreciate and utilise to the fullest the things we produce. The slogan 'buy local' should be a part of our daily usage. To use local products is the only way through which Guyana or any other nation can become self-sufficient, the only way we can become truly developed. We must seek not only to produce and reap what is there but must continue to explore

ways and means to use the things we produce, to manufacture items for improving our own lives first, then to assist in our foreign exchange earnings.

We have not yet mastered the technology for the optimum exploitation of the vast ground sandy area of the immediate savannahs. The soil has good possibilities but we have yet to develop the most appropriate cultivation practices. We need to know more about disease patterns to develop better systems for maintaining and improving the nutrient qualities of the soil. We need to undertake research to identify the more suitable crops or variety of crops for soil and climate conditions. If we are to achieve self-sufficiency using all our local products to ensure maximum production and productivity, efforts will therefore have to be made to develop farming systems. For example, farmers in the hinterland can minimize the need for fertilizer by a scientific system of rotation and taking fields out of production in which fields livestock could be reared, particularly poultry and small ruminants.

Page 7, paragraph 4 of the Cde. Leader's address says the world will always need wood and wood products. If we are to satisfy ourselves and the world with wood and wood products, it is only necessary that we exploit our vast forest. Wood may be regarded as being in the category of a new and renewable energy source. Its application in the production of goods and services may either be firstly in the form of providing steam in a boiler which can be used to cause work to be done such as providing energy to operate a steam engine or, secondly, by a method of wood gratification, wood or production gas is produced which can operate internal combustion engines. I have seen this wood gas operation in the Mabura wood project.

About our bauxite industry I would like to quote what the Cde. Leader said about production and productivity on page 30, paragraph 4 in the booklet "Organise for Production and Defence". I quote:

"Let us take a look at the Bauxite industry, identified as one of the growth points of the national economy. Production reached an all time record peak in 1975, four (4) years after nationalization. But, that has not been achieved again since. There have been given many explanations for the fall in production. Most if not all of these have substance, but none is insuperable."

**TAKE
15:40 - 15:50 HRS
MISSING**

National Assembly

(Cde. Davidson continues)

Cde. Speaker, I heard the hon. Dr. Jagan mentioning that Linden is supposed to be the stronghold of the People's National Congress and there is a fall in production. Stronghold Cde. Speaker, is not the criterion for production and unless Dr. Jagan knows, Linden is not the stronghold of the People's National Congress. The entire Guyana is the stronghold of the People's National Congress. Cde. Leader went on to say in his booklet "are you comrades employed in the industry sure that all machines and equipment are properly serviced and carefully used, are you sure that you have been working to the best of your ability so that others can emulate you, what have you done about workers training and development?" Production and productivity is a slogan which is only a guide to action, action which you and I must take and take urgently or we perish. Cde. Speaker, if we are to achieve self sufficiency using all our local products to ensure maximum production and productivity we must at all times make sure that all our machines and equipment are properly serviced and carefully used. Be patriotic Guyanese and use what we have. Work to the best of your ability so that others can emulate you. Educate our people to appreciate what they have. Land must be given to the farmers and would be farmers and as the Cde. Leader said production and productivity is a slogan which is only a guide to action. All of us Cde. Speaker, must take this action and take it urgently or we perish.

Cde. Bispat: Cde. Speaker, ours is a war declared. This is the Leader and Father of this nation on the 14th December, 1974, how brave those words were in those days. The Cde. Leader has since then seen that in this country of ours that there has been recession in the field of production. Cde. Speaker, this country has been blessed to have had a leader in the form of our great Sampson. Cde. Speaker, on Friday, 1982-01-22, this honourable Assembly was graced with the presence of our distinguished, beloved and respected President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and Leader of the People's National Congress. Cde. Speaker, the father of this nation delivered a very candid and crucial address, so to speak at the ceremonial opening of the second session of the fourth Parliament of Guyana. It was intervention that was in a small package but replete with many messages. It unfolded unequivocally the task that lies ahead in charting our destiny, the destiny of the people of Guyana, all Guyana. The Leader and the then Prime Minister of our Dear Guyana on the 14th December at a special congress of party in an address at Sophia which is now popularly known as 'declaration of Sophia' made two very important statements. The first was a conclusion that the time had come for the nation to be mobilised on a permanent basis for development and not merely for periodical elections and certain functions and programmes. The other was that the time was propitious at the stage of our history for a new constitution to be introduced to take account of the National ethos and objectives of the society. The two statements were intertwined and inter-connected. Cde. Speaker, today, we do have a People's New Constitution, thanks to the Leader of the People's National Congress. A constitution that is

reflective of the views and aspirations of the Guyanese people. A constitution of the people for the people. In it great emphasis is laid upon the democratization of our institutions to enable the massive involvement of the people in the task of managing their communities and developing the areas in which they live. Perhaps however, one of the most important landmarks in the general process of liberation was the introduction of the People's New Constitution which was passed in this August House in 1980. This constitution gains its inspiration from the objectives of the People's National Congress – the vanguard political party in Guyana. Moreso, ever since the People's National Congress, under the astute and dynamic leadership of the Cde. Leader came to power in 1964 it has been working to fulfill its objectives, the struggle for the achievement of political independence, the declaration of a Co-operative Republic, the vast programme, the introduction of free education are but a few the party's achievements. Cde. Speaker, the practice of co-operativism provides the dynamic principles which are expected to provide basis for relationships. Therefore, in keeping with the objectives of the party the constitution provides the basic legal framework within which all Guyanese from the Rupununi to the Corentyne will be able to create a self-reliant socialist society. The fundamental rights and duties of the people are broadened, there is freedom of worship, the right to work and leisure, the right of inheritance, the right of land to the tiller, the right of free education, medical attention, equality of women, and children born out of wedlock. The People's New Constitution provides a local government framework which seeks to bring all citizens within the organisation and management of the state. It is hoped that once the people become actively involved in the management of their communities – development will be faster. Cde. Speaker, the People's National Congress is not a party of words but one of deeds and this is visible seen in tangible forms in this country of ours. Provisions have been made for a country-wide system of local government by dividing up the country into ten regions and other local democratic organs.

Cde. Speaker, it is a fact that today we have in this country of ours ten local regional democratic councils and they are as follows:

- (1) Region 1 – Barima /Waini – with the composition of fifteen regional democratic councilors
- (2) Region 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam – with seventeen regional democratic councilors.

National Assembly

16:00 hrs

Region 3, Essequibo Islands/West Demerara, with 27 Regional Democratic Councillors

Region 4, Demerara/Mahaica, with 35 Regional Democratic Councillors

Region 5, Mahaica/Berbice with 18 Regional Democratic Councillors

Region 6, East Berbice/Corentyne, with 30 Regional Democratic Councillors

Region 7, Cuyuni/Mazaruni, with 15 Regional Democratic Councillors

Region 8, Pataro/Siparuni, with 15 Regional Democratic Councillors

Region 9, Upper Demerara Berbice, with 15 Regional Democratic Councillors

Region 10, Upper Demerara/Berbice area with 18 Regional Democratic Councillors.

Our Leader and President of this country has stuck to his words. We have seen that we do have with us today a new system of local democracy because the Cde. Leader believes that it is only with active involvement and participation of the people that there can really be true and meaningful development of this country of ours. Within our concept of democracy there is no aspect of national life that cannot fall within the purview of local democracy and which it cannot influence and enrich. The primary objective will be to promote and protect the permanent interests of the people of this fair land of ours. Forward the people!

It will also create, sustain and systematically improve the material and cultural conditions of the life in various communities throughout all the ten regions of this country. It will also involve the people in the planning aspect of their lives, the development of their communities. Also exploiting their natural resources and marketing their produce; engaging in economic enterprises of all kinds and the provision of goods and services which can accelerate the pace of development for the benefit of all Guyanese.

Local Government in a developing nation is a very important institution. Due to its grass-roots operation and activities it influences and involves persons more directly than any other national institution. A viable local government structure will help Guyana to move forward effectively in dealing with its social and economic problems, development and the fulfilling of the rising expectations of the people. Local government enshrines certain concepts and values that are beneficial to nation building. Chief of them is self-reliance. One must agree that these values are necessary to the development of our co-operative republic. It is in consideration of these facts that we have the new system of local democracy.

It might not be amiss for me at this stage to refer to a statement by the Leader of the Opposition when he said that he had hope of becoming a President. That statement to me is like asking the elephant and the whale to do battle. As you are aware, the elephant is the largest animal on earth and the whale is that of the sea. Therefore a battle between them is impossible. They can never meet.

It is in consideration of these facts that we have the new system of local democracy. Local government reflects the aspirations of the community and involves the community in actions and inter actions for its development and betterment. Having regard to the fact that the process of local government is considered an important concomitant of the democratic way of life and the training

National Assembly

ground for new leaders at the local level, the new system with its provision for the six sectors augurs well for the development of this country and it set about to have involved over 16,000 people and those 16,000 people will in turn have involved other people so it means that it is only because of the kind leadership that this country has that we can really talk about socialist democracy.

The new system will improve the life style of the people because it will be liberating their energies . All the people and their energies will be directed into productive endeavours. The welding of the sectors of the community – we now have ten regions and in the very near future we will have implemented 26 sub-regions, 52 districts, 109 community councils, 262 neighbourhood, 427 people's co-operatives, all with the aim and the view of having the people involved to improve their life style and their quality of livelihood.

The welding of a nation by using the new system of local democracy to put the country on the path of prosperity, a new society that is socialist oriented, a free society where political and social democracy will pervade our lives, through the inspiration of our Leader and the Father of this nation, Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham.

