

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE 90TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (1992-1997) OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD

AT 2.00 P.M

ON THURSDAY, 30TH JANUARY, 1997

IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, GEORGETOWN

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (74)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Derek C. Jagan, C.C.H., S.C., J.P., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government - People's Progressive Party/Civic (44)

The Hon. Samuel A. Hinds, M.P., Prime Minister

The Hon. Reepu Daman Persaud, O.R., J.P., M.P., Senior Minister of Agriculture (Leader of the House)

The Hon. S. Feroze Mohamed, M.P., Senior Minister of Home Affairs (Government Chief Whip)

The Hon. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P., Senior Minister of Local Government

*The Hon. Rev. Dr. Ramnauth Bisnauth, M.P., Senior Minister of Education and Cultural Development

*The Hon. Bernard C. DeSantos, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Absent - on leave)

*The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P., Senior Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security

The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Senior Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P., Senior Minister of Health

The Hon. M. Shree Chan, M.P., Senior Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry

*The Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P., Senior Minister of Finance

Mrs. Janet Jagan, O.E., M.P.

The Hon. Clinton C. Collymore, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Local Government

The Hon. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security

*The Hon. F. Vibert DeSouza, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Local Government

*The Hon. George E. Fung-On, M.P., Minister in the Office of the President

The Hon. Moses V. Nagamootoo, M.P., Senior Minister of Information

*The Hon. C. Anthony Xavier, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Public Works and Communications

*The Hon. Satyadeow Sawh, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture

* Non-elected Member

Mr. Cyril C. Belgrave, M.P.
 Mr. Fazil M. Ali, M.P.
 Mr. Husman Allí, M.P.
 Mr. Shaik K.Z. Baksh, M.P.
 Mr. Komal Chand, C.C.H., M.P.
 Mrs. Shirley V. Edwards, M.P.
 Dr. Hughley H. Hanoman, M.P.
 Mrs. Una A. James, M.P.
 Alston A. Kisson, M.P.
 Dr. Moti Lall, M.P.
 Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.
 Mr. Donald Ramotar, M.P.
 Mr. Lawrence E. Rodney, M.P.
 Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Local Government
 Mr. Winslow M. Zephyr, M.P.
 Reuben A. Gilbert, M.P.
 Mr. Edward DaSilva, M.P.
 Mr. Khadim Bacchus, M.P. (National Congress of Local Democratic Organs)
 Mr. Samad A. Baksh, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam) (Absent - on leave)
 Mr. Harrinarine Baldeo, M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)
 Mr. Joseph DeSouza, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)
 Mr. Eugene La Cruz, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)
 Mr. Bagot Paul, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni) (Absent - on leave)
 Mr. Kum Karan Ramdas, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
 Mr. Ramrattan, M.P. a/k Balkarran (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/
 West Demerara)

Members of the Minority (29)

(1) People's National Congress (26)

Mr. H. Desmond Hoyte, S.C., M.P., Minority Leader (Absent - on leave)
 Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, M.P.
 Mr. Winston S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P.
 Mrs. Clarissa Riehl, M.P.
 Mr. Dunstan Barrow, M.P.
 Mr. M. Idris Deen, M.P.
 Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P.
 Miss Amna Ally, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Miss Jean M.G. Persico, A.A., M.P.
 Mr. Arthur A. Alexander, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly
 Mr. Dharamdeo Sawh, M.P.
 Mr. Simon Ng-See-Quan, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Mr. David Subnauth, J.P., M.P.
 Mr. Reynold N. David, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
 Mr. Aftabuddin Ahamad, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Mrs. Cyrilda A. DeJesus, M.P.
 Mr. Kenrick Tyndall, M.P.
 Mr. Phillip Bynoe, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)
 Mr. Andy Gouveia, M.P.
 Mr. Hukumchand, M.P. a/k Parag
 Miss Joan C. Richards, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Mr. John A. Fredericks, M.P.
 Mr. Ivan Peters, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)
 Mr. Hubert K.H. Hyman, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Mr. Ivor Allen, M.P.

(There is one vacancy)

(ii) Working People's Alliance (2)

Dr. Rupert Roopnaraine, M.P.

Mr. Matheson Williams, M.P. (National Congress of Local Democratic Organs)

(iii) The United Force (1)

Mr. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.

OFFICERS

Mr. Frank A. Narain, A.A., Clerk of the National Assembly

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 2.00 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Statement By The Speaker Concerning A Remark Made By Mr. Idris Deen About The
General Secretary Of The Trades Union Congress

The Speaker made the following statement:

Hon. Members, as you are aware, while the Hon. Shree Chait Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry, was speaking on Tuesday January 28, 1997, on the Budget Debate, he mentioned Mr. Joseph Pollydore by name and stated that Mr. Pollydore, the General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, commended the Budget, and while the Hon. Minister was referring to Mr. Pollydore's statement, the Hon. Member, Mr. Idris Deen, a People's National Congress front bench Member, shouted in a loud voice "he is senile"

Immediately, some Hon. Members on the Government side called on Mr. Deen to apologise but he made no attempt to do so.

When the Hon. Member, Miss Jean Persico, Member of the PNC, at the beginning of her speech, referred to the qualities of Mr. Pollydore, I interrupted her, and I apologised to her for doing so, as I thought if there had to be an apology about the "senile" statement, it had to come from Hon. Member, Mr. Deen. I told the Hon. Member, Miss Persico, that the Hon. Member Mr. Deen, had said that Mr. Pollydore was senile and thereupon Mr. Deen stood up. I thought he did so to apologise but instead he said he did not call any name. As he obviously had no intention to apologise. I requested of him to take his seat and reminded him that it was after the Hon. Minister Shree Chan had mentioned Mr. Pollydore's name that he (Mr. Deen) had said "he is senile".

Later in the evening, while the Assembly was still in session and I was presiding, the Hon. Member, Mr. Barrow, who I believe is the PNC Chief Whip, sent a note as follows: "Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deen would like to offer an apology re: Mr. Pollydore's statement. When will you allow him to do so? D. Barrow".

I called the Hon. Member Mr. Barrow to the Chair and told him that Mr. Deen had ample opportunities to apologise and had refused to do so but, nevertheless, I would consider his request and inform him, the Hon. Member Mr. Barrow, when I would permit the Hon. Member Mr. Deen to do so under the Standing Orders. I also asked the Hon. Member Mr. Barrow to let me know if he had any suggestions.

Before the sitting of the Assembly yesterday, I informed the Hon. Member Mr. Barrow that I was prepared to permit the Hon. Member Mr. Deen to make an apology under the item of "Personal Explanations" on the Order Paper, although I had some doubt that it could be done, but I was prepared to give the Hon. Member Mr. Deen the benefit of any doubt. The Hon. Member Mr. Barrow said he also thought it could be done under the item "Personal Explanations".

I then told the Hon. Member Mr. Barrow that the Hon. Member Mr. Deen, under the Standing Orders, would have to make a request to me, to make an apology. I then asked the Hon. Member Mr. Barrow to tell the Hon. Member Mr. Deen to come and see me.

The Hon. Member Mr. Barrow left my Chambers and returned informing me that the Hon. Member Mr. Deen said he is not prepared to apologise. Neither did Mr. Deen come to see me.

As far as I was concerned, that was the end of the matter.

However, last night I was informed that the PNC Secretariat had issued a statement in connection with the matter.

I thought that the PNC had taken the opportunity to disassociate itself from the view that Mr. Pollydore was senile, as expressed by one of its leading Members and that the PNC will apologise to Mr. Pollydore.

The Release however failed to do so.

Instead, the Release, among other things, stated that "there was an apparent controversy over a statement made by a PNC Member of Parliament" and then maliciously accused me of refusing "a request by the PNC to address the matter" in order "to allow the issue to remain overnight so that the mouthpiece of the PPP, the Guyana Chronicle, and we expect the Mirror will follow suit to use the incident for nefarious political purpose".

Hon. Members, as far as I am aware, there was no apparent or any controversy over the statement when the Hon. Member Mr. Deen said "he is senile" nor was there any request by the PNC to address the issue. The issue involved a Member of the PNC who, as I have stated earlier, had refused to address the issue on the day of the incident when he had the opportunities to do so.

After I was informed by the Hon. Member Mr. Barrow that the Hon. Member Mr. Deen would like to apologise, the first opportunity, if any, under the Standing Orders, was to permit the Hon. Member Mr. Deen to make an apology under the item "Personal Explanations" at the sitting the next day.

As I have stated earlier, I agreed to permit the Hon. Member Mr. Deen to do so and he refused.

The Release also states that "the PNC believes that there will always be differences of opinion and respects the right of people to differ".

It therefore seems that the PNC in effect is saying that the Hon. Member Mr. Deen was entitled to his opinion about Mr. Pollydore and therefore there was no need for the PNC to disassociate itself from the statement by the Hon. Member Mr. Deen.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

ITEM 1 MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1997

Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1997.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Dr. Faith A. Harding

The Senior Minister of Education and
Cultural Development

The Minister in the Ministry of Labour,
Human Services and Social Security.

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

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 5.00 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.30 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Resumption of Debate

Mr. Manzoor Nadir continued and concluded his speech.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Shaik K.Z. Baksh

Mr. Dharamdeo Sawh

Dr. Hughley H. Hanoman.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 7.32 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 7.54 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Resumption of Debate

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Komal Chand

Mr. David Subnauth.

Presiding of Deputy Speaker

Mr. Fazil M. Ali was speaking to the motion when the Speaker withdrew from the sitting and the Deputy Speaker took the Chair and presided until the end of the sitting.

Resumption of Debate

Mr. Fazil Ali continued and concluded his speech.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Matheson Williams

Dr. Moti Lall

Mrs. Una A. James

Mr. Joseph DeSouza.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11.02 p.m., on a motion by the Senior Minister of Agriculture (Leader of the House), the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m. on Friday, 31st January, 1997.

Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown

30th January, 1997.