

THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA

FIRST SESSION

1973 1978

MINUTES of the Proceedings of the 158th Sitting of the National Assembly held in the Parliament Chamber at the Public Buildings, Georgetown, Demerara,

AT 2.00 P.M.

ON

WEDNESDAY, 17TH MAY, 1978

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (66)

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (49)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C., M.P., Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid, M.P., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development

Senior Ministers (8)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P., Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives

- \* Cde. H. Green, M.P., Minister of Health, Housing and Labour
- \* Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P., Minister of Energy and Natural Resources
- \* Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P., Minister of Finance
- \* Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P., Minister of Works and Transport
- \* Cde. G.A. King, M.P., Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
- \* Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H., M.P. Minister of Agriculture
- \* Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, C.C.H., S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Justice

Ministers (5)

- Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley, M.P., Minister of Information
- Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P., Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House
- \* Cde. C.V. Mingo, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs
- \* Cde. V.R. Teekah, M.P., Minister of Education, Social Development and Culture
- \* Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent - on leave)

Ministers of State (9)

- Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P., Minister of State - Regional (East Berbice/Corentyne)
- Cde. P. Duncan, J.P., M.P., Minister of State, Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operatives

\* Non elected Minister

- Cde. C.A. Nascimento, M.P., Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister (Absent - on leave)
- Cde. K.B. Bancroft, J.P., M.P., Minister of State - Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro)
- Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P., Minister of State - Regional (Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)
- Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., Minister of State, Ministry of Health, Housing and Labour
- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P., Minister of State, Ministry of National Development
- \* Cde. A. Salim, M.P., Minister of State - Regional (East Demerara/West Coast Berbice) (Absent - on leave)
- \* Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael, M.P., Minister of State - Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (4)

- Cde. M.M. Ackman, C.C.H., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip
- Cde. E.L. Ambrose, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. S. Præhad, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operatives
- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture

Other Members (21)

- Cde. E.M. Bynoe, M.P.
- Cde. W.G. Carrington, M.P.
- Cde. L.A. Durant, M.P.
- Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
- Cde. J. Gill, M.P.
- Cde. W. Hussain, M.P.
- Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. K.M.E. Jonas, M.P.
- Cde. M. Kasim, A.A., M.P.
- Cde. M. Nissar, M.P.
- Cde. L.E. Ramsahoye, M.P.
- Cde. J.G. Ramson, M.P.
- Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
- Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P., M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
- Cde. C. Sukul, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. H.A. Taylor, M.P.
- Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. L.E. Willems, M.P.
- Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, M.P.

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

- Cde. C. Jagan, M.P., Leader of the Opposition

Deputy Speaker (1)

- Cde. Ram Karran, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

\* Non elected Minister

Other Members (12)

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

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

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

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly (F.A. Narain, A.A.)  
Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (A. Knight)

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) Leave

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to -

(a) Cde. Jackson for one week from 17th May, 1978,  
and

(b) Cde. Salim for that sitting.

(ii) Behaviour of Leader of the Opposition

The Speaker informed the Assembly that at the sitting on Monday, 10th April, 1978, during the debate on the motion for the second reading of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 1978, the conduct of the Leader of the Opposition was grossly disorderly. The Chair did not take action then as the Leader of the Opposition withdrew immediately thereafter from the Chamber.

As that day's sitting was the first occasion on which that Member was present since the incident, the Speaker stated that he was bringing this matter formally to the attention of the Assembly and particularly to the Leader of the Opposition, and that should there be a recurrence, the Chair would take appropriate action.

(iii) Congratulations to the Prime Minister and Cdes. Janet Jagan and Ram Karran

The Speaker, on behalf of the Members of the Assembly and himself, extended congratulations and good wishes to the Prime Minister and to Cdes. Janet Jagan and Ram Karran, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of their becoming Parliamentarians.

Mr. Singh joined in extending congratulations to the three Members.

The Leader of the Opposition also spoke.

The Prime Minister expressed thanks.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Question No. 23

Cde. Nokta asked the Minister of Works and Transport the following question:

QUESTION: Will the Minister of Works and Transport say when the Government proposes to acquire suitable equipment to effectively clear the channels of the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers to facilitate proper navigation of these rivers?

The Minister of Works and Transport gave following reply:

ANSWER: A study was carried out by a firm of Consultants with respect to the dredging needs of the country.

They recommended that a simple and less expensive way to fill Guyana's short-term needs was to mount a special crane on a pontoon and to use split barges pushed by a tug to get rid of the spoil.

The crane has already been acquired and it has been mounted on the pontoon. An order has been placed for two split barges and a tug and it is expected that these items will be available before the end of this year.

Meanwhile, the crane/pontoon is being utilised to carry out some dredging operations.

A supplementary question was asked by Cde. Nokta.

Question No. 24

Cde. Nokta asked the Minister of Agriculture the following question:

QUESTION: Will the Minister of Agriculture say what is the total expenditure incurred during the period January 1974 to December 1976 on cassava cultivation in the Port Kaituma-Matthews Ridge Agriculture Project and how much has been derived from the Project during that period?