The new system of local democracy has been established to ensure the involvement and participation of the people for their development and well-being.

It would be interesting for us to look at the history of local government and local democracy in this country of ours. Despite the long history behind it, local government has never been left out of the controversies on the assessment of the value of the institutions and has found itself the instrument around which the important question revolves: Is it important?

Those who answer the question in the negative nevertheless defer to the interest shown in it by persons as regards the effect on them financially when the question of rates and taxes is brought into focus, or when the election of councillors to serve is current.

Those who answer that question in the affirmative assert that local government as a whole is indivisible and point to the practice of most countries of putting the responsibility at high level.

We are of the view that within that contradiction lies the answer to the question if for the reason alone and no other that that controversy is sustained as a living aspect of the very existence of local government. But the institution of local government, like so many other in normal life, is one from which we get out of it so much as is measured by what we put into it. That proposition should condition the attitude of the population because if the approach to it, in the initial stages, is accompanied by self-reliance and self-help and an understanding of the role it is destined to play, there can be no difficult whatsoever.

National Assembly

The predisposing weaknesses of local government in this country is the lack, on the part of the populace, of a sense of identity with the institution, but the population is assured that there will be an identification of the people with the process of local government in this country of ours. The former weakness has already been tackled with fortitude by our Government with the new system of local democracy, for the one part is all-embracing in that the entire country is covered and, on the other, we will have greater involvement and participation of the people for their own development.

If Guyana is to fulfil the expectations of the people, if the visions of our Leader are to become realities, the effectiveness of the Local Democratic Organs will be all important. Such a system must be non-partisan, financially contested and contracted in competence.

The new Constitution establishes that local democracy, as a foundation of the democratic structure of the State, assigns it a dominant role in the organisations of national life and vested upon it the existence powers and responsibilities for the management and development of the regions. Local democracy now spans the whole country and will provide the opportunity for massive and direct involvement of all citizens in the decision-making, management and development processes and will be the major institution for creating self-reliant, productive communities, possessed of the confidence and political awareness of organise and manage their own affairs.

Each region has sufficient agricultural land, mineral, forest and other resources to enable that region on its own to become economically prosperous so as to better the live of the people who live in those areas. Already regional democratic councils have organised their institutions to play a pivotal role in the political, economic and social life of the region and the country as a whole,

National Assembly

[Cde. Bipat continues]

as well as to mobilise, organise and motivate the people in the Regions through their elected or chosen representatives to be involved and to participate in the development of the regions. Regions have already identified their resources, natural, material and human, that could be utilised towards its development. There have also been meetings with production groups to increase production and productivity. This, however, must continue and be intensified. Local democracy in the final analysis is the unflagging improvement in its totality, working towards the togetherness of the people from the People's Co-operative level.

Cde. Speaker, it is said: Vox populi, Vox Dei – the voice of the people, is the voice of God. Who else could say that with the introduction of the new system of Local Democratic we are not ushering into this country of ours a new era, a new era for hope. With the introduction of the new system of local democracy, financial and accounting arrangements have undergone great changes. One of such changes is the preparation of our Estimates. The Estimates are in two section: Central and local. Today the regions can put into them what they want to have done.

Cde. Speaker, existing within every strata of society are the following problems: idleness, disease, ignorance, squalor and want. The new system of local democracy will work towards the eradication of those problems and the bettering of the life style of the people within the regions.

The new system has a responsibility in the fight for the eradication of those problems. In the sphere of local democracy, we assume that a viable structure is evolving and that special and important consideration will be paid to training.

Cde. Speaker, the purpose of training is to re-orientate the administrative structures and processes originally designed for a comparatively static era and limited resources to now perform duties of a dynamic era dealing with rapid economic development and extensive social change, and the fulfilling of the rising expectations of our people. Training courses are already in train at the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College. Servicing a system of local democracy today, Cde. Speaker, should be a career in which only lack of ability would limit advancement.

Cde. Speaker, more so, the people are now active partners with the Central Government in the process of development. Local government as an institution of the people for promoting their self-government through self-management of their affairs, has been removed from the periphery to a more central and pivotal position. Mechanisms have already been established to permit central and local Government to integrate and harmonise their activities in a symbolic relationship within which, each will enrich and support the other.

National Assembly

Cde. Speaker, the people now have a new image and a new purpose which is also providing them with new opportunities for creating self-reliant and productive communities. The people have a new mantle. The people's worth and potential are now recognised. It will serve as an instrument for harnessing their will, energies and creativity. Further, it will confer responsibilities for people to co-operate and to improve their well being. Article 25 to 38 of the People's Constitution impose on every citizen an obligation to improve his community and to promote the development of its economy. And I quote:

“Every citizen has a duty to participate in activities designed to improve the environment and to protect the health of the nation.”

The people have been given a new status and have been assigned new duties and responsibilities. People are now managers of their communities and their resources. People are now recognise – and are in the fact are equal partners in development, and must demonstrate a willingness to accept and undertake the new tasks and responsibilities which are now theirs. Cde. Speaker, the new system of local democracy has extensive power to get things done. These powers are enshrined in our Constitution itself to enable development in which the Local Democracy Organ should engage itself. The Local Democratic Organ is principally and primarily the agent of development. The task therefore, falls squarely on the people in their particular communities in the regions right down to the People's Co-operative. Time for talking and walking is over. The role is to give assistance, advice and leadership; to speed up the task of development. The objective is development.

With it all there is power, but one should ask power for what? For whom? Power from where? And power by whom? Cde. Speaker, the power is with the people – the broad masses of the working people of this country – to use it for the development, for the promotion of the benefit of man and not for the exploitation of man by man; to produce goods and services for mans benefit and use. The usefulness and reality in its final analysis would be for the eradication of all injustices in our society.

Cde. Speaker, the new approach to people's development has ushered in a new era of organising people for positive action and development in each of our communities no matter how small. The new system is a bold departure from the past and seeks to chart new courses and new relationships for people and their new institutions, from the base of the people's Co-operative right up through the structure at neighbourhood community districts, sub-regional and regional levels to the pinnacle of the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs. Cde. Speaker, this is power to the people. The only way to make further progress, gradual, peaceful and smooth, keeping perfect pace with the political awareness and resolve of

the majority of the people and with their own experience. We look towards the new era which will be shaped by this potent instrument of the new system of local democracy.

Cde. Speaker, its activity will be towards improving the people's living standards, cultural and environment conditions. The system is also geared to facilitate the mobilisation of the people towards production, and for cultural and educational activities. In total, the objective of the system is to work for the harnessing of the power and collective wisdom of the people for development of their regions and improvement of their living standards and quality of life of themselves and of their children.

Cde. Speaker, our large oil-rich neighbour Venezuela has re-activated with much impurity, her unjust, irrational and immoral claim to five-eighth of our dear country, Guyana. We as a people wholly reject that claim. We hold the Arbitral Award of 1899 which settled the boundary between Guyana and Venezuela is a final and full settlement. We would not budge. This ridiculous and absurd claim on our small, peaceful and beloved country poses a severe financial burden on us. Simon Bolivar, the great liberator and champion of self-determination must be turning in his grave at the spurning of his noble and sacred ideals. The drive towards development and self-sufficiency in the regions has been affected because of this ignoble claim. We in the regions are part of a whole and we say regardless of whether we are in region one or in Region 10 we shall not be moved.

The Speaker: Cde. Bispat you will soon be moving though. Consequently it is very vital and important for us all to be very vigilant and as patriots to safeguard our country against any act of interference. All the benefits of the new system that will be unfolding will be in vain, meaningless, unless we have a country, a country, that we can call our own. This land is ours, we have a country, a country that we call our own. This land is our, we will defend her shores. We must all protect and guard her. Cde. Speaker, the great advocate and preacher of non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi when asked to chose between violence and bondage, what did he say?

National Assembly

(Cde. Bispat continues)

Cde. Speaker, he said give me violence because he knew and appreciated what it was to be under bondage and, Cde. Speaker, with us in Guyana we say give us violence. Let me commend ourselves to the inscription on the monument to the Liberation Fighters and I quote:

“Mourn not for us who died but for our brothers everywhere who lived in bondage and in mourning turn away to act”

Long live Guyana. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Hope

Are Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Cde. F. Hope): Cde. Speaker, as a Parliamentarian, Guyanese and as a Member of this Assembly when the Cde. President of this nation for issuing to us all a set of policy guidelines which ought to and which would inform our action and our effort in the period ahead in order to ensure that the development of this country proceed apace and that the crisis in which we find ourselves today would be overcome. In particular, Cde. Speaker, we are grateful to the President for enunciating a most important principle that should it be applied efficiently and sensible constitute a most important step in a charting the way to the solution of our balance of payments problems. In reviewing the role of exports in the recovery effort the President said as follows and I quote:

“It is my Government’s proposals that those exporters who have the potential for being net foreign exchange earners should enjoy a certain priority in the allocation of scarce foreign exchange”

Cde. Speaker, I think it is common knowledge by now that this country for sometime now has been experiencing serious balance of payment problems arising from the fact that we as a nation have been exporting, in terms of value, much less than we have found ourselves importing. This of course is a situation which cannot last. It is a basically unsound position and therefore every effort necessary must go into the drive to increase production and to increase our exports. But this shortage of foreign exchange, Cde. Speaker, has the effect of stultifying our production. Because with foreign exchange short we have been unable to purchase, all the equipment or the raw materials or the spare parts that have been necessary for production in agriculture and in industry. Indeed this restriction of foreign exchange has had the converse effect to what the nation really wishes and that, as I said before, has led to the reduction in export production at a time when the very survival of this nation depended on production for export. It is a fact that when our exporters are unable to export their goods they

