

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 5]

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

19th Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Wednesday, 4th August, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

Members of the Government

People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

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

Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of Communications

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Finance

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

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Education

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)

The Hon. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction

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

The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Local Government

Appointed Ministers

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

The Hon. H Green,
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

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

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. W. Haynes,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

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

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

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

Other Members

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

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr. C.B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition	(Absent – on leave)
Mr. Ram Karran	
Mr. R. Chandisingh	
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.	(Absent – on leave)
Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker	(Absent)
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson	
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P. Opposition Whip	
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.	
Mr. M.Y. Ally	
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.	
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.	
Mr. R. Ally	
Mr. E.L. Ambrose	
Mrs. L.M. Branco	
Mr. Balchand Persaud	
Mr. Bholu Persaud	
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.	(Absent)
Mrs. R.P. Sahoye	(Absent – on leave)
Mr. V. Teekah	

United Force

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

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks

(Absent)

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F.A. Narain

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

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. Bancroft and the hon. Member Mr. Zaheeruddeen, J.P., from today's sitting.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

TRANSPORTATION OF RICE

Mr. R. Ally: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture Question No. 8 standing in my name on the Order Paper: Will the Minister say why rice farmers are required to pay 36 cents for water transportation on every bag of rice they deliver to the Rice Marketing Board's bond at Springlands when grading and blending is taking place at the bond?

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture (Dr. Reid): Delivery of all consignments of rice must be made at the Board's warehouse in Georgetown. A single schedule of purchase prices which is published every year includes this condition and is therefore applied to all purchases, irrespective of the area in which the rice is produced. Therefore, transportation charges to the warehouse must be paid.

The fact that the Board erected a Blending Plant at Corriverton (Springlands) in 1965 does not change the situation because the farmer, if he had to sell at the central warehouse, would have had to pay the freight.

Mr. R. Ally: A supplementary question, sir. I wish the hon. Minister to say whether this is fair or unfair to the rice farmers, that the rice farmers have to pay transportation to the Rice Marketing Board's bond, and water transportation from the bond to the Rice Marketing Board in Georgetown, but when the rice farmers want to buy rice for home consumption, the Rice Marketing Board does not give them the necessary transportation to their door.

Mr. Speaker: Would you please re-phrase the question, Mr. Ally?

Mr. R. Ally: I want to know if this is fair to the rice farmers, that they will have to pay the necessary transportation from bonds to Georgetown and when the rice farmers want to purchase rice from the Rice Marketing Board, the Board will not give them the necessary transportation to their houses.

Mr. Speaker: Will you please ask a supplementary question?

Mr. R. Ally: What I am asking is just this. Is it fair that the Board does not provide the necessary transportation for rice for home consumption? Mr. Speaker, not only rice, but this is so in respect of empty bags, in respect of rice fertilisers. I want the hon. Minister to say.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Roshan Ally, I will not allow any supplementary question on that.

IMPORTS-EXPORTS WITHIN CARIFTA

Mr. M.Y. Ally: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Finance Question No. 9 standing in my name on the Order Paper: Will the Minister state what was the value of –

- (a) Imports from CARIFTA countries for the three-month period January-March, 1971?
- (b) Exports to CARIFTA countries for the same three-month period?

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): The answer to the Question asked by the hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally is as follows:

- (a) Imports from CARIFTA countries for the three-month period January – March, 1971 total \$8,529,714.
- (b) Exports to CARIFTA countries for the same three-month period total \$7,425,004.

CUSTOMS REVENUE

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Finance question No. 10 standing in my name on the Order Paper: Will the Minister state what was the Customs Revenue for the three-month periods January-March, 1970, and January-March, 1971?

Mr. Hoyte: The answer to the Question asked by the hon. Member Mr. M.Y. Ally is as follows:

- (a) Customs revenue for the three-month period January-March, 1970, was \$14,252,997.
- (b) Customs revenue for the three-month period January –March, 1971, was \$13,715,495.

2.10 p.m.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: Will the hon. Minister state whether a drop in the revenue would affect the economy of our country?

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, I answer the question with diffidence because I am not quite sure what the hon. Member means.