The Minister of Agriculture gave the following reply:

- ANSWER:
- (a) There was no "Cassava Project" as such in the Matthews Ridge/Port Kaituma Area during the period January 1974 to December 1976.
  - (b) However, there has always been some cassava cultivation by settlers ever since the area came under the Government's control in 1969. Such cultivation is now being expanded to a maximum of 2,000 acres in that area

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A supplementary question was asked by Cde. Nokta.

Question No. 25

Cde. Nokta asked the Minister of Works and Transport the following question:

QUESTION: Will the Minister of Works and Transport say whether the Government has given consideration to the many requests from the residents of Rupununi South for the re-opening of the Wichabai Air Strip; and if the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister say how soon will work commence?

The Minister of Works and Transport gave the following reply:

ANSWER: The Wichabai airstrip was inspected by the Director of Civil Aviation on 20th February, 1978 and found to be serviceable. There was need of minor maintenance work including weeding and some arrangements have been made with the Rupununi Development Company for this work to be done.

Although the Guyana Airways Corporation does not include Wichabai airstrip in its route structure, it can be used within a few days on special trips if justified. Meanwhile, the area around is served from Sand Creek. At the present moment an examination is being made of all airstrips in the Rupununi with a view to rationalising air and land transport for this area.

A supplementary question was asked by Cde. Nokta.

Question No. 26

Cde. Nokta asked the Minister of Agriculture the following question:

QUESTION: Is the Minister of Agriculture aware that equipment for the construction of a meat-processing plant has been lying in the open at the Guyana Airways Compound, Lethem, Rupununi, for over four years?

Will the Minister say how soon the meat-processing factory is to be set up and put into operation? Doesn't the Minister regard this situation as a gross misapplication of the taxpayers' money?

The Minister of Agriculture gave the following reply:

ANSWER: The equipment which I believe is being referred to by Comrade Nokta is not for a meat processing plant. Some second-hand equipment was acquired with the intention of processing residues after slaughter of cattle. Pieces of this equipment were sent to Lethem and stored at the Guyana Airways Compound. The erection and operation of this equipment at Lethem subsequently proved to be uneconomical and a decision was made to halt the project and seek, if possible, alternative use for the equipment in the area.

Supplementary questions were asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

Question No. 27

Cde. Nokta asked the Minister of Works and Transport the following question:

QUESTION: Will the Minister of Works and Transport indicate when work will commence on the new vessel to service the North West region, giving particulars of its capacity, speed and turn around schedule?

The Minister of Works and Transport gave the following reply:

ANSWER: Construction of the new North West vessel commenced in November, 1977.

The dimensions are as follows:-

Length overall	- 151 feet
Beam	28 feet
Draft	- 6 feet 3 inches
Speed is designed for	16 knots

It is expected that the vessel will make two return trips per week to North West and it will be capable of taking two hundred passengers seated and ten tons of baggage on any one trip.

A supplementary question was asked by Cde. Nokta.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILL - Second Reading, Committee and Third Reading

ITEM 1 - REFERENDUM AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION BILL 1978 -  
No. 12, 1978 published 8.5.78

Correction to Clause 5

The Speaker informed Members of a printing error in the penultimate line of Clause 5 wherein the word 'and' should be substituted for the word 'or', and requested Members to note the correction and make it on their copies of the Bill.

Second Reading

The Minister of Home Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THE CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1978 TO THE VOTE OF THE ELECTORS QUALIFIED TO VOTE IN AN ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 73 OF THE CONSTITUTION.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud w s speaking to the motion when the time for the suspension of the sitting was reached.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING:

At 4.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4.24 p.m. the sitting was resumed.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud concluded his speech.

Mr. Abraham, Cde Mohamed, Cde. Collymore, Mr. Singh, Cde. Ram Karran and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development spoke to the motion.

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice was speaking to the motion when the sitting was suspended.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 8.30 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.47 p.m. the sitting was resumed.

The Attorney General and Minister of Justice concluded his speech.

The motion was then put and carried.

The Bill was read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

In Committee.

Clause 1 was passed as printed.

Clause 2 The Minister of Home Affairs moved the following amendment which was put and carried:

Insertion immediately after the words "10th April, 1978" of the words "and published in the Official Gazette dated 13th May, 1978".

Clause 2 was then passed as amended.

Clause 3 was passed as printed.

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Clause 4 The Minister of Home Affairs moved the following amendment which was put and carried:

Insertion immediately after the words "10th April, 1978" of the words "and published in the Official Gazette dated 13th May, 1978".

Clause 4 was then passed as amended.

Clauses 5 to 7 were passed as printed.

The Preamble was passed as printed.

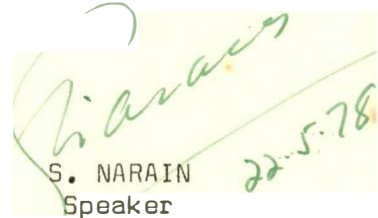
Assembly resumed.

Third Reading

On a motion by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Bill was read the third time and passed as printed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.13 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m. on Monday, 22nd May, 1978.



S. NARAIN  
Speaker

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,  
Public Buildings,  
Georgetown,  
22nd May, 1978.