National Assembly

lose markets and we have heard this complaint from time to time. Not only does production fall, not only does incomes tax receipts reduce, not only does unemployment increase, but the chances of our exporters losing their external markets are severely increased. We know that once we become unreliable suppliers, for whatever reason, overseas buyers shift to our competitors. It is this particular problem, Cde. Speaker, that the President sought to address when he stated Government's proposal to give preference to industries that are net earners of foreign exchange in our licensing system. The need to expand exports and export capacity is self evident in our circumstances. We have the capacity to export. We have a viable agriculture sector which we are seeking to expand even more. We have the ability to provide as the President pointed, food to feed our neighbours and our brothers farther afield, and to provide for those who need forest products whether lumber for housing or wood for furniture. We have minerals that industries of the world require. In short we have the capacity to export and it is this capacity which we need to exploit if we are to survive. We are a small population by many standards but certainly in terms of supporting production our market is relatively small. This is an additional reason why if our industries are to be profitable, if our industries are to continue to provide employment for our people, that we seek to export. Consequently, Cde. Speaker, the principle of providing an incentive to our exporters is vital and the one which the President identified is to give our exporters who return more foreign exchange than they take out to buy raw materials to give them preference to continue in the job of producing for exporting. Clearly, however, Cde. Speaker, if we are to follow the policy derivatives by the President we will need to establish certain guidelines. The very exporters would want to know who will benefit from the policy statement the President enunciated. In my view, I feel first of all that we would need to give that kind of preference to the kind of industry to the manufacturer who takes into account his total production whether it is for domestic consumption or export, who take into account his total production, the value of his exports exceed in money terms, to some significant extent, the foreign exchange that he needed to purchase imports to go into the production of that total amount of goods. This is the kind of manufacturer, Cde. Speaker, who, I conceive, will have the highest priority. The manufacturer who taking into account his total production is earning more foreign exchange than he is utilising for raw materials that went into his production.

National Assembly

(Cde. Hope continues)

We have a number of industries like that and the only reason why I would not identify these is because one does not want to be invidious. But when one gets down to study it one recognises that we have a number of industries like this which can benefit subsequently because they are clearly net earners of foreign exchange.

Then we need also to encourage our manufacturers, our industrial people, to expand. The President referred not only to exporters but, as he said, those who have the capacity, the potential to export and many of our producers have in their existing industries and their existing plants excess capacity. In other words, they have productive capacity that we can exploit. Then can increase production once they can find the markets. Then, of course, there are also those who are willing to put in new investment to expand because they feel and they are satisfied that they can find an export market whether it is in the Caribbean or further afield. These manufacturers or enterprise owners, managers, are the ones who have, in my view, the potential and I feel once they can find the markets overseas for their goods we will need to encourage them further by making them qualify for this kind of concession, this kind of encouragement in terms of priority treatment in the allocation of licences. So basically, we have, in my view, two kinds of manufacturers who would benefit: One who has taken his total production into account and taken his total exports out of that production into account is exporting in money terms and, therefore, earning more foreign exchange than he is using for his total production because he has to buy raw materials overseas. Secondly, there are those who want to expand. They have the capacity to expand either by putting up new plants or by utilizing their existing machinery more efficiently. But once such manufacturers can conceive the authorities that they can find an export market for that extra amount of exports, we feel that they should qualify for preferential treatment in terms of allocation of licences for imports.

But apart from these two I can see that there is third class of manufacturer, the one who is not necessarily an exporter, but really a manufacturer who is producing for our domestic use whether it is in consumption or where. In other words, he is producing for import replacement. Obviously, the manufacturer who is producing local things which we otherwise would have imported is certainly saving the country foreign exchange. In other words, he is producing things which in terms of our own national priorities we would have imported if these were not being produced locally. Such a manufacturer is in my view producing essentially for import replacement and, therefore, his effect, his influence on the balance of payments, is as strong as the manufacturer who is exporting. I feel that in terms of the preference he should also have preference.

National Assembly

But there is an important qualification which needs to be emphasised. He is producing a commodity for local use which, in the absence of that production, we would have, in our present circumstances, been importing in any case. He is manufacturing in those circumstances for replacement. He I feel should benefit. So in our concept, as we seek to give effect to the President's policy statement, we would want to identify three classes of manufacturers who would benefit from this arrangement of preferential treatment in the allocation of licences for the importation of raw materials.

If we are to encourage exports, as clearly we need to do in the context of the difficulties which we are experiencing, then in addition to the preferential treatment in the allocation of licences one can also contemplate a whole body of export incentives which can be accorded exporters. There are few countries in the world today which have not taken note of the importance of exports. And once they have taken cognizance of the importance of exports there are few countries of the world which have not put in place a body of incentives designed to encourage export. Many countries in the world, notably Brazil and notably Japan have progressed most rapidly in their industrialisation process on the basis of substantial body of export incentives. We have always had incentives to industry. It is a separate policy, measures which we have been implementing for many years now. But these production incentives and investment incentives have been given to people who wanted to invest. We can point to numerous enterprises presently operating in this country which have been established over the last two decades on the basis of the various investment incentives the Government has been granting to potential investors.

We have never has a body of export incentives available to our exporters and this is what, as part of the whole effort to put in place President's directives, the Ministry of Trade will be pursuing. As a matter of fact, we have already begun to develop such a body of export incentives which we hope to have presented to the Cabinet for acceptance very shortly. We feel that these things are important because of the relevance of exports to our developmental efforts and to our efforts in terms of surviving the present crisis. We need, therefore, to thank President for identifying this as an important policy objective for the present period.

But that is not all, because what we are after is development. What we are after is the fuller utilisation of our raw material resources. What we are after is an expanded level of employment. We can get exports, it is true, without those export activities leading to the kind of developmental progress that is possible. That is, of course, if we perceive that we need to import most of the raw material inputs that go into the manufacturing enterprise.

National Assembly

Cde. Hope: It is for this reason that the President also indicated in his address that manufacturers who are to benefit from this licensing priority must demonstrate active effort in backward linkages, in other words, in producing they must look for domestic alternatives to the imported raw materials. It is this linkage which will guarantee a fuller exploitation of our resources and a more balanced development in our economy. Indeed, Cde. Speaker, I can quote at least two examples of efforts which have already been made in this direction and which will point the way to be pursued in the coming period. One of our Managers has already approached successfully one of our soft drinks manufacturers, for that soft drink manufacturer to use carambola juices as a flavouring for soft drinks. Trials are going ahead in that respect and I am advised that a second manufacturer has confirmed that independently they are pursuing the same effort. In addition to that, we intend to call upon the manufacturer of cigarettes to participate in the new initiative to step up to the production of tobacco leaves within this country. Cde. Sepaker, there have been lines, I believe for cigarettes during December in particular, in other words there has a shortage of cigarettes in the country and having spoken to the manufacturer as to why this was the case, the account that was given was the he was not able to order as much in tobacco leaves as he would have liked and in addition to that even what he had ordered was late in delivery. In other words, the whole production effort at the cigarette level was heavily dependent on imported leaves. It is also true that some leaves are produced locally and blended, but the point that we wish to make is that here is an ideal example of the way in which a backward linkage that is producing their own tobacco can do to maintain their production from what it can do to reduce your reliance on imports, reduce your demand for foreign exchange. All this can happen if one pursues very strongly a policy of integrating your production through backward linkages and this is the kind of effort which pursuing the President's policy of guidelines we will need to pursue and we will be pursuing in the period ahead. Also Cde. Speaker, the President said that no licences will be given to manufacturers who continue to import raw materials where there exist in the country local alternatives. This is also an important principle that we need to pursue and in pursuance of that we will then have to consult with, examine, and this work has already begun in the Ministry for Manufacturing Industry to examine the whole import list. The whole list of imports which manufacturers have to identify, what we feel we can produce and to take steps to encourage those manufacturers to produce or other entities to produce. When going up on the East Bank you would have observed a series of buildings being established and those were to develop a new line of output, creates for packaging and those things may be going into the bottling industry whether it is rum or soft drinks and that is an example of backward linkage to which reference was made. But Cde. Speaker, in all of this course, if we recognize that if we were to succeed in implementing these various policy, directives, we will need to work closely with

National Assembly

manufacturers. We will have to make them understand the role that they have to play and how the preferences would be administered and in the light of that we will be as the Minister of Trade will shortly be – holding meetings with representatives of industry, the Manufacturers Association, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in order to explain these policy guidelines, to point out to them the importance of producing for export and for establishing backward linkages. Cde. Speaker, as I said before, the President in his clear and very effective presentation of a number of policy guidelines has in fact identified a series of important development points that we must pursue and one of these as I said is development of exports through encouragement. I think the nation owes the President a debt of gratitude for these policy guidelines and it is up to all of us – we in Parliament, the workers, the people, to work together to put in place the measures which must give expression to these policy guidelines. Thank you.

National Assembly

16:50 hrs

The Speaker: Cde. Abraham.

Cde. D. Abraham: Cde. Speaker, it is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here in this National Assembly in the year 1982, the Year of Defence. It is my fervent hope that 1982 will be a year crowned with achievement, success, efficiency and productivity. I personally will give full co-operation and make my contribution towards the development of our dear land of Guyana.