If the hon. Member is of the view that the figures given reflect adversely on the economy of the country I would give him an unequivocal answer that that is not so. The apparent drop in customs duty is due to the fact that import duties are being phased out in respect of commodities coming in from Carifta areas, but this loss of import duty is being made good by consumption tax.

Hon. Members will recall that there was recently laid in this honorable House Consumption Tax Order No. 31 of 1971, made under the Consumption Tax Act of 1969, whereby provision was made for the collection of consumption tax on a wider range of petroleum products as from the 1st of May, 1970. In other words, on that date there was a reduction of the import duties in accordance with our obligation under the Carifta Agreement, but there was no consequential consumption tax Order at the time.

That Order was made and promulgated in this honourable House so that the subsequently approved by Resolution in this honourable House so that the apparent shortfall will be recouped under the Consumption Tax Order in respect of petroleum products. Hon. Members will also recall that a series of similar Orders have been laid in this honourable House.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: Will the hon. Minister agree that the mis-management of the Ministry of Trade so far as the importation of cement is concerned was one of the basic causes for the drop in revenue?

Mr. Speaker: I think you are asking two questions. Will you put them one at a time? The first deals with the mismanagement of the Bureau.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I say that the management of the import trade in cement was of the basic causes for loss of revenue.

Mr. Speaker: Will you please put your question again, Mr. Ally?

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I would like to know if the Minister will agree that the mismanagement by Government of cement importation was the cause of a drop in revenue in this country.

Mr. Hoyte: There has been no mismanagement of the importation of cement by the Ministry of Trade and I wish to assert again, for the benefit of the hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally, that there has been no overall drop in revenue. I sought to explain to him that the apparent shortfall has been due to the fact that the customs imposts on Carifta commodities are being phased out but there has been a corresponding recouping in the revenue by virtue of consumption taxes. I have brought to his attention the Consumption Tax Order made on the 7th day of July, 1971, which goes back to the 1st of May, 1970, and which will collect consumption tax on a wide range of petroleum products.

Obviously the taxes will not be reflected in the period January to March, 1971, because they have not yet been collected; but they will be reflected later in the year when they have been collected.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I should like to know---

Mr. Speaker: You should like to know or do you wish to ask a question?

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I want to ask if the Minister will tell us whether the Government is collecting any revenue on cement during this period.

Mr. Speaker: Which period?

Mr. M.Y. Ally: The same period I have mentioned.

Mr. Speaker: Between January and March?

Mr. Hoyte: The answer is yes, Mr. Speaker. Cement from Carifta areas attracted consumption tax and taxes have been collected on cement during the relevant period.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I am not speaking of consumption tax. The Government used to collect 35 cents on every sack of cement.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Ally, if you framed your questions properly you would get proper answers. You asked if tax was collected and the hon. Member said, yes, it was collected. Now you go on to ask another question. It is time that you prepare your supplementary questions properly.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I was given this Order Paper a short while ago. Notice of this question was given a long time ago. You will excuse me, sir.

Mr. Speaker: I will not excuse you.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I would like the hon. Minister to tell us whether the revenue previously collected on cement, which includes a tax of about 35 cents on every sack and defence levy of 6 cents is still being collected.

Mr. Hoyte: Your Honour, every commodity entering the country attracts a 3 per cent defence levy. With respect to the exact level of duty exacted on cement I cannot say offhand but duty is collected on cement. If the hon. Member would give notice of that question I shall be prepared to let him have the exact details.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

RECOMMENDATION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A ROAD THROUGH SOPHIA
TO THE EAST BANK ROAD

“Whereas vehicular traffic through Georgetown is excessive and can be reduced considerably if traffic originating from the East Bank for the East Coast and *vice versa* is diverted by the construction of a ‘ring road’ joining the two roads at convenient points near Georgetown.

Be it resolved that this National Assembly recommends the early construction of a public road through Sophia to meet the East Bank Road at Meadow Bank.” [Mr. Wilson.]

Mr. Wilson: Mr. Speaker, in moving this Motion standing in my name I am optimistic that it being not controversial it will receive the support of the Government. But it will be useful to point out some facts. We all are agreed that there is great congestion of traffic in the City of Georgetown. We should all therefore agree that any reduction of traffic in the City of Georgetown should help towards reducing accidents which do occur.

