

Ministers (2)

- Cde. O.E. Clarke,
Minister – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne) (Absent – on Leave)
- Cde. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister, Office of the Prime Minister (Absent)

Ministers of State (10)

- Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi) (Absent)
- Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (North West) (Absent)
- Cde. K.B. Bancroft, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Absent)
(Mazaruni/Potaro)
- Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Absent)
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)
- Cde. J.R. Thomas,
Minister of State, Ministry of Education, (Absent)
Social Development and Culture
- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,
Minister of State for Youth and Sport, (Absent)
Ministry of National Development
- Cde. S. Prasad,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)
- Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman,
Minister of State, (Absent)
Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. F.U.A. Campbell,
Minister of State for Information,
Ministry of National Development (Absent)
- Cde. H. Rashid,
Minister of State, (Absent – on Leave)
Office of the Prime Minister

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

- Cde. M.M. John, C.C.H.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the
Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip (Absent)
- Cde. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture (Absent)
- Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture (Absent)
- Cde. E.M. Bynoe,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade
and Consumer Protection.
- Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic
Development and Co-operatives
- Cde. J.G. Ramson,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Transport (Absent)

Other members (15)

Cde. W.G. Carrington, C.C.H.
Cde. S.M. Field – Ridley
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler
Cde. J. Gill
Cde. W. Hussain
Cde. K.M.E. Jonas (Absent)
Cde. P.A. Rayman
Cde. A. Salim, C.C.H.
Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P. (Absent)
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S.
Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.
Cde. H.A. Taylor (Absent)
Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P.
Cde. L.E. Willems
Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition (Absent)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran,
Deputy Speaker

Other Members (12)

Cde. J. Jagan
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., Opposition Chief Whip
Cde. Narbada Persaud (Absent)
Cde. C. Collymore (Absent)
Cde. S.F. Mohamed (Absent)
Cde. I. Basir (Absent)
Cde. C.C. Belgrave
Cde. R. Ally (Absent)
Cde. Dalchand, J.P.
Cde. Dindayal
Cde. H. Nokta (Absent)
Cde. P. Sukhai

Liberator Party (2)

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

OFFICERS

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

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Comrades Jack, Clarke and Rashid for today's Sitting and to Cde. Van Sluytman up to the 10th September, 1980.

Death of Former Legislators

Since we last met two persons who served as legislators many years ago passed away recently. They are Sir Edwin Frank McDavid and Ulric Alexander Fingall. While acting as Colonial Treasurer of British Guiana and as the substantive holder of the office, Edwin Frank McDavid served as an Ex- Officio Member of the Legislative Council during the year 1930 to 1953. On his retirement from the Colonial Service in 1953, he was knighted by her majesty the Queen and was appointed by the Governor to be a Member of the State Council, that is, the Upper House of Legislature, which was established by the then new Constitution. He was elected by the state Council to be its President and to be the Minister without Portfolio. When the 1953 Constitution was suspended that same year, he ceased to be a Legislator.

In the Interim Legislative Council which followed, Sir Frank McDavid was appointed to be a Member of the Legislative Council and the Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines. He served as such from 30th December, 1953 to 3rd September, 1957.

Sir Frank McDavid gave much service to this country and made many contributions in the legislature.

Ulric Alexander Fingall was nominated by the People's Progressive Party to the State Council and served as a Member thereof in 1953. His service was of a very short duration but he made contributions in that body while he was a Member.

Comrades and hon. Members, today we record our loss of these two former legislators and express our sympathy to their families.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following papers were laid:

- (1) Financial Paper No. 1/1980 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates (Advances made from the Contingencies Fund in 1979), totaling \$6,668,754.
- (2) Financial Paper No. 2/1980 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates (Advances made from the Contingencies Fund as at 15th August, 1980), totaling \$8,424,393. [The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Minister of Finance.]

5.9.80

2.05 – 2.15 p.m.

In terms of Standing order No. 68, the Minister named Wednesday, 10th September, 1980, as the day for consideration of the Financial papers.

PUBLIC BUSINESS
BILLS – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS
PUBLIC HEALTH (Amendment) BILL 1980

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Public Health Ordinance with respect to the Constitution of the Central Board of Health.”/The Minister of Health, Housing and Labour.]