As you are aware, I am from the Upper Region of Guyana's hinterland, a part of which is now being claimed by our greedy neighbour, Venezuela. I am confident that every Guyanese who lives and works in that part of Guyana will stand firm in our commitment behind our party, the People's National Congress, the Government and the Leader of the People's National Congress, the Executive President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham.

I would today like to let everyone in this honourable House become aware of the emphasis this government is placing on the development of the hinterland areas of Guyana. It was just some years ago when the hinterland was looked upon – and, in fact, referred to generally – as 'The Bush'. It was, indeed, treated as such. I am sure that everyone here can remember that there was such a time when the emphasis was on the urban areas entirely. One can well imagine the plight of us, the citizens of the hinterland, then. However, thanks to the People's National Congress Government this changed. The emphasis is now being placed on the rural and hinterland areas.

There has been marked improvement in all areas. In the field of education, for instance, students from these areas had to travel long distances to Georgetown or live in Georgetown in order to obtain secondary education. Today there are secondary and multilateral schools in our rural and hinterland areas where our children in these parts are benefiting from the improved school programmes.

This Government has seen the need: caring has its goal – development of the people. Education today, as we know, is a very vital aspect. There is free education from nursery to University and we are grateful to our Government for this. In transportation as well, this Government of the people's National Congress has done a lot of improvement. Airstrips were established and upgraded in many of the locations and now the aircraft go direct into the areas with less problems.

National Assembly

In Region No. 1, for example, ships, pontoons and barges were commissioned by the Transport and Harbours Department and they serve the people adequately. They are convenient for passengers and cargo. These are just some of the facilities afforded the people of the rural and hinterland areas by the People's National Congress Government.

Let us look at Communication as well. Radio sets are of great help to us. Electricity spreads from Georgetown to the hinterland. Small generating stations have already been installed, like those at Lethem, Mahdia, Bartica, Mabaruma and in other areas, with a view to enhancing development and improving the quality of life of the Guyanese people. Improvements have been made in the water supply to the rural and hinterland areas. A number of wells have been installed in Region No. 9.

On its establishment, the Guyana Water Authority (GUWA) was charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all Guyanese have an adequate water supply for various needs. These have successfully worked in a number of areas in the hinterland.

In the area of health, much has been done to improve the service for all people in the hinterland. A number of health centres have been built in interior areas, as well as cottage hospitals and modern Hospital at Aishalton, Region No. 9. A number of health posts have been established in the in the remote areas of the country. Region No. 7 Mazaruni/Cuyuni, Region No. 8, Pataro/Siparuni and Region No. 9, Upper Takutu, are benefiting from the Community Health Worker Programme. All other interior regions will share this benefit.

A number of people from the regions have been trained and are still being trained in all aspects of medical work so that they can serve in the communities to which they belong.

In this Year of Defence, I wish to appeal to all my brothers and sisters in Guyana to heed the seriousness of our greedy neighbour and guard against traitors, and to help to build the dear country of ours for the future generations. [Applause.]

The Speaker: The sitting is suspended until 5:30 p.m.

Sitting suspended accordingly at 17 hrs.

National Assembly

On resumption –

Mr. Feilden Singh: Mr. Speaker, I do not really want to emphasise a personal note, but after three weeks of illness, we despite the fact that I am still suffering from the flu and the dengue virus, I nevertheless thought that it was incumbent on me to attend the Sitting of Parliament on Friday last, and today, for various very important reasons.

The Speaker: Well, Mr. Singh, I am sure Members of the Assembly and on my own behalf, we are very sorry to hear of your illness, and wish you a speedy recovery to health.

Mr. Singh: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I felt that I should be here, firstly, because Guyana at this point in time is passing through the most severe economic crisis we have ever witnessed, in my opinion, at least in my life time in the history of Guyana. Secondly, the Venezuelan threat to our territorial integrity is getting more real with each passing day – to name a few of the reasons why I am here. And talking about Venezuelan threat, let me reiterate here and not the unequivocal position of the United Force, that we totally reject the Venezuelan claim as being entirely without foundation. [Applause.] Where is no doubt in my mind, and the evidence is there the substantiate it, that they are pursuing their claim relentlessly. However, being a realist, I am not aware that they have actually said that they will invade Guyana. However, as his Excellency the President himself admitted in his speech, they have, to use his words: “our neighbours have armed themselves with sophisticated weaponry.”

So they have armed themselves with sophisticated weaponry. Are we going to do the same? Mr. Speaker, let us be realistic. I am a dedicated Guyanese and I am speaking very emotionally. I have another country that I go to. My wife is from the United Kingdom. I am a qualified United Kingdom lawyer. I can go to that country. I can live there. But I am saying it here and now, this is my country. I have no wish, no desire to go anywhere else, but to stay and die in Guyana because this is my country. [Applause.] To defend my country, I am prepared to give up my life also. [Applause] However, as a realist, let me say that I recognize that we cannot win a military battle against Venezuela. This is my humble opinion. And there is no point in our spending our scarce dollars on arms and ammunition. Instead, I agree wholly with what our President said in the last paragraph of page 6 of his speech. On page 6 what did he say? He said:

“It may be observed, at this stage and in the circumstances, that defence extends beyond our borders and include the telling of our story to the world.”

National Assembly

“Telling of our story to the world.” Mr. Speaker, I agree with him. Let us tell our story to the world. Ours must necessarily be a fight to secure international support to force Venezuela to observe the Geneva Agreement. She has said officially in release which I have a copy of dated, 2nd may, 1981 – I quoted it in Parliament before, but I will quote it again because we have to bind her and tie her to the release from Caracas dated 2nd may, 1981. She says:

“At all times, Venezuela has been particularly careful in respecting strictly the Agreement’s precepts, convinced as she is, that if both parties decide to honour it in good faith, its purpose – i.e. to find a satisfactory solution for the practical settlement of the controversy, - will surely be attained.”

Alright, we have our doubts whether she is keeping to that or not. However, that is what she says. Therefore, while it acknowledges the value of certain criticisms concerning this treaty, the Government will insist on enforcing its articles in order to find a solution to our claims. This is what she says. She says that. That is an official release by the Venezuelan Government.

If she says that, then let us secure, our President says, let us secure world support, world opinion to see that she sticks to that statement and observes it to the latter. That is what I say we should do.

Mr. Speaker, getting back to the speech of his Excellency, the President, I expected that his Excellency, the President, in his Presidential Address would have given some positive guideline to this Government and this National Assembly. I expected, like the rest of the nation, the President would have made some important pronouncements. For example, the position of our negotiation with the International Monetary Fund. But I listened and when I thought that I would have heard it, I did not.

As a general policy statement, Mr. Speaker, our President’s Address was a good one for this country. There is no doubt about that as a general policy statement. But unfortunately, it was lacking in specifics, specifics which I expect would come later. Specifics like how much bauxite we expect to produce in 1982? How much sugar? How much rice? The only thing we were told about was that gold production would increase by 50 percent in 1982 over 1981. But as I said, I suppose the specifics would come later in the Budget speech. I as a dedicated Guyanese, sincerely hope that the Budget speech would be reflection to coincide with the optimism in the President’s speech. In the absence of those specifics at the present moment, my comments would also necessarily have to be a general nature.

However, Mr. Speaker, there are certain aspects which I would like to highlight. It is said that sugar achieved 95 per cent of the revised target – the revised target. But the fact is that we have cut more cane in 1981 than ever before. Prior to nationalization, we produced 369,000 tons of sugar with much less cane cut. Last year our cane cutters cut a record of 4 million tons of cane but we produced less sugar. So what is the position? Is it that agricultural husbandry and discipline were not observed? For example, were the fields fertilized at the required time?

The sugar industry for several years, prior to nationalization, averaged 11 tons cane per ton of sugar. Now on an average, over 14 tons of cane is required to produce a ton of sugar. I am talking as I have been reliably informed on an average. There are some estates which would require less, some which would require more, but as a general average, 14 tons of cane. Why is this? Is there something wrong somewhere?

Again, Mr. Speaker, I expected that the president would have told us something about the Caribbean Basin initiative, and to what extent Guyana would be engaged in the private sector thrust, whether wholly or in joint venture with outside private sector interest for the restoration of confidence in the investment climate in Guyana. Our own publicised private investment code is not really a definitive document, and in a country where the per capita income is \$580U.S., which apart from St. Vincent is the lowest in the Caricom, this really is a serious indictment.

National Assembly

(Mr. M.F. Singh continue)

We have heard a lot that we have the capacity and capability to feed the Caricom, yet Mr. Speaker, I am reliably informed that only 0.9 percent of our 83,000 square miles, I have not been able, maybe I am a little too old to go into the metric system, I have not been able to convert it to metric, but I am told that only 0.9 percent of our 83,000 square miles is really under agriculture cultivation. So obviously, there is a lot that we can do in this field. Mr. Speaker, on various occasion this nation has heard the President's calls 'Produce or perish', 'tighten your belts', and so on, etc. and so forth, as if to try us more and test our mettle. Our President is not pronouncing that survival requires hard work, sweat and blood. Mr. Speaker, this nation has worked harder in the pass fourteen years than ever before. This nation has sweated harder in the past 14 years than ever before. This nation has indeed given blood over the past fourteen years than ever before and particularly in the last four years. What is the result? What do we really have? Shortage of food, spiralling prices, malnutrition, blackout, no spare parts, lowering standard of living, and I can go on and on. No wage increases as promised, etc. and I can go on and on. All of this, Mr. Speaker, not because of the absence of hard work, sweat and blood, but because of what has been admitted by the President, himself in his speech – mismanagement of the economy. I respect and really admire him for his frankness in admitting this. I am not talking here because I want to be nasty or an opposition critic, strictly for the sake of the opposition. I would like to know I am being constructively critical. Our President on page 10 said this "My Government accepts its share of the blame and will seek to take certain corrective measure". He is accepting blame; his government is accepting blame for some of what has happened in this country. I am not talking here because I want to be opposition for the sake of opposition. I am hoping that my remarks will not be taken as any invective and I hope that it will not get a response of invective, of nasty invective from the Government.