We are always hearing the Traffic Chief bemoaning the fact that there is too much slaughter on the roads and everything this nation can do to conserve the best of its resources, that is the young people, to prevent wanton destruction of life should be done. It should be agreed that one of the major transportation objectives should be easy and continuous flow of traffic in all directions. I am sure that we all know the fact that traffic from the East Coast intending to get on the East Bank and vice versa have to plod wearily, almost dangerously, through the City; and this is not necessary. Time is lost and we know that time is money. We should try to have a system of transportation whereby much time would be saved for traffic intended to pass through Georgetown. These two roads – East Bank and East Coast – should be linked. I am sure that very often we have looked with great distress on what happens at the bottle-neck situation on Vlissengen Road and Public Road Kitty, and also from the La Penitence Market going to Banks Breweries. It is indeed painful to see the way the traffic has to move at a snail’s pace.

I am sure that if a proper survey is taken by the Traffic Department we would find that a great percentage of accidents and fatal ones have occurred at these points. From my personal experience I know of a great number of accidents which have occurred between Sophia and Kitty Seawall and many of these accidents could have been prevented if traffic which was intended for the East Bank had not compulsorily to pass through Georgetown. It may be said, "Well, there is the Sheriff Street route." But that argument will not carry any weight since as we know Sheriff Street is entirely in the City of Georgetown.

When we speak of a "ring road" we have in mind a road on the outskirts of the City, as a matter of fact between the City and what is supposed to be the Green Belt where the number of houses for residents will be at minimum. There will be wide open spaces and so the number of people which are likely to be in the area will be very negligible indeed. As a matter of fact if this "ring road" is constructed there should be feeder roads from the "ring road" to the ordinary normal highway.

As I said before, we should all be concerned about traffic accidents in Georgetown especially at the bottle-neck points on the East Coast and La Penitence Public Road and we should all be concerned too about reducing time which vehicles have to take in commuting between these points. We speak about our tourist industry and the need to encourage tourists into the country, though I know this Government has a ban on persons coming to this country, it does not seem to know the value of having visitors.

Nevertheless, we know that persons coming into this country as tourists do bring in a lot of dollars and nothing should be done to prevent much needed funds coming into this country to assist in the country's economy. Apart from that, the economy is greatly hampered because of the fact that many vehicles have to pass through Georgetown which they do not do. We have in mind the sand trucks transporting sand from the East Bank to the East Coast for building purposes, the quarry sifting and the like, and everything should be done to facilitate and to make such transportation easy and economical.

We have inherited a system of transport from the colonial past, we claim that we are now a Republic governed entirely by a people's government, albeit a Government by fraud and

Government produced by rigging. However, that is its claim that this is a people's government. We know that the present system of transportation, especially transport has been the result of private interests.

2.30 p.m.

Private concerns have certain interests and the roads follow their interest in maximising their profits. We must get away from that situation. We must have transport planned, not in the interest of private enterprise as such, but in the interest of the nation, and if we accept this proposition, then we should agree that the kind of development which gave us the East Bank and East Coast Roads, as they are presently situated, have not been in the interest of the people. There should be central planning, socialist planning, not capitalist planning in the interest of private enterprise.

We draw attention of the Government to first this one small aspect there something can be done urgently. There are many defects which could be drawn to the Government's attention. In Berbice, we know of the situation in regard to the West Coast and the East Coast. There ought to be some earlier flow of traffic across the river, whether it is by a line of pontoons or a bridge. The Minister, in his seat, talks about blueprint. He ought to bring forward a blueprint for transportation. Let us have a blueprint, not just ad hoc development as is done under a system of capitalism, where things are done just to meet the transport plan in the interest of the nation and the Minister will have done his duty. However, I have assisted him now, and I trust he will seize the opportunity to build this ring road.

Mr. Ram Karran: I beg to second the Motion and reserve my right to speak later.

Question proposed.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, we all know of the congestion on the East Coast and East Bank roads approaching Georgetown. We all at some time would have been caught in the traffic there and would have seen what a terrible state of affairs it is during the rush hours. I know this fact has been recognised by the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply. I know they have been giving it attention. I know that as far back as 1968, money has been allocated to do a

feasibility study for the experts to come up with an answer as to where best this road should be put.

