

THIRD SESSION

1971

MINUTES of the Proceedings of the 25th Sitting of the National Assembly under the Constitution of Guyana, held in the Parliament Chamber at the Public Buildings, Georgetown, Demerara,

AT 2.00 P.M.

ON

WEDNESDAY, 22ND SEPTEMBER, 1971

PRESENT:

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

(a) Members of the Government

(i) Ministers

Dr. the Honourable P.A. Reid, Deputy Prime Minister
and Minister of Agriculture
The Honourable M. Kasim, A.A., Minister of Communications
The Honourable W.G. Carrington, Minister of Labour and
Social Security
The Honourable Miss S.M. Field-Ridley, Minister of Health
The Honourable B. Ramsaroop, Minister of Housing and
Reconstruction (Leader of the House)
The Honourable D.A. Singh, Minister of Trade
The Honourable D.E. Clarke, Minister of Home Affairs
The Honourable C.V. Mingo, Minister of Local Government
The Honourable W. Haynes, Minister of State for
Co-operatives and Community Development
The Honourable H. Green, Minister of Works, Hydraulics
and Supply
The Honourable H.O. Jack, Minister of Mines and Forests
The Honourable E.B. McDavid, Minister of Information and
Culture
The Honourable Miss C.L. Baird, Minister of Education

(ii) Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, J.P., Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Finance
Mr. P. Duncan, J.P., Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture
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,
Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

(iii) Other Members

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

(b) Members of the Opposition

Dr. C.B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition
 Mr. Ram Karran
 Mr. R. Chandisingh
 Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.
 Mr. E.M.G. Wilson
 Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip
 Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.
 Mr. M.Y. Ally
 Mr. R. Ally
 Mr. E.L. Ambrose
 Mrs. L.M. Branco
 Mr. Balchand Persaud
 Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
 Mr. V. Teekah
 Mrs. E. DaSilva
 Mr. J.A. Sutton
 Mr. R.E. Cheeks

Clerk of the National Assembly - Mr. F.A. Narain
 Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly - Mr. M.B. Henry

Absent:

The Honourable L.F.S. Burnham, S.C., - on leave
 Prime Minister
 The Honourable H.D. Hoyte, S.C., -, on leave
 Minister of Finance
 The Honourable S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
 Attorney-General and Minister
 of State
 Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker - on leave
 Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P. - on leave
 Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
 Mr. Bholu Persaud - on leave
 Mrs. R.P. Sahoye - on leave
 Mr. M.F. Singh - on leave

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

OATH OF A NEW MEMBER

The oath of office was made and subscribed by Miss Cecilene Leona Baird, Minister of Education.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER(1) Ministerial Changes

His Honour the Speaker informed the Assembly that he was advised that with effect from the 1st of September, 1971 -

- (i) the Honourable Miss S.M. Field-Ridley, formerly Minister of Education, had been designated Minister of Health, and
- (ii) the Honourable Miss C.L. Baird who had been appointed a Minister, had been designated Minister of Education.

On behalf of the Members of the Assembly and on his own behalf, His Honour congratulated Miss Baird on her appointment as a Minister and welcomed her to the Assembly. He also extended best wishes to both Miss Field-Ridley and Miss Baird in their respective assignments.

(2) Leave

His Honour the Speaker announced that leave had been granted to -

- (a) Mr. Burnham for that day's sitting;
- (b) Mr. Hoyte from 20th September to 4th October, 1971;
- (c) Mr. Jagan for two months from 17th September, 1971;
- (d) Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud for two weeks from 18th September, 1971;
- (e) Mr. Bhola Persaud for **three months from 17th** September, 1971; and
- (f) Mr. M.F. Singh for that day's sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.(1) By the Speaker (Chairman, Committee of Selection):

Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on Wednesday, the 8th of September, 1971.

(PARL: 5/5 V)(Circulated)

(2) By the Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House) or behalf of the Minister of Finance:

(a) Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Transport and Harbours Department for the year ended 31st December, 1968.

(T. 6 A. II T.J. (1))(Circulated)

(b) Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Guyana Post Office Savings Bank for the year ended 31st December, 1969.

(P.O.S.B. 6 VIII)(Circulated)

(3) By the Minister of Communications:

Annual Report of the Transport and Harbours Department for the year 1969.

(C-12/4/7)(Circulated)

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

QUESTION NO. 11

Mr. R. Ally asked the Minister of Finance the following question:

Question: Will the Minister say why were drivers of motor vehicles who took out their drivers' licences on 28th December, 1969, required to pay, in 1971, an additional \$5.00 for the three days in 1970?

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House), on behalf of the Minister of Finance, gave the following reply:

Answer: The question is not clear. Nevertheless, the following explanation of the effect of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, 1969, may be helpful to the Honourable Member:

- (1) The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Act, 1969, which amended sub-section (3) of Section 29 of the Principal Ordinance, made all licences issued or renewed valid to the 31st December, of the year of issue. The Act became operative on the 1st January, 1970.
- (2) The amendment therefore provided for drivers' licences to be renewable on 1st January every year as distinct from the previous provision whereby drivers' licences remained in force for a period of 12 months from the date on which it was issued.

- (3) When licences which had been issued or renewed during 1969 expired during 1970, they were renewed up to 31st December, 1970, in accordance with the Act aforesaid. The fee for such renewal was \$5.00.

QUESTION NO. 12

Mr. Hamid asked the Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply the following question:

Question: Will the Minister say whether he is aware that the Well on Tiger Island, Essequibo River, has been out of order for very many months, and as a result of this the people are forced to wash with and to drink stagnant trench water?

If so, will the Minister say how soon action will be taken to get the well functioning again?

The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply gave the following reply:

Answer: The natural flow of the Well on Tiger Island has stopped as a result of a general falling of well levels. However, a hand-operated "force and lift" pump was installed on the well and by this means residents now obtain their supplies of water.

QUESTION NO. 13

Mr. Hamid asked the Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply the following question:

Question: Will the Minister say whether any money, and if so, how much, remains from an allocation in 1963 said to be \$163,000 for the improvement of the Bartica Water Supply?

Will the Minister say whether an undertaking was given to the Bartica Village Council to carry out the second and third stages of a pure water supply plan for Bartica, and if so, whether the undertaking was honoured?

The Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply gave the following reply:

Answer: There was no allocation of \$163,000 in 1963 for the improvement of the Bartica Water Supply system.

An allocation of \$263,000 was provided for that purpose in the 1961-1964 Development Programme of the previous Government. Of this sum, \$118,000 was expended on the first phase of the two-phased water supply plan. The first phase was completed in 1962 but the second phase was not embarked upon though an undertaking to do so was given by the then Government.

A Supplementary question was asked by the Leader of the Opposition.

QUESTION NO. 14

Mr. R. Ally asked the Minister of Health the following question:

- Question:
- (a) Will the Minister say how soon the Government proposes to repair and paint the Public Hospital at Skeldon?
 - (b) Will the Minister also say how early the Government proposes to furnish this hospital with beds, mattresses, sheets and other necessary items of furniture, and with a full stock of drugs?

The Minister of Health gave the following reply:

- Answer:
- (a) Some repairs are already in progress and nearly completed. Painting of the building is being undertaken as a project during the "Advance Guyana" campaign.
 - (b) Beds, mattresses, sheets, etc., are gradually being replaced as supplies become available. This Ministry has been unable to establish any significant drug shortage at the Skeldon Hospital.

Supplementary questions were asked by Mr. R. Ally and Mr. Wilson.

QUESTION NO. 15

Mr. R. Ally asked the Minister of Education the following question:

- Question:
- (a) Will the Minister say whether she is aware that there are two Denominational Schools within the Line Path and Princetown areas, and that both schools have been trying to accommodate three times the number of children they were built to accommodate?
 - (b) Will the Minister give consideration to the building of at least two large Government primary schools in this area, in order to ease the situation?

The Minister of Education gave the following reply:

- Answer:
- (a) Yes, the Minister is aware that there are two denominational schools within the Line Path and Princetown areas. They are the Skeldon Church of Scotland and the Skeldon Anglican Schools and they are overcrowded.

- (b) The Ministry of Education proposes to have a Government School of 1,000 places constructed in the area by self-help. The project has been included in the school building programme under the next development plan.

Supplementary questions were asked by Mr. R. Ally.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

His Honour informed the Assembly that it was agreed that the motion on the Supplementary Order Paper in the name of Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud would be taken as the first item.

ITEM 1 - MOTION ON THE INCREASE OF THE PRICES OF PADDY AND RICE

Mr. Ram Karran, on behalf of Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, moved the following motion:

WHEREAS rice farmers and millers of Guyana are finding it uneconomical to continue to cultivate and manufacture paddy and rice;

AND WHEREAS production costs have increased by over 22% since 1966 while purchase prices have been drastically reduced;

AND WHEREAS the reduction of production of rice is seriously affecting the economy of Guyana:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Government take steps to increase the prices of paddy and rice to the farmers from the 1971 autumn crop on the basis of prices prevailing prior to 1966.

Mr. Ambrose seconded the motion.

Mr. R. Ally was speaking to the motion when the time for the suspension of the sitting was reached.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.05 p.m. the sitting was suspended for tea.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4.35 p.m. the sitting was resumed.

Mr. R. Ally concluded his speech.

Mr. Wilson, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and the Leader of the Opposition spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, the motion was put and negatived on the following division:

<u>FOR</u>	<u>AGAINST</u>	<u>DECLINED TO VOTE</u>
Mr. Teekah	Mrs. Willems	Mr. Sutton
Mr. Remington	Mr. Zaheeruddeen	Mrs. Da Silva
Mr. Balchand Persaud	Mr. Van Sluytman	
Mrs. Branco	Mr. Saffee	
Mr. Ambrose	Mr. Fowler	
Mr. R. Ally	Mr. Corrica	
Ms. M.Y. Ally	Mr. Correia	
Mr. Hamid	Mr. Chan-A-Sue	
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Budhoo	
Mr. Chandisingh	Mr. Bancroft	
Mr. Ram Karran	Miss Ackman	
Dr. Jagan	Mr. Aaron	
	Mr. Wrights	
	Mr. Thomas	
	Mr. Salim	
	Mr. Duncan	
	Mr. Joaquin	
	Mr. Mingo	
	Mr. Clarke	
	Mr. D.A. Singh	
	Mr. Ramsaroop	
	Miss Field-Ridley	
	Mr. Carrington	
	Mr. Kasim	
	Dr. Reid	
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ITEM 2 - MOTION ON THE DISMISSAL OF MRS. HAZEL DA SENT

Mr. Teekah moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the Hon. Minister of Education ordered the transfer of the Secretary of the Charlestown Government Secondary School, Mrs. Hazel Da Sent, to the Bush Lot Government Secondary School, West Coast Berbice, with effect from the 14th October, 1970;

AND WHEREAS after strong protests had been made by and on behalf of Mrs. Da Sent to the effect that no just cause existed for her transfer to the Bush Lot Government Secondary School, the Minister of Education directed that Mrs. Da Sent be transferred instead to the Zeeburg Government Secondary School with effect from 14th October, 1970;

AND WHEREAS on representations made by and on behalf of Mrs. Da Sent, the Ministry of Education permitted her to continue in her post as Secretary of the Charlestown Government Secondary School on and after 14th October, 1970;

AND WHEREAS Mrs. Da Sent was dismissed as Secretary of the Charlestown Government Secondary School on 2nd June, 1971;

AND WHEREAS efforts made by and on behalf of Mrs. Da Sent to have discussions opened by the Ministry of Education on the matter in accordance with established trade union practice and with a view to arriving at a satisfactory solution, have been completely ineffective;

AND WHEREAS Mrs. Da Sent has been humiliated in the eyes of the community and is suffering great hardship as a consequence of her dismissal;

AND WHEREAS the post of Secretary of the Charlestown Government Secondary School has been vacant since the termination of Mrs. Da Sent's services:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly agrees that the decision to dismiss Mrs. Da Sent should be rescinded and that she should be re-instated as Secretary to the Charlestown Government Secondary School with effect from 2nd June, 1971.

Mr. Teekah was speaking to the motion when the time for the suspension of the sitting was reached.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 6.30 p.m. the sitting was suspended.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.05 p.m. the sitting was resumed.

Mr. Teekah concluded his speech.

Mrs. Da Silva seconded the motion.

INTERRUPTION OF DEBATE

At 9.35 p.m. the debate was interrupted to enable the Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House), to move the suspension of Standing Order No. 9(1).

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 9(1)

On a motion by the Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House), paragraph (1) of Standing Order No. 9 was suspended to enable the Assembly to sit beyond 10.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE

The debate was then resumed.

The Minister of Health was speaking to the motion when the time for the suspension of the sitting was reached.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 10.00 p.m. the sitting was suspended for coffee.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 10.15 p.m. the sitting was resumed.

The Minister of Health concluded her speech.

Thereafter, Mr. Teekah replied.

The motion was then put and negatived on the following division:

<u>FOR</u>	<u>AGAINST</u>
Mr. Sutton	Mrs. Willems
Mrs. Da Silva	Mr. Zaheeruddeen
Mr. Teekah	Mr. Van Sluytman
Mr. Remington	Mr. Saffee
Mr. Balchand Persaud	Mr. Fowler
Mrs. Branco	Mr. Corrica
Mr. Ambrose	Mr. Chan- A Sue
Mr. R. Ally	Mr. Budhoo
Mr. M.Y. Ally	Mr. Bancroft
Mr. Lall	Miss Ackman
Mr. Hamid	Mr. Aaron
Mr. Wilson	Mr. Wrights
Mr. Chandisingh	Mr. Thomas
Mr. Ram Karan	Mr. Salim
	Mr. Duncan
	Mr. Joaquin
	Mr. Mingo
	Mr. Clarke
	Mr. D.A. Singh
	Mr. Ramsaroop
	Miss Field-Ridley
	Mr. Carrington
	Mr. Kasim
	Dr. Reid

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ITEM 3 - MOTION ON THE OPERATIONS OF GLOBAL-AGRI

Mr. Ram Karan, on behalf of Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, moved the following motion:

WHEREAS on 12th July, 1970, the Ministry of Finance announced that the total assets of Global-Agri, said to be a multi-million dollar project for the development of corn and cattle on a large area in the Berbice River, had been acquired by the Government;

AND WHEREAS the collapse of this project, in which the Government had earlier announced that it was taking a controlling 51% interest of the shares, has gravely disturbed public confidence in the Government;

AND WHEREAS the National Assembly has not been furnished with any information about this project and is therefore completely unaware of the amounts paid in acquiring either the 51% controlling interest in the Company, or

subsequently, its total assets, and is equally unaware of the circumstances which led to the collapse of the project;

AND WHEREAS it is believed that, among other defects, there was no proper assessment of technical aspects of the project such as whether or not corn could be grown economically in the chosen area;

AND WHEREAS the Chairman of Global-Agri, Mr. Stanley Greene, has had to leave Guyana hurriedly and in circumstances which have increased the grave doubts of Guyanese tax-payers about the efficient functioning of the various arms of the Government and the Ministry of Agriculture in particular;

AND WHEREAS it appears that a great deal of expensive machinery and equipment has been imported into the country and is now lying somewhere on the site of the project and that those items represent the total assets of the Company in Guyana;

AND WHEREAS, among the first casualties of the collapse of the project have been Guyanese workers, who have not, it is understood, been paid overtime due to them in dock-side unloading of the abovementioned machinery and equipment:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly agrees that a Committee comprising Members of both sides of this House be set up to inquire into all the circumstances of the operations of Global-Agri up to the date of the announcement of the take-over of the assets by Government.

Mr. Hamid seconded the motion and reserved the right to speak later.

Mr. Sutton and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Mr. Ram Karran replied.

The motion was then put and negatived on the following division:

FOR

Mr. Sutton
Mrs. Da Silva
Mr. Teekah
Mr. Remington
Mr. Balchand Persaud

AGAINST

Mrs. Willems
Mr. Zaheeruddeen
Mr. Van Sluytman
Mr. Saffee
Mr. Fowler

Carried

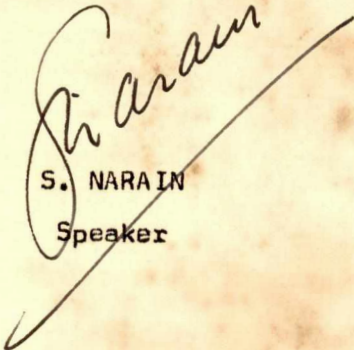
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	<u>FOR</u>	<u>AGAINST</u>
Brought Forward:	5	5
	Mrs. Branco Mr. Ambrose Mr. R. Ally Mr. M.Y. Ally Mr. Lall Mr. Hamid Mr. Chandisingh Mr. Ram Karzan	Mr. Corrica Mr. Chan-A-Sue Mr. Budhoo Mr. Bancroft Miss Ackman Mr. Aaron Mr. Wrights Mr. Thomas Mr. Salim Mr. Duncan Mr. Joaquin Mr. Mingo Mr. Clarke Mr. D.A. Singh Mr. Ramsaroop Miss Field-Ridley Mr. Carrington Mr. Kasim Dr. Reid
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ADJOURNMENT

At 12.25 a.m. on Thursday, 23rd September, 1971, on a motion by the Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House), the Assembly was adjourned to a date to be fixed.


 S. NARAIN
 Speaker

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
 Public Buildings,
 Georgetown.

2nd October, 1971.