But I sincerely say it as constructive criticism. As His Excellency, the President said in his remarks, I think it is on page 1 "At the same time it was my hope that this will be a year of stimulating and productive debate, deliberations and discussions aimed at improving the general situation and circumstances of Guyana". I agree with him. That is what I want. My remarks are aimed at having dialogue with the Government so we could have a consensus in respect of our dear beloved land of Guyana. Mr. Speaker, at this time in our history Guyana is among the most multiracial nations in this hemisphere. We have I am told one military personnel to every ten members of the population. Over thirty percent of the current expenditure in our budget goes towards the military forces. Now we are told institutions like the Guyana People's Militia must be strengthened and others brought into being. Mr. Speaker, we are really heading for a position where we will indeed make every Guyanese soldier? I am

prepared to die for my country but I am also a realist and being a realist I keep saying that being realistic must mean that we must fight on the international level. This nation is passing through the worst economic crisis ever witnessed. What we need Mr. Speaker, are solutions. We have got no positive solutions to our problems, to say that it is important that we expand our exports and exporting capacity, that it is the duty of exporters to integrate backwards, that licences will not be granted for foreign elements which are alternatives to what can be produced locally, to mind these are mere words and empty cant. What is needed are incentives to get people to do these things. Real incentives. Incentives to invest, incentive to stay in Guyana. Incentives to return to Guyana. We all know of the exodus from Guyana. As I said before and I give my pledge here, I have no intention of leaving Guyana and going anywhere even though I do not have to get any visa or licence to go to another country. I can go. I have no intention of leaving. This is my country and I will die here as a dedicated Guyanese. But we have to recognise the fact that there are others who are clearing out. Why are they clearing out? Why are they going? Why should we not try and correct that. Look at the electricity corporation. What have we got to do? We have got good engineers but we have to bring in engineers from the United Kingdom and pay them fancy salaries and fancy allowances in order to sort out the problems. The M.M.A. Scheme – who is the man in charge of it. Bobby Camacho, A Guyanese. Steve knows that. Vice-President Steve Narine knows Bobby Camacho. So we are paying the expatriate firm of Sir William Halcrow and Partners.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh, I do not know if you want to have extra dialogue. You can have that afterwards.

Mr. M.F. Singh: But that is what is happening. I remember when I was Minister of Works – Sorry, but we worked together when I was Minister of Works.

The Speaker: You always like to constantly remind yourself about that.

Mr. M.F. Singh: It happens to be a fact and I did in fact benefit immensely from the invaluable advice I received from Mr. Steve Narine, for whom I have the highest regard. The Government has for many years been imposing control mechanisms and at the same time shouting increased production and productivity. But I failed to find instances where our Government has really and realistically introduced incentives for investors. Control and more control seem to have been the order of the day, resulting in low exports, high unemployment and let us be realistic, corruption also. The President in his address refers to the sugar industry a being by far the best performer in 1981 achieving 95 percent of its revised target. But how do we set out your target. The rated capacity of the sugar industry is 450,000 tons of sugar. As I said before in 1971 we produced 369,000 tons; in 1980 270,000 tons which is 75 percent of the 1971 production and 60 percent of the rated capacity of the industry. Unless we compare our achievements with the rated capacity, Mr. Speaker, we could end up living in a fool's paradise.

National Assembly

(Mr. M.F. Singh continues)

For instance, we could set a target 50 percent below our capacity and having achieved that target, pat ourselves on the back and say we have done well. But is this what we really want? What is the capacity of the rice industry and what is the capacity of the bauxite industry? What have been our achievements? Calcined, bauxite and alumina output in 1980 was 1,600,000 tons; 602,000 tons and 211,000 tons respectively and 1981 was lower. Yet as far back as 1970 our output our output achievements were 2,300,000 tons; 692,000 tons and 312,000 tons respectively. In other words, in 1980 we achieved approximately 70 per cent of what was achieved ten years ago.

Why was there this low level of production? This government for years have been speaking of incentive schemes for workers. The President reported that incentive scheme have been put in place, but is it really working? Statistics reveal a negative position. It is said that behind every dark cloud there is a silver lining. However, even in the address by His Excellency the President he himself seems to have admitted that there is no silver lining for 1982. But to my mind I humbly submit that there is perhaps a ray of hope which I see in certain developments recently. I am subject to correction but, for example, I understand that Green Construction Company, a private enterprise Company at Linden, having been awarded a contract for the primary stripping of bauxite, having progressed so well and having been ahead of schedule, were further awarded recently a contract to actually go on to mining bauxite. This is private enterprise which the United Force has always advocated, the free market, free enterprise system. If that is true there is a ray of hope. They have produced and they have been ahead of schedule.

Again there is a ray of hope. I saw in the newspapers of Tuesday, 19th January, 1982, an article which stated:

“Canadians to manage GTL Forestry Operations. Guyana Timbers Limited, GTL, has entered into a “three-year” contract beginning this year with a Canadian firm, C.D. Schultz & Company Ltd. for the management of its forestry operations.”

This is an admission that private enterprises can do a job. Again I read in the newspapers of the Guyana Chronicle of Wednesday, 20th January – and there is a picture with it too – that there are German consultant at Guyana Fisheries Limited.

National Assembly

The United Force has always advocated a strong vibrant private sector in preference to state monopoly capitalism. Let us hope that these trends are a recognition of what has been proved to be correct, that state monopoly capitalism is no substitute for a strong vibrant private sector. To my mind these are hopes, very strong hopes, these are rays of light. It may not be the silver lining but there are rays of light in the dark cloud.

Mr. Speaker, in the final analysis the conclusion to my mind is that there needs to be dialogue, a solution of the political level before we can ever witness a solution to the crisis which faces Guyana today. Let us work towards this solution so that we can start shaping a new Guyana and then move, as Guyana has always been, in the forefront, move towards helping to shape a new world. This is my fervent hope, my wish, my heart's desire, my future for this our dear beloved Guyana.

The Speaker: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Speaker, first I wish to share with the others in recording my personal gratitude to His Excellency the President for his Presidential Address. When the President comes to Parliament I believe all of us have so much to learn and this time was no exception. As a matter of fact, the impact was greater because of his absence. He gives so much for us to think about. I always remember a few words from the Declaration of Sophia, "Ours is a war", words from the man who is now President of our country. And so I wish to record my personal gratitude and, I think, gratitude of all of us in this Assembly.

During this debate you have had, I believe, an opportunity to enjoy some peace and quiet. I want to congratulate you for that. For ourselves on this side we have listened to some maiden speeches and I wish to compliment all of those who were good enough to make those presentations. Some of them, I know, have spoken for the second time. But still there is need for encouragement. What is useful is the industry and the preparation for those presentations. Others are from the old brigade, they need only passing mention.

The Presidential Address, as we all agree has been a ... has been a very frank one as my dear friend Mr. Feilden Singh has pointed put to us a matter of emphasis.

National Assembly

(The Prime Minister continues): I wish to compliment my good friend Mr. Feilden Singh for showing the courage you have shown even in his present ill health. We have to forgive him for his emotion this afternoon for I believe all of us can understand his emotional outburst. This world is a real world, a world of reality, a world that is harsh and I am certain because of his own reading and his own analysis of the world, we would appreciate that conditions today are far worse than conditions in the last war. I think it is enough to point out to him that some of our problems, our difficulties are due to the world environment in which we live. He of course is a great believer in the free market, is a great believer in private enterprise and private undertakings. But as we review the history of our own country – poverty, homelessness, the poor and depressed environment over all the years one would want to ask, wasn't it then the area where private enterprise had its field day commanding and doing all sorts of things and yet when we became independent in 1966, this country hadn't even one hundred miles of good roads. One would remember the bottom house schools that our children had to attend; one would remember the mud and slush in some of our communities. Were these things due to private enterprise? Their skill and their expertise. He probably would be in a good position to answer that. For we in Guyana today wish development for all and genuine development at that and if that is to happen then it is really the mobilization of people and not those who play politics have no commitment, no goal, no objective for total development of all our people. We have tried in the past linking ourselves with the party of which Mr. Fielden Singh is now head, I think it is the same name – United Force, the time Peter D'Aguiar gave leadership to that party. Peter D'Aguiar in his wisdom has found that the environment is better suited for him to invest more and more and he continues to do that because we ourselves see in our country a place for private enterprise but not that private enterprise must dominate. This government is the people's government and so its involvement of more and more people mobilising them and to help us to resolve some of the problems we have now. He speaks of agriculture for sugar is an agro industry and in our present conditions production changes from time to time for all sorts of reasons. In the presidential address it was not possible to go into these details because as he himself has answered that address is to state the policy and before long we will have more and more details when the budget is presented. But any agricultural production depends on our weather conditions and what happens in one year is no indication that it will happen in subsequent years. A farmer even if he is a peasant farmer cannot boast about a crop until it is harvested and is properly stored, and even though you have tons and tons of sugar cane and you harvest more sugar cane than ever before that is no guarantee that you will get the highest quantity of sugar because what is important is the sucrose content of that cane. The changes in the rainy season. It is diluted in the rainy season, the canes are heavier and you get greater weight in cane but you do not get greater quantity in sucrose. There are other reasons for that, the time when the cane is harvested and the time when the cane is milled – all these have bearing on the final production in that area. We must agree though because of the