I am not an expert in this field. I do not know whether it should be put at Sophia or at Meadow Bank, but there are people who would know how to examine this and who would be able to properly evaluate where such a road should be put. There is no doubt that a road is necessary to connect the East Bank and the East Coast, bypassing Georgetown with feeder roads connecting the surrounding areas.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Fielden Singh, do you propose to move an Amendment? Because the Motion before us is for the construction of the East Coast road to the East Bank road.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I am speaking on the Motion. I am speaking generally on the Motion and I can agree or disagree, or make my own suggestions as regards the Amendment. I take it I have the right to either agree or disagree with the Motion. As I said, there is no doubt that this road is necessary. I am sure the Minister would be speaking on this Motion. On the last occasion I asked a question about this road, what was being done in respect of this feasibility study, how far it has progressed, and the hon. Prime Minister replied that the feasibility study was underway.

I should like the Minister in the course of his speaking on this Motion to tell us what exactly has been done about the feasibility study, whether it has been started, who is doing it. I know that this road was contemplated, I know a decision was taken to build this road, so perhaps he will confirm when the road will be built. I do not think that anyone can deny the fact that a road, whether it be a ring road or a feeder road, between the East Bank and the East Coast, bypassing Georgetown, is an absolute necessity.

The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply (Mr. Green) (replying): The Mover of the Motion has my sympathy because one thing is quite clear, that he speaks from a position of an abundance of lack of knowledge and information. Contrary to what my Friend said, this Government recognised some time ago that we were having problems not only in and around

Georgetown but in the Berbice area and we have undertaken a rather exhaustive study and examination of the problems. Unlike previous Ministers of Works and Hydraulics, we did not operate merely on advice given to us by strangers but we decided what we considered urgent and important for the people of this country. We have already completed a thorough examination, and if we were to travel up Camp Street, we would see one part of the operation already started, to wit, the construction of a road from the eastern end of Camp Street through Kelly Dam to connect with Vlissengen Road. This is but the beginning of a number of the things.

2.40 p.m.

I shall have to reject this Motion. The mover of the Motion talks about a proper survey being taken. This has already been done. As I said the Motion was based on a lack of knowledge. First, it is not accurate to say, as suggested in the Motion, that there is a difficulty with respect to traffic originating on the East Bank or on the East Coast for the East Bank or the East Coast. What information we have, after a very detailed and careful study, reveals that a substantial quantity of the traffic does, in fact, originate and conclude in the city of Georgetown. That was found after careful study, traffic counts and so on. Because of this we looked at the problem in that light.

We did not think of a ring road, whatever that is, but we looked at the problem to prepare development plans for improving the highway approaches to the city of Georgetown and New Amsterdam. We thought of improvements that will last not for five or ten years, but for a minimum of twenty years. This is a programme that we are going right into 1991. It consists, for the information of this honourable House and in particular for the information of my friends across the way, of what we term a bypass for Greater Georgetown.

We shall include a new approach road for the University of Guyana because this Government thinks that the University is an important institution, an institution that we cannot afford to ignore. We want to ensure in spite of the bad start that the University had, that the residents and the people who commute to and from the University out of the city primarily will have easy and safe access to the University of Guyana. Therefore that, too, was included in our scope of study.

We felt that the congestion originates outside of Georgetown, as I said. Improvements to the East Bank road and the East Coast road are also proposed and construction will start early in 1971.

We went further and we considered improvements – we discussed with the municipality – for some streets in Georgetown so that the traffic in Georgetown can be distributed to the two approach roads we are talking about within the city. We have also had a brief examination with respect to the possibility of bridging the Demerara River. We have looked at improvements for the East Bank Berbice River, West Canje road, East Canje road and the New Amsterdam area itself. We have also looked for improvements for some streets in New Amsterdam and in addition – a matter which the P.P.P. Government ignored – we have looked at the question of the crossing of the Canje River where the existing Canje Bridge exists.

Information with respect to surveys indicates that at the moment we have nearly 700 motor vehicles, 200 motor cycles and 90 cycles using the various routes and that if there was a bypass into what we call the C.B.D., the Central Business District of Georgetown, it would take off the traffic congestion from the roads that my friend attempted to refer to.