The Minister of Health, Housing and Labour (Cde. Green): Cde. Speaker, I beg to move the Bill standing in my name intituled An Act to amend the Public Health Ordinance with respect to the Constitution of the Central Board of Health. This is a simple matter and as is perhaps public knowledge, the Board at the moment consists of the Chief Medical Officer, as Chairman, members from the Local Authority in the particular areas in which it operates, and nine other members. At the moment, the Board is fully constituted and is effective and is doing its work. However, we have discovered over the past few years that, invariably, the Board has been seeking the assistance of the Commissioner of Lands and Surveys or his representative. Since there are so many matters like approving of sub-divisions of land into lots for housing and other purposes which the Board has to consider, the Board has constantly and consistently sought his assistance.

This amendment is merely to add one person so that the Commissioner, we propose to name him that person, can be a full member of the Board rather than an adviser. I beg to so move.

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

OLD AGE PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT 1980

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Old Age Pensions Act.”
/The Minister of Health, Housing and Labour.]

Cde. Green: Cde. Speaker, I have one other matter before this House this afternoon and that is to move that the Old Age Pensions (Amendment) Bill 1980 be now read a Second time. This is again a simple matter which, I suspect, will have no difficulty. Under Section 9 of the existing Act, Chapter 36:03, a person in receipt of old age pension is dis-qualified from receiving that pension the minute he or she enters a charitable institution or a public institution. As a result, we have found that a number of pensioners who spend short periods in the hospital and other institutions cannot, under the law, receive their pensions. I hold the view, and the Government, that this provision is somewhat harsh and it may deprive the pensioners of the means of purchasing things they would need even though they are in an institution receiving free boarding and lodging, as we would say in local terms.

5.9.80

2.05 – 2.15 p.m.

The Bill merely is to remove that restriction so that persons in those institutions for periods no less than three months can receive their full pension benefits.

Question proposed.

Cde. J.Jagan: On this bill before the House, I wanted to make the point that if the Minister was serious about improving the situation I think he would have removed totally the question of limitations when an old age pensioner goes into any institution. I think the correct thing, if we are at all interested in the welfare of old folks, is that we would have no limitations whatsoever.

As he should know, and as all of us know, if a person goes into hospital for two months or three months or even four months that does not mean he will give up wherever he is living. If he has a room he is renting or a small apartment, he has to continue holding on to it because I do not believe anyone can risk giving up an accommodation in this day and age unless he is on his way to the grave and has no other place to go. It is either six feet under or holding on to what you have got. That means that rent has to be paid, and, as far as I know, even the cockeyed way the Electricity Corporation works, even if you are away and use no electricity it is going to bill you for some because from my own experience when there are long periods of blackouts you end up paying a higher electricity bill. So I presume that old age pensioners are still obliged to pay rent and to pay for electricity. As he himself mentioned, they will want a few things in hospital especially if they go to any of the public hospitals for any long period. Anyone who has any hold on life would find it impossible to eat that food steadily or any long period so they are bound to want something else to eat.

I cannot see any Government that talks about being concerned about old people and underprivileged people would make an amendment like this. Wipe out the whole thing, forget about it.

I also want to bring to the attention of the House that old age pensioners are supposed to be given free bus passes but these have time limitations and it is impossible for many old people to make use of their passes. They are complaining bitterly. Remove all these limitations, remove all these restrictions and let old age pensioners ride the buses when they have the need. Many of them cannot fit into the tight schedule that is given to them. I cannot see why we have to be so “nitty bitty” and niggardly about all these things we are doing. Give them something if you are going to give it. Why be so tight - fisted?

I also want to draw to the attention of this House, in case it does not know, that the Local Board of Guardians which is the body that reviews –

The Speaker: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Green: (replying) I have noted the observations made by the member of the opposite side. We did consider the idea of removing all the alleged limitations but one has to deal with reality and from our own experience in the ministry and in the department we feel that this amendment is designed to relieve the hardships that the pensioners now suffer. One has to be careful that our hospitals are not converted into pleasure resorts, if we just simply remove all the limitations. In any event, Cde. Speaker, we have administrative procedures which we use from time to time to assist the old people who have difficulties even if they spend a period beyond three months in a public institution.

Questions put and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

MEETING OF GUYANA BRANCH OF COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

The Speaker: Comrades, and hon. Members, this completes the Assembly’s business for today. However before we adjourn I would like to remind members of the meeting of the Guyana Branch of the C.P.A. which will be taking place immediately after this meeting. Cde. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday 10th September, 1980 at 2.p.m.

/The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House./

House Adjourned accordingly at 2.20 p.m