National Assembly

circumstances under which we operate, sometimes we do not get the kind of management that is vital for production and that is so because of our new lease of freedom. There was a time when people did things through fear. I myself remember years ago when I worked with private industry – Bookers. There was a manager at a certain estate and his way of getting the men to do work was to shout them down and curse them. People have become accustomed to that. That was the only thing that moved some people to work. Nowadays, we do not believe in treating people like that and so it will take time for people to accept the new way of treatment and to continue to accept that we must produce if we are to develop this new society. He mentioned about per capita income. That is no guarantee for your standard of living because in some places the wages are high and the cost of living is also high. I was hearing only a few days ago that a pineapple in one of the Caribbean islands is fourteen dollars. One mango is four dollars in one of these islands. What money can buy? In examining Guyana not so long ago one of these international survey show that Guyana is not doing bad. I think the United States got ninety plus marks and Guyana came along with eighty marks and Guyana was highly rated as a country that is showing progress. It says that we are the most militarized country around this part of the world. I have a document here – it might be useful. These are clippings from the Venezuela's Press 'el nacional' this one is dated 1981-11-25. It says Cuba maintained the highest military spending in Latin America. Guyana the smallest. These I believe are experts who looked at these countries and listed the countries of South America. Chile taking quite a lead in South America and Guyana coming last.

National Assembly

18:10 hrs

Cde Dr. Reid continues

As a matter of fact, according to the points given, Chile is 1.032 and Guyana is 0.037. If Cde. Feilden Singh has done his own research and has done this kind of analysis, then he is in a position to speak as firmly as he did on that particular question. But, in this Assembly, we have the privilege of saying anything. We can even curse each other if the Speaker is not hearing. [Mr. M.F. Singh: "I never do that!"] All sorts of things we can do. Many of them we dare not do out in the Committee Room. So he has the privilege of saying that, whether it is true or false, but I personally am very glad that my good friend has been able to brave his ill-health to be with us this afternoon and to make what I think is a useful contribution.

If we are to really develop our country we must go through the pains of development. There was a time when we lived on the periphery of this world. Today we are not any more on the periphery. There was a time when the United Kingdom, Great Britain, bargained for us. There was a time when we held on to their coat-tails, when they commanded us here, there and everywhere. If they were in a war, all they had to do was to call on us to go and fight and things of that kind. Those days are no more and so we have to struggle for ourselves and go through the pains of development as all developed countries have gone through. Those who do not want to go through those pains, well it will be difficult for them to think they should enjoy development. Some I know are waiting outside for the day when our progress will be on the up to return home to enjoy the fruits of that development.

Just by chance I came across a few lines from a little date book. It has not got the writer's name but I hope you will not object, Cde. Speaker, to my reading these beautiful lines:

“We must not hope to emerge and to gather the ripe golden ears unless we have been sowers and watered the furrows with tears. It is not just as we take it; it is the mystical world of ours. Life's theme will yield, as we make it, a harvest of thorns or of flowers.”

There are some who have changed their direction according to orders from the mighty and powerful in this world. They are given all sorts of concessions. But that is not development. Lazarus sitting at the rich man's table is not a developed human being. He is still a beggar and we in Guyana, with our resources, cannot concede that we must live in beggary, being directed by people, being pawns of East and West.

One learned gentleman, when I was finished, charged me for painting the picture too gloomy. I remarked that what I said was not my own research: I was just repeating some of the facts that has surfaced through the research of other people.

And so, today, in our present circumstances, I hope that none of us in this Assembly, in this Parliament, would want to think that the economic chaos in the world has just come upon the world by chance. Years ago when we were less informed, we would have said, "All this is the work of God." Today I do hope that none of us would think that the present chaotic economic situation in the world is the work of God. This has been created by human beings, for there are a few countries that organise this world and rule this world and a few people in those few countries that organise this world and rule this world and a few people in those few countries who do the management off the economy of this world.

Some, of them, I believe, have set Guyana as a target. Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Feilden Singh has said that we cannot fight Venezuela, we cannot beat Venezuela, small countries have done a lot of things. The United kingdom is small – about our size, and at one time it ruled this vast world. The sun never used to set on the British Empire. It is a small country. It is not the size of the country, but the kind of people in the country, the spirit of the people, that matters and I believe we Guyanese can cultivate that spirit to stand up to any incursion from Venezuela, notwithstanding the size of this country. [Applause.]

Guyana has been marked as a bad boy in this part of the world for we have instituted free education for all. Some years ago we challenged the United Kingdom and indicated to her that that we would not sell our sugar when the price of petroleum had gone up and the price of sugar did not change. We have resources to cause genuine development to happen and there are mighty powers who would like to see us on our knees. We in this Assembly must be able to make people understand these difficulties and these constraints, not to weaken them, but to give them strength to carry on so that we can win. For we believe that if genuine development is to take place, then the road that we are travelling, the socialist road, is the right one, [Applause.] so that we can produce the goods and services for the use and benefit of the people of Guyana.

Sometimes we see the long lines and some people do not understand it all. They think that something is wrong, but over the years people's standard of living has improved. People who would stand in a line for cheese today, if there is cheese, fifteen years ago probably did not even know what was cheese. Do you realize that? People who today have fancy suites in their homes, some years ago survived in mud huts.

1982-01-26

18:10 – 18:20 hrs

National Assembly

Some years ago, I made a presentation to the Guyana Labour Union's Congress and the theme was "Glimpses of the World". There was no economic chaos then. The world then could have been described as reasonable normal. But in that presentation I tried to describe how this is governed, how it is managed, how it is ruled.

(The Prime Minister continues)

The Prime Minister: Our expectations are now greater. We have sampled what it means to develop, and there is no turning back. If we understand those things, then we would not be too worried and depressed, and mis-interpret some of the lines we see. I know that some of our constraints are internal, but as I said a while ago, many of them are external. High energy cost is a reality in this world. High interest rate is another reality. Adverse terms of trade is another. In this Assembly you will have heard from almost every speaker what it means to survive today. Inadequate cash flow to poor countries, all these are things that are happening in the world, not by accident, because those who are managing this world like to see some countries like Guyana change direction, get back into what they all call the fold, take the commandments from them and continue to suffer in poverty and want.

Now, let me tell you something about the world at large. Current deficit of oil importing countries in the world – not only Guyana I am talking about – rose from \$26 billion in 1978 to \$70 billion in 1980. Over the same period, the price of oil increased over 80 per cent in real terms and constituted in 1981 some 48 to 50 per cent of the import bill of our country. That is what we pay from our foreign exchange that we earn from our export. We pay some 48 to 50 per cent just for petroleum.

In 1973 a tractor was \$5,000 to \$7,000, today it is \$50,000. Look how many more tractors we still have, notwithstanding that high price. Some years ago sugar was sold in the world market at £80 to £90 per ton. Today notwithstanding the rising prices of so many things, sugar is sold for £140 per ton. Compare that with the price of the tractor. The price of tractor is some ten times, but the price of the sugar has not even doubled.

Such is the world in which we live, organized by human beings who are for the time being powerful and mighty. We can still look at some other countries, some near and some far, and then probably we might be able to locate our position. In 1980, oil imports absorbed 40 per cent of the total earnings in Tanzania. Net reserves were nil and arrears on external payments were in the vicinity of \$219 million, notwithstanding their austerity living in that country.

Borrowing from IMF increased agricultural prices to farmers, credit restrictions, increases in taxes and tighter control upon imports, all these are things that are happening in the world, happening in many countries all over the world. Brazil is near to us. At one time it was described that Brazil was creating an economic miracle. Between 1970 and 1973, Industrial growth in Brazil averaged 13 per cent and the GNP rose at an average of 11.5 per cent. But increasing oil prices, adverse terms of trade, led to a serious slow down. Between 1974, and 1978, G.N.P. growth was down to 4.5 per cent and the terms of trade deteriorated by 20 per

cent in the 1975 to 1976 period. Heavy investments on energy and alternatives such as hydro-electricity and gas, oil a large devaluation in 1979 which changed the rate of the Cruzeiro from 21 to 43 to the U.S. dollar, monetary and pricing policies intended to curb demand etc., could not prevent this slow down. By 1980, 44 per cent of Brazil's merchandise imports were accounted for by imported fuel.

It may be contended that we have been dealing with countries still caught in the capitalist market economy, and therefore, nothing else should be expected. But this is happening in both East and West. If you go to Poland, Hungary, USSR itself, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, all these are going through this kind of experience. Even the German Democratic Republic. And so the story goes because of how this world is organized, all these countries are now in economic difficulties, economic chaos and near bankruptcy. This is mere sketch, Cde. Speaker, of the international realities, and so there can be no doubt that the world is facing a serious economic crisis and our region and our country be no exception.

I am not in any way as I state these facts trying to excuse ourselves for low production and productivity and the many difficulties we have, because as the President himself has said , some of them are internal. But in viewing them, we must put them in their proper perspective and that is what I have been trying to do for the brief while. We are not going to succeed by wishful thinking and wishful doing, we must recognize these realities and conduct ourselves accordingly. We have heard of the claim by Brazil to some 70 per cent of our territory. My friend Mr. Fielden Singh has said that- [Mr. Singh: "Not Brazil Venezuela."] - by Venezuela sorry. My friend Mr. Fielden Singh has put his life at stake to save this country of ours. I think that this is the position that all of us should take. It is better to die like men as the President would have said, than to like mice, because Venezuela has in mind that we should be returned to colonial days, and if we just think back what used to happen in those days of slavery in this country of ours, is it that what Venezuela wants to bring back to all of us here? We are a small country, but I do not think any of us would want to live in the days that our fore-parents lived in slavery an indentureship.

(Cde. Dr. Reid continues)

What was the image then like? Right here in Georgetown on the wharf out there ships used to come with slaves in the holds of those ships. Fifty percent of them died on the way and those who were landed came without any raiment on and they were handled like cows and goats and sheep and auctioned out there to the highest bidder. Is that the kind of thinking in Venezuela about how they will treat us if we return to a colony? Is that the kind of life we would want to accept, when people were shipped, chained and beaten, even on the death, when they were thrown aside when they were too old? Now we talk of old age pension and all sorts of things. We have made some progress. We have a lot of things that we can count as our blessings in this country, notwithstanding the difficult times. So we must safeguard these gains by preparing ourselves because we would not get any assistance from any place if we ourselves lay down arms, throw up our arms and give up in despair. Talk we will. We will tell the story to the world, but we must be prepared for any incursion to our territory and to be able to give meaningful resistance. You must be able not only to do that in the event of an incursion by Venezuela but also for any subversion within our territory. We must remain vigilant so that we could overcome the difficulties. For what would Guyana be if we lose seventy percent of it. So we will work unceasingly for peace with our neighbours, for we believe in peace, we believe if development is to take place we need peace. Even in this Assembly there can be so much better understanding if we have a chance to think in quiet and peace as we are doing during this debate. In peace and quiet we are able to think better and better and so we stand firm by the Treaty of Washington, which was negotiated far back in 1897 and the demarcation which took place in 1905. We ask for no more, we accept no less. However, Cde. Speaker, there are many ways in which we ourselves can destroy the gains we have made. Every activity of the Party and the Government, in the interest of the working people of this country demands resources, which may be generally defined as money. When as a working people we neglect to produce we do two fundamental things. Firstly we make it impossible for the Government to provide the goods and services including free education, health services, better roads and things like these and these are vital to the development of our people and to the development of our country. Secondly, we have to make sure that we have a good environment and that is where the struggle lies now. So that we will not have every capitalist and capitalist-minded individual bombarding the party with advice as to the virtues of capitalism and the virtues of private enterprise that we have heard a little while ago. While if you look for the evidence in our own country you could not have seen those virtues. Sure enough some people got richer and richer while the masses of people grew poorer and poorer without facilities, without education, without development going further and further into backwardness. Therefore, we must make no mistake about these gains that we have made and the determination of the Party and this Government to safeguard those gains. This year, therefore, has been designated 'Year of Defence'. Not only of our territory but also of our socialist thrust. Some there are who are bent on redirecting our movement to return to discrimination against

the masses especially those who cannot afford proper educational opportunities. Let us not be deceived, for fair play in education and training is the sheet-anchor for equal opportunities for all. It is beyond contradiction that our new roads even beyond the coastlands, our imploding projects to safeguard our agriculture, our bridges that cross our rivers and creeks, our new vessels like Kimba and Acquero, our community and multilateral schools, the utilisation of our own food commodities, our resource – base industries all speak louder than words that Guyana is on the right road to genuine development. In recent times in the institution of the new Constitution we have not just councillors in the Regions, but what I want to believe, regional creators who are now in partnership with the Central Government and this partnership is good for development. It is hoped that because of this closer monitoring we will be able to be rewarded according to our work and that too will excite some of us to do our best. We have indeed inherited a capitalist country and we are still in the process of laying the foundation for the development of socialism in Guyana. In doing this there is no escape, as I said a while ago, from the pains of development. So we have to learn from our experiences and from the experiences of others and do not attempt to lay the foundation on a false basis. Some people who have attempted to go this road have turned back. They are finding out that the kind of development, and they have found out very soon that kind of development cannot ever be healthy. We cannot, because of our wish to provide useful work or all of our people, seek merely to provide employment. There is little use in padding our employment figures knowing fully well that there are persons who do little or nothing. Therefore our Party and government are committed to providing useful employment for all Guyanese where necessary, therefore, Cde. Speaker, labour will have to be redirected where it is needed and urgent efforts must be made to increase useful employment capacity. We are not giving up our commitment but we must fulfill it in a very realistic and sensible fashion. Additional and new skills must be learnt. Some sectors cry out aloud for honest and conscientious workers. I had occasion to tell some young people not so long ago and that these are the days when we have to learn as many skills as we can. I used as an example the Cde. Leader himself, the President himself. It was only a few days ago I listened to him talking about some of the technicalities about agriculture. I told those young people that by profession he is a barrister, Attorney-at-law, a brilliant one at that, but today he has had to broaden his education and I do not think many of us in here can discuss technical details about agriculture better than the Cde. Leader and when it comes to doing construction work he has become the Clerk of Works, [Applause] in some parts of this country.

18:40hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

It is an example that we should follow, especially our young people, so that we can learn to do many things in our country because there is useful work in Guyana for every person. A country with this extent of land, arable land, plenty of rain – some people have land without water. We have rain water, we have rivers and streams flowing with water. We have bright sunshine, all of the blessings a country can have for making good agricultural use of the land.

Because of our capitalist orientation, private sector orientation, because that has governed us in the past, we want to escape doing any work on the land. But if we just have the spirit and the will to do that there will be employment for all. I understand sometimes five boras are sold for \$1. I understand a lemon is 10 cent. I understand a pound of cherries is 55 cents. We in here have to follow the example of the Leader to get to the land and help rehabilitate it as the Leader himself is directing the rehabilitation of some coconut estates along the East Coast. Some of these comrades go to do some self-help some weekends to see that we do not have our resources, our wealth, lying idle while we are looking for all kinds of work and cannot find anything to do.

There is work in the farming sector of our country, in areas for logging, in areas for charcoal production and many other areas. But because of our capitalist orientation we have looked for service tasks, for work in offices, always having clean tidy clothes, notwithstanding the kind of work you should do and things of that kind. I hope that this economic crisis will help us to face up to these realities and do the things that must be done.

Socialism is not simply about production. It is also about togetherness of production, the distribution of those goods we produce and, even more important, about the creation of a higher or more humane value. You might call it spiritual value if you like. However, all these other factors must be based upon our level of development, hence our productive capacity. Once we are highly developed – and that high development includes our spiritual value development as well so that some of the things that happen at the workplace would not happen all the time.

Our people must learn that their attitude to production is important. Sometimes our failing is due to that attitude itself. It is hoped that the incentive schemes now in place would help to give workers what they deserve, and penalise those who do not deserve anything that is good and useful so that we can root out some of the idleness and foster a spirit in keeping with our development, a will to emulate not the worst workers but the best workers, sometimes the unskilled and the unlettered, but committed and dedicated, to create a new Guyana for all and

1982-01-26

18:40 – 18:50 hrs

so extend themselves in reaching out towards excellence. Yes, Cde. Speaker, they really and truly follow Guyana's unusual gift, the Leader, the President of this nation, L.F.S. Burnham. [Applause]

Here in Guyana we have begun, as I said a while ago, to put in place a most comprehensive and democratic system of Local Government. We have listened to Cde. Bispat. It is a new thing. It is the first time this country is going through this experience so that every citizen in his given locality would have the opportunity to plan and organize his world according to the democratic will. This is what co-operativism means at this level. This is what we are trying to do, to involve all the people, not just thinking of getting political heads together who look for seats and a sharing of this and a sharing of that, a new carpet there and a new seat there and things of that thing, how many members are on a Board and how many members are on a Committee. We are looking towards the people and we have set in place the structure to attract the people in the communities to be involved in this new thing. Every area of the country is to be covered by the new system of local democracy. It is here that our development and mobilisation must take place.

The regional system has been devised to provide self-supporting communities. What they lack in manpower would have to come from the centre. The centre, however, can no longer be seen as a hub around which development will take place and power exist and, as a result, the place where all our young people travel to find a better environment. Indeed, in every region, which can be compared to a stove, a hoop is needed to fulfil the object of the barrel. All of us do know that when you trent with those individual staves or insufficient number of staves to make that barrel, that barrel is useless. But when you put the hoop around the staves then the barrel can function. We hope that as leaders in this Assembly, this Parliament, we will be sincere and true leaders in our community, forming that hoop and to keep together and help them to perform.

We are therefore re-directing many persons form the centre to the regions where their contributions are most urgently needed at this stage to prevent the barrel form leaking. There is a philosophy which directs that a lot of little brains are superior to a few big brains when it comes to making organisations work effectively. The live-in exercise that we carry out time and time again in the Developers' Course is to expose some of the leading people in the communities to the knowledge that is within the rank and file to the people in those little communities in other parts of this country so that we will have the kind of respect for them, to treat them with human dignity so that they will want to release their energies for the task ahead. For our regional system to operate effectively, much education and a change to perform would be necessary and the national Congress of Local Democratic Organs has a particular responsibility to collaborate very closely with other arms of our party and Government to see that each person who is involved in the system is adequately trained. I myself have had opportunity to sit in some of these learning exercises and to enjoy the excitement of this new

1982-01-26

18:40 – 18:50 hrs

institution. Indeed, the N.C.L.D.O. must carry an exciting and effective programme of mass education where learning is premised on understanding through less talk and more doing for it is really only through doing cometh deep comprehension and needed confidence for personal responsibility and productive involvement.