Our projection indicate that by 1990 the volume of traffic on this bypass will be between two to three thousand vehicles per day, about 1,000 motor cycles and nearly 200 cycles. To accommodate this traffic we have proposed – as I said this work will start early in 1972 – what we term not a ring road but an inner bypass to be built by improving Ruimveldt Avenue and Sheriff Street. Sheriff Street will go right through to connect to Ruimveldt Avenue. This is a distance of about 4 ½ miles and will cost the taxpayers about \$1,000,000.

With respect to the East Coast road, this is at the moment a very dangerous road. 11,000 vehicles use that road at a point outside Georgetown daily. At the moment it is a narrow strip of alphalted road with no shoulders and with a wall coming into the city which makes it even more dangerous.

Our projections show us that by 1990 we will have something like 40,000 vehicles per day using that road at that point. Therefore we propose a four-lane highway beginning from

Vlissengen road and taking us to a point just west of Buxton. This improvement will include better alignment through the elimination of sharp curves. This will cost the taxpayers about \$12 million. We will be getting a modern four-lane highway that will be able to take off the traffic we expect at least in the next 20 years.

I can go on to point out proposals for the East Bank Demerara River, where a similar exercise is proposed. We will convert the existing public road into a modern four-lane highway up to a point just outside Diamond. From there we propose to improve the road using the basic alignment cutting out the dangerous turns though to Timehri on a single two-lane highway.

In Georgetown itself we propose to improve some of the major streets by Princess Street taking into account the part from Camp Street going south on to Sussex Street and we propose a round-about one-way improving Smyth Street, Charles Street and part of Sussex Street and taking Hunter Street right through to connect with the Ruimveldt Avenue, which will give easy access to the East Bank Road.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, as you are aware, there is the proposal to begin before the end of this year sea defence works between Fort Croyne and Vlissengen Road on the Georgetown esplanade. Out of it we also propose to bring a four-lane road from the Sea Wall Road through to Cummings Canal and then to continue Camp Road through to Brickdam as a proper four-lane road. We are going to have certain difficulties, but we have done a fairly thorough survey and the engineers assure me that we can begin construction of that part during the latter half of 1972.

Vlissengen Road will also be made into a four-lane highway from the Sea Wall through to Lamaha Street so that traffic coming into the city will have an easy access to the Central Business District. Of course, Lamaha Street will be opened right through to Durey Lane and connect to the proposed road I mentioned behind the University of Guyana which will connect with an existing road to put you back on the East Coast Public Road.

All the time we have been talking about Georgetown to Demerara. We propose at the same time to do roads in the Berbice areas. We have looked at the situation in New Amsterdam and we propose on the East Bank, Berbice River, to improve the roads so that the travelling

public will have less problems than they have at the moment. Improvements are proposed for the West Canje Road, the East Canje road and the streets in New Amsterdam, as I mentioned earlier. The mover of the Motion referred to over-all plans and a proper survey and he did mention Berbice.

The existing Canje Bridge is 79 years old and is functionally obsolete. It is to be noted that though at one time the People's Progressive Party boasted of substantial support in this particular area, it was the People's National Congress Government that took cognizance of the problems and took action with respect to providing a modern bridge to replace the 79-year-old swing bridge in this area. Construction should start before the end of 1972.

We have had to phase construction over a particular period because the attitude of the Government is to ensure that we use local engineers and local forces as much as is humanly possible; and with our limited resources it is not possible for us to commence all these works simultaneously.

2.50 p.m.

Briefly, Mr. Speaker, we propose to spend over the next few months over \$30 million to reconstruct about seventy-three miles of road that will take care of the approaches to Georgetown and the approaches to New Amsterdam including the Canje Bridge. The roads we are going to have are not the type of roads constructed during the regime of previous Ministers. We are ensuring that we do not only put down a bald public road but we have insisted that part of the engineering design include things like shoulders so that our large pedestrian population would be safe, so that drivers, some of whom are becoming senile, some who ought not to have drivers' licences – and I do not say that the Mover of the Motion falls into that category, Mr. Speaker – so that even those drivers who are not particularly fit to drive would be able to get around the City of Georgetown and New Amsterdam with a relative degree of safety.

