

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 57TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND
SESSION (1990-1991) OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON TUESDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 1991
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, GEORGETOWN
MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (73)

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, U.K., S.C., J.P., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly (Absent - on leave)

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (60)

Prime Minister

Cde. H. Green, M.P., Prime Minister

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (1)

* Cde. K.S. Massiah, U.K., S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister
of Legal Affairs

Deputy Prime Minister (2)

Cde. K.H.U. Corbin, M.P., Deputy Prime Minister, Public Works,
Communications and Regional Development (Absent)

Cde. W.S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister, Minister
of Trade, Tourism and Industry

Senior Ministers (6)

* Cde. C.b. Greenidge, M.P., Minister of Finance (Absent - on leave)

* Cde. Dr. P.L. McKenzie, A.A., M.P., Minister of Agriculture (Absent - on leave)

* Cde. V.M.A. Bernard, M.P., Minister of Education and Cultural Development (Absent - on leave)

* Cde. J.K. Kranenburg, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Public Works,
Communications and Regional Development (Absent)

Cde. C.G. Sharma, A.A., J.P., M.P., Senior Minister in the (Absent)
Office of the President

* Cde. Kabbian Ali-Khan, M.P., Minister of Labour, Human Services and
Social Security (Absent - on leave)

Ministers (6)

* Cde. V. Sawh, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry

Cde. V.V. Parvatan, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. J.T. Kissoon, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Health

Cde. Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P., Minister in the Office of the President (Absent)

Cde. Stella Udie-Ali, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

Cde. Jean M.G. Persico, A.A., M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Labour,
Human Services and Social Security

Government Chief Whip (1)

Cde. Jennifer A. Ferreira

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (32)

Cde. Viola V. Burnham, U.K., M.P.
 Cde. W.A.L.H. Parris, C.C.H., M.P. (Absent)
 Cde. R.E. Jackson, U.K., M.P. (Absent)
 Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P. (Absent)
 Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.
 Cde. Yvonne V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.
 Cde. Urmia E.H. Johnson, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Cde. K.W.E. Denny, M.P.
 Cde. K.B. Bancroft, M.P.
 Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.
 Cde. Philomena A. Kayman, M.P.
 Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
 Cde. Joyce Gill-Mingo, M.P.
 Cde. H. Doobay, M.P. (Absent)
 Cde. Edwina Melville, M.P.
 Cde. Anna Ally, M.P.
 Cde. N. Calistro, M.P.
 Cde. F.M. Cumberbatch, M.P.
 Cde. M.I. Deen, M.P. (Absent)
 Cde. Cyriilda A. DeJesus, M.P. (Absent)
 Cde. Edith Deygoo, M.P.
 Cde. Calrice A. Edwards, M.P.
 Cde. C.L. Geddes, M.P.
 Cde. G. Marshall, M.P. (Absent)
 Cde. B. Persaud, J.P., M.P.
 Cde. K. Sankar, A.A., M.P. (Absent)
 Cde. E.L. Fraser, M.P.
 Cde. Mignon V. Griffith, M.P.
 Cde. P.E. Kockcliffe, M.P.

(There are two vacancies)

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. Rose I. Semple, M.P.
 Cde. P. Singh, J.P., M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. Nellie K. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni) (Absent)
 Cde. K. Bishop, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent)
 Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)
 Cde. Y. Khan, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)
 Cde. Enid E. Abrahams, M.S., J.P., M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Island/West Demerara)
 Cde. I. Ally, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
 Cde. S.I. McGarrell, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)
 Cde. M. Stephens, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo) (Absent)
 Cde. Ajoodhia, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)
 Cde. V. Fernandes, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)

Members of the Minority (11)(i) People's Progressive Party (8)

(Vacant)

(ii) United Force (2)

Cde. M.F. Singh, C.C.H., J.P., M.P. (Absent)

(There is one vacancy)

(iii) Working People's Alliance (1)

(Vacant)

OFFICERS

Cde. E.W. Kendall Acting Clerk of the National Assembly
Cde. Monica Jordan Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

PRAVERS

The Acting Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER(i) Leave

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to -
Cdes. Bernard, Johnson, Ali-Khan and McKenzie for that day's sitting.