(The Prime Minister continues)

Cde. Speaker, it is for us to accept our resources for this forward thrust. My good friend an colleague, Cde. Minister of Trade and Consumer Production has spoken of the linkage methodology – forward and backward linkage. That is also another form when we think of it as upward, downward and even sideways, all the types of linkages, we in Guyana have the resources to implement. We have the Leather factory at this time in New Amsterdam. That leather comes from the hides of our own animals in our country. That is a state organisation, a state industry, but we have others because the private sector has an opportunity to perform in this country of ours. There is plywood. There is also carabmola. It has already been tested in the market, (where instead of the standard season,) and so we will be using stand up on the market. It is now being tested, and who is doing that – the former Leader of the United Force. The climate is so good for investment that he has seen wisdom to stay in industry and live. This is part of our development to people who have the will and the spirit, the people's development.

We have already talked about 'Land to the tiller' and I need not go through that. I have mentioned that that land is available to all of us and therefore there should be no idleness in our country. We in Guyana can boast, can feel proud if we do not boast, that there is no starvation in this country. My good friend mentioned malnutrition, but what is there to say about real malnutrition. As you live in a world, as you speak here, thousands of people are dying every minute because they have no food, no water, no shelter. In this very world in which we live I am certain there is nobody who can say that any person in Guyana has died because there is no food to eat. Cannot feed ourselves. We have all sorts of grain with which we can feed ourselves. So there is no starvation here. Sometimes we lag in effective performance and that is why the Cde. President mentioned in his address, I sometimes think that in our hustle and bustle and the enormity of the changes that have taken place we have forgotten about the spiritual upliftment of our communities. That spiritual fabric is missing and sometimes even when we appreciate the difference between right and wrong we continue to do what is wrong instead of what is right. We will therefore need a tangible effort, every one of us, especially members of this Assembly, to give some direction so that there can be some upliftment of spirit so that we will not only know what is right and what is wrong, but we will know how to behave in our environment so that we can have an environment of businesslike activity. Sometimes, I think when our people leave Guyana and go to places like United States, there is so much businesslike activity that they have to follow promptly. There is no alternative if they are to survive. But here because of the environment, it is not difficult to survive and so we have had to deal with the spiritual upliftment of man so that he will give of his best not only for his material betterment, but also for the upliftment of his total environment.

This is what co-operativism is all about, the environment in which we live, and probably the time has come when that should be taken up and hopefully a change in production

1981-01-26

18:50 – 19:00 hrs

will take place. These are the days Cde. Speaker, when we talk of interdependence. Here in Guyana we are firm that we are not moving to what is described as dependent development. The International Monetary Fund, the great inspector – as my good friend has mentioned – is only really operative on poor countries. Those rules were set for poor countries, poor countries that had nothing to do with the formation of those rules and regulations. They are not set for the United States of America and sometimes the United States will demonstrate that the rules are not for the United States. We had the practical experience with the last agricultural sector loan. Notwithstanding all the rules, when the United States was ready to accept and give the vote, it was done like magic. So those rules are not fair rules. I want to elaborate by saying just this, that they set those rules in terms of money, finance, and you must earn that internationally accepted currency by exporting your goods. They tell you that you have no other condition to time about but the question is raised, who sets the price for the goods that we export.

1982-01-26

19:00 – 19:10 hrs

19:00 hrs

Cde. Reid continues

The same people who organize the world, set the price, but when they are bargaining with you for conditions to qualify for the International Monetary Fund they are not talking about your production of goods per se: they are talking about what you can earn from those goods. It is they who price the goods and I am often reminded of the shopkeeper who lived across from the school when I was a little fellow. When people carried their eggs to him, he priced them. When they carried mangoes, he priced them; when they wanted salt fish, he priced the salt fish. You had to get salt fish from him. When you wanted sugar, he priced the sugar, that is how the world is organised. Those organise it, they set the price for their goods, so today you pay \$50,000 for a truck but they price our sugar and they pay us £140 per ton. Under those circumstances, you need not thing and hope that the international Monetary Fund can cause genuine development to happen.

In the circumstances we use facilities that we are available but development has to come about by the people of this country of ours releasing their energies to do what we have to do wisely andIf all of us co-operate properly in doing that, then many of the things that are left undone could have been done.

The President, when he was Prime Minister, said this some fourteen years ago:

“Here in Guyana we have reached that state of political independence and one of the things which that state connotes is the capacity of self-criticism and introspection. If we indulge in self-criticism and introspection we will soon come to the conclusion that political independence is not the be-all and end-all. We learn that the success of the nation depends on the capacity and ability of the Government and those controlling certain sectors of the community and economy to bring a better life to the country and to the masses.”

These remarks are a relevant today as they were then. This country is inexorable wedded to the achievement of socialism and it is a tribute to the Government’s patience and purposeful prosecution of policies to this end that the argument is no longer about the “benefits” of capitalism or about the policies to be implemented for the achievement of socialism, rather about the execution of these policies. For example, the Guyana national Service is no longer a bone of contention given now that there is a true understanding of its objectives. However, the Guyanese People’s Militia has replaced that institution as a focus for criticism from saboteurs and frauds. Every country, however, has its fifth columnists. Those who are determined to help in defending our country – all ages are included from 18 to 45 and

above 45 – become part of the Guyana People’s Militia. Even if you are not fit to do any of the drill, there are other things that you can do in this task that is before everyone of us. Those of you who would want to die here I would think would wish to so operate that we can die in our beds. Any country convinced of the correctness of our position may come to our aid if we help ourselves, but only if we are prepared and the time for preparation is now.

It is the duty of all true Guyanese to answer the clarion call for organised preparedness. It is not an individual thing now, not standing alone and saying, “We are ready!” Get organised in a group so that we can say we are properly prepared. Government has decided that the vehicle to execute the programme for training those who respond to this call is the Guyana People’s Militia. Let there be no other training institution!

The Government has charted a course. The President has said “Charting our Destiny”. We know, therefore, where we are going. You have charted your course. When you have a destiny charted you know where you are going. You have your goals and the total development of this society, these goals cannot be achieved without the conscious and deliberate participation of our young people. Look at my friend over there! Y.S.M.! Government is conscious of the need vigorously to pursue its programme to better equip our youth to contribute to the achievement of these goals.

However, it is imperative that your young people come to accept the duty which comes with the opportunities they are now being given. That duty is defending the gains we have made and contributing to the achievement of further gains so that we can bequeath to our descendants not only a country free from the fear of recolonisation and exploitation, but a society characterised by equality of opportunity for all its people, non expected, to meaningfully participate in the economic, social and political life of the country.

I hope that we will be able to turn this very difficult period of Guyana’s advantage by keeping the staves of the barrel together. Leaders in every organisation, even the leaders of the United Force, will see themselves as hoops for the barrel.

This decade of the 80’s is going to bring more and more startling changes as far as our basic and vital functions are concerned and so we demand much larger responsibilities. Perhaps, as I said a while ago, spiritual values will take their proper place and the honour that the President has mentioned in his Address will catch the imagination of some of us that we can work not only for things material and tangible, but also for things that are intangible. May we see our mission to create a new and better Guyana for all as our unshakable belief and our unmovable creed.

In commending this Motion, so ably moved by my Comrade, Joseph Calderia, son of the late John Caldeira, a resident of Essequibo, I wish to conclude by observing that since we have a mission, we must be missionaries and to be missionaries there are certain requirements. Permit me, Cde. Speaker, to mention a few of a few of them – just three, namely, clean hands. When I was a young man and joined a bacteriological class the first day the Professor told us that his first lecturer would be on Washing up Our Hands, making our hands clean. We wondered if we would do that for a whole period, one hour. He said, “You will take half an hour to wash your hands, to make them clean.” We had a brush, we had soap, we were given towels that were sterilized and properly folded up. And we brushed and brushed. He said, “Time up! Half an hour!” Some of us did not really scrub our hands.

National Assembly

(The Prime Minister continues)

Then he brought out some Petri dishes properly sterilised and he told us all those with clean hands must touch the dishes, and so we did. Twenty-four hours after bacteria were growing underneath. Our hands were not clean. I am not asking you to go and that – to wash your hands – because however much you wash your hands they will never be clean. If our hands are to be clean, then our minds must be clean. Our spirit must be clean so that we can go out into our communities with clean hands.

The next one is a hard mind. Cde. Speaker, your mind should be hard if you are to give leadership. Our minds must be hard so that we can stand up for Guyana. So often when the time comes – and I do hope that Mr. Fielden Singh would not have to this kind of experience – we go into hiding, because in this very critical moment in the development of our country we who are professing leadership need to be able to stand up for Guyana. It is very difficult to do this. Let no person tell us that it is easy to do, for all of us have friends in some quarters, some far and some near – sometimes you can stand up for Guyana against enemies, but you cannot stand up for Guyana against your friends. Sometimes our friends would like us to do the things that would destroy the development of our country. It is under of those circumstances you must be able to stand up for Guyana. If you are to do this your mind must be hard.

You must have warm hearts. This is particularly difficult, we people oriented not like people who saw profits as being the be all and end all of sugar, not those who saw machines as being more important than people, not those who believed that the raw mules were of greater value than the mule boys. This Government is oriented to the development of all the people, and we can only do that if our hearts reach up to people.

Let me conclude by saying that I have said umpteen times before. This land is my land. This land is your land. Let us stand up for Guyana.

[Applause.]

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

“Resolved that this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.” [The Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations.]

Adjourned accordingly at 20:18 hrs