Mr. Speaker, since the Mover of the Motion mentioned the congestion on the Ferry we have already looked at this and only a few weeks ago gave instructions for a complete study to be made with respect to the crossing of the Demerara River. The initial study includes

examination of a high-level bridge, a moveable low-level bridge or a tunnel. The information we have at hand suggests that the most feasible of the three proposals is a high-level bridge so that there will be easy and constant contact with the West Bank and the East Bank of the Demerara River at a point near and outside of Georgetown. It is anticipated by 1990 that the traffic required over the Ferry per day will be about 1,500 motor vehicles and over 500 motor cycles, 2,000 cycles and at least 23,000 of what is termed “walk-on passengers”. Therefore, the present thinking is that a bridge is necessary. But unlike previous Governments, we do not talk about a bridge; we have taken positive action.

I wish to assure hon. Members of this House that if they need information Ministers of this Government and myself are always willing to make them intelligent. They must not, I submit, sir, waste the time of the House with Motions of this nature founded on a lack of information talking about a ring road through Sophia to Meadow Bank. Where could you get such a road? Do you know where Meadow Bank is Mr. Speaker? Meadow Bank is on the west of the existing public road. Or are they trying to remove Mr. d’Aguiar’s Banks Breweries? Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I make this offer this afternoon so that members of the Opposition could make themselves useful. We understand the role of the Opposition but when some members of the Opposition approach Ministers it is not on general matters of policy and to seek information. Very often it is to get personal favours. At the same time he asked me a certain question on a favour, the Mover of the Motion could have asked me what has happened with respect to the road approaches or the ring road as he would call it to Georgetown. I would have invited him in and showed him our plans and our maps; I would have given him a prognosis of what this Government proposes to do to alleviate the difficulties to which he referred.

Mr. Ram Karran: Sir I wish with your permission to wake up the hon. Minister standing as he is on the eastern side of Camp Street and straying all over the country from the Canje Bridge all the way down to Timehri and indeed back to the West Bank and the bridge on the Demerara River. I just want to wake him up and bring him back to the Motion which seeks to get this House’s approval to the construction of a road joining the East Bank with the East Coast so that traffic which now clutter up the City of Georgetown could bypass the City and make it safer for people to use the roads. I wish to wake up the hon. Minister who has taken us on an

excursion all over the country and to thank him in passing, if I may, sir, for doing that turn for us. We however are realistic people and we hope to see these things done. We hope to see the bridge across the Demerara River and indeed to give the Government a chance. All right, take some time to build a bridge but why can he not do something for the present congestion on the Ferry? The Government cannot do that. People are finding great difficulty – school children, working people – to get to Georgetown in time. The Government cannot stop that but it is going to build a bridge.

I also wish to comment and to ask whether it is competent for the hon. Minister to say that the members of the Opposition must go to him and ask him what is Government's policy? Or whether it is the business of the Opposition to bring it before this House? What are we here for? I understand now why the Government has been for years refusing to bring Opposition matters before the House. This is one of the issues we have now started on. But the hon. Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply comes and tells us this is not the correct procedure. He tells us not to bring it to the House but to meet the Minister in the by-ways and say, "Sir, what is the Government's policy?" and the hon. Minister will oblige. I thought, sir, that this was an insult to you and to the House for the hon. Minister to say in your presence that this House does not have the right to move Motions and to enquire what is the Government's policy.

3.00 p.m.

As far as I am concerned, and as far as my colleagues are concerned, let it be straight, we are not going to knowtow to any Ministers who hardly know what they are about. There it is, a simple debating point, the Motion deals with a ring road or a bypass between the East Coast and the East Bank, and the hon. Minister has taken us all over the country.

I compliment the hon. Minister and the Government in-so-far as improvement on the roads in Georgetown is concerned, but I shall compliment them more when I see the work done. Camp Street is going to be extended. Kelly Dam is going to be started. I have seen a lot of mud there. On the East Coast there is to be a four-lane carriage-way leading to Buxton. All that is good, but it is still on paper. The hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte) was telling us just now that there is a shortfall in revenue. If he did not say so, he has misled the House and at the end of

the year it will be seen. Let the hon. Minister tell us where they are going to get the money to do all this.