(ii) THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION BILL 1991 - Bill No. 19/1991.

The Speaker informed Members that on the Order Paper it was stated that the Assembly will not proceed with The Integrity Commission Bill - Bill No. 19/1991. However, she advised Members that the Bill will be proceeded with at that sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC. -

By the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Trade,
Tourism and Industry:

- (i) Audited Financial Statements for 1976 to 1983 and Annual Report for 1988 for the Guyana Telephone Corporation.

(Circulated)

- (ii) Audited Financial Statements for 1984 to 1987 and Annual Report for 1989 for the Guyana Telephone Corporation.

(Circulated)

- (iii) Annual Report for 1982, 1983 and 1989 for the Guyana Transport Services Limited.

(Circulated)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture made the following statement -

Government proposes to implement a Programme of Agrarian Reform aimed at stimulating agricultural production with cognisance of the fact that Agriculture is an important pillar of the economy. Included in the programme will be the provision of institutional strengthening to support the sector, incentives and assistance to farmers in order to enable them to maximise production and beneficially occupy their agricultural land holdings and thus improve their standards of living through increased farm incomes.

In implementing this Programme, special attention would be paid to the following issues -

- (i) the slow rate of development of leasehold state lands;
- (ii) the economic viability of small holdings particularly those under mechanized development;

- (iii) land development expansion beyond the coastland in order to create a new development front and to facilitate enlargement of those land holdings, the sizes of which are not economically feasible;
- (iv) the impact of modernization of agricultural activities upon land tenure and farm enterprises;
- (v) improvement in agricultural credit facilities;
- (vi) the provision of incentives to stimulate large scale production and crop diversification;
- (vii) the establishment of appropriate insurance schemes to assist farmers to re-establish their farms where in some circumstances, they suffer loss of crops;
- (viii) the development and management of water resources in an integrated manner.

As a first step in implementing this programme, Government will provide small farmers on State Lands with a better security of tenures by converting their leasehold interests into firm freehold titles by a system of enfranchisement. To facilitate the easy implementation of this enfranchisement programme and in order to enable tenants to Government lands to benefit therefrom, the difference in status between State and Government lands would be abolished and all Government lands, would become State Lands. This will enable the farmers to use these titles as collateral for loans necessary for development of their farms.

The target group to receive immediate benefit from this programme are those farmers holding titles to State Land which are fifteen (15) acres and less in size.

The effect of this programme would be to accelerate the development of some seventy-five (75) percent of State Lands which are held under lease or other inferior form of title by small farmers.

Of special interest is the fact that the most significant area of agricultural production to be affected by this programme is the Rice Industry.

The more complicated areas of Agrarian Reform to be addressed at a later stage would include the following -

- (i) determination of Economic-sized land holdings;
- (ii) consolidation of fragmented land holdings;
- (iii) organisation of the beneficiaries of the reform;
- (iv) ensuring the availability of appropriate agricultural credit facilities;
- (v) identification of appropriate infrastructure;
- (vi) zoning of areas according to their soil types and other agricultural characteristics;
- (vii) ensuring adequate markets for the sake of agricultural produce; and
- (viii) advising on pricing policies etc.

The above listed areas, however, require the collection and analyses of various forms of information pertaining to agriculture by a competent multi-disciplinary committee which will advise Government on the various steps to be taken in formulating its agrarian policies and implementing the consequential programmes emanating therefrom.

This committee will also recommend the feedback mechanism to be established and the form of communication to be made with them in order to facilitate the review of the various programmes from time to time to ensure that they achieve the desired objectives.

It is the thinking of the Government that a multi-disciplinary will form the Agrarian Reform advisory Committee which would be granted the relevant authority that would enable it to function independently and in the best interest of the Guyanese Nation, so that its recommendations would flow from a scientific analysis of the various agrarian problems to be resolved. The policies, plans and programmes recommended by this Committee will be executed by an Agrarian Reform Authority.

Towards this end, Government will enact the necessary Legislation to establish the Agrarian Reform Authority in order to enable it to act according to Law. One of the principal functions of this Authority would be for it to examine the relevant existