

Buy Local? or Buy Local!

by Janet Jagan

“Buy Local” is a very old slogan in Guyana. I’m not sure if any Party or organization can really put claim to

available. There are always those who think that foreign goods are better than locally produced goods. Of course, it was moreso in the colonial days. I can remember when men used to wear heavy dark serge suits, because the UK

functions. Of course, many conservatives were horrified.

After all, Guyana is a warm country, near the Equator. Only women have had the good sense to wear clothing suitable to the trop-

fruits, vegetables, ground provisions, meat, poultry and fish? We have them in abundance, fresh and uncontaminated with all sorts of chemicals and preservatives. Yet there are some who still want to buy the imported versions which many merchants will go out of their way to import and put on the shelves of the super markets.

It is amazing to go through super markets and see what is selling: Italian pasta when we manufacture first class pasta of several kinds. Imported pepper sauce – hard to imagine but the merchants bring it over from Trinidad. That’s “free trade,” I guess, when we have a large amount of peppers growing here and many produce pepper sauce, so much better than the imported one. We even had a fairly good industry of dry cereals going, until the ex-



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pensive, big foreign ones took over. I used to search for this delicious local dry cereal, bending my poor back to the bottom shelves looking for the local brand, until I finally gave up.

Our locally made sweets and biscuits are very good, but they are outplaced and outnumbered by the imported ones. Believe it or not, but quite recently I was given bottled water to relieve my thirst, only to discover that it was imported – from

one of the small islands. What crazy merchant had the nerve to import bottled water when we have all we need here! And so, on and on it goes, with little or no efforts to protect or assist the local producers.

Yes, we have to keep repeating the slogan “Buy local” or we can end up, like many little countries spending the last of our hard currency purchasing bottled water and pepper sauce which we don’t need, but which our local entrepreneurs need backing in their production.

There are so many production possibilities in Guyana that we should make the most of them. If our merchants and buyers lack the sense to know what to import, the consumer should guide them by refusing to buy what we can produce right here.

Who cannot want to buy Guyana’s wonderful fruits, vegetables, ground provisions, meat, poultry and fish? We have them in abundance, fresh and uncontaminated with all sorts of chemicals and preservatives. Yet there are some who still want to buy the imported versions which many merchants will go out of their way to import and put on the shelves of the super markets.

it. As long as I can remember, Guyanese have been urged to “Buy Local.” It’s a logical slogan and full of meaning.

It’s just plain stupid not to buy locally produced products when they are

was promoting its own textiles. I can remember too, when Cheddi Jagan was Premier in the 60’s, he started wearing locally made shirt jacs, and began a fashion that liberated men’s dress – no ties, no coats, even at formal

ics. I see the men slipping back to ties and coats. I feel sorry for them sometimes. It’s so stupid! Save the ties and coats for traveling to the North!

Who cannot want to buy Guyana’s wonderful