The hon. Minister said that a substantial quantity of the traffic from the East Coast and from the East Bank terminates in Georgetown. That might be so at the moment, although one who lives on the East Coast will recognise that a large number of vehicles, particularly sand trucks, are using the city to go on to the East Coast. The hon. Minister did not do his survey up to the twenty-first century. I do not know for what reason he stopped at the year 1990, one would have thought that it would be rounded off, but what is going to be the position next year or the year after?

The hon. Prime Minister told us that we should not build in timber anymore; we should build out of sand clay. Sand clay requires material for binding called cement and sand; it means if more houses are going to be built on the East Coast, then it means more sand and cement will have to go up the East Coast, unless they are going to paste the houses with loy. There is also this plan, and I have heard hon. Ministers refer to a port authority and the development of the port to the south of Georgetown; it would be feasible and reasonable for the East Coast traffic discharging at the port, when the port is constructed, to use the road such as the one described by the hon. Minister, thus taking all the heavy traffic to the East Coast rather than cluttering up the streets of Georgetown.

The hon. Prime Minister, when he was the Mayor of Georgetown, was pestering the then Government for an increased subvention because of the traffic using the roads in Georgetown. I am sure the Mayor and Town Council is not going to look kindly to what the hon. Minister has said. The Town Council has been belly-aching for increases in the subvention. And why? It is asking for more subventions because more traffic that does not belong to the city is passing through on the city streets.

The situation is worse today than it was ten years ago and it will be worse ten years from now. How can the hon. Minister take the view that the surveys show that the traffic is going to terminate in Georgetown but the Government will probably decide to pay an increased subvention to the City of Georgetown in order to allow traffic not belonging to the City of

Georgetown to pass through the City of Georgetown? I am not saying that the Government should not increase the subvention but I am saying it will reduce the traffic passing in Georgetown and prevent the bumper to bumper driving which will overtake us in the next five years.

My friend the Minister tells us that he has developed Bamboo Dam, Sheriff Street. Sheriff Street, as you know, sir, has served a very useful purpose in that area, although the Government has cut through the Botanical Gardens. They have desecrated that part of our national property to cut through the gardens to build that road when they could have avoided that – unless it was merely done to provide a free farm for the Prime Minister. That is the only reason, because the ideal place for this road to have been constructed was outside the limits of the gardens from the Sophia dam, the same place my colleagues suggests that the ring road should start on.

Had the Government started at that point, it would have given everyone an opportunity of using this by-pass – the hon. Minister likes to use this Yankee term – to go on to the public road, and they would have used the same ring road for going to the University of Guyana – which they used to call Nunes' Night School. It is our responsibility to bring things to this House in the interest of the country and in the interest of the nation. If the Government seeks to reject things through its pettiness, merely because they are brought forward by the PPP, then it is up to the Government, but posterity will hold it against these people who claim to be Guyanese but who are indeed enemies of the Guyanese people. [*Applause.*]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Wilson, do you wish to reply?

Mr. Wilson: No, Your Honour.

Question put.

Mr. Ram Karran: Division.

Assembly divided: Ayes 12, Noes 25, Declined to vote 2, as follows:

4.8.71

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

3 p.m. – 3.10 p.m.

Ayes

Noes

Declined to vote

Mr. Teekah

Mrs. Willems

Mr. M.F. Singh

Mr. Balchand Persaud

Mr. Van Sluytman

Mrs. Da Silva - 2

Mrs. Branco

Mr. Saffee

Mr. Ambrose

Mr. Jordan

Mr. R. Ally

Mr. Fowler

Mr. R.D. Persaud

Mr. Correia

Mr. M.Y. Ally

Mr. Chan-A-Sue

Mr. Lall

Mr. Budhoo

Mr. Hamid

Miss Ackman

Mr. Wilson

Mr. Aaron

Mr. Chandisingh

Mr. Wrights

Mr. Ram Karran – 12

Mr. Thomas

Mr. Salim

Mr. Haynes

Mr. Duncan

Mr. Joaquin

Mr. Mingo

Mr. Clarke

Mr. D.A. Singh

4.8.71

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

3 p.m. – 3.10 p.m.

Mr. Ramsaroop

Miss Field-Ridley

Mr. Carrington

Mr. Hoyte

Mr. Kasim

Dr. Reid - 25

Motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 9th August, 1971, at 2 p.m.” [Mr. Ramsaroop.]

Adjourned accordingly at 3.12 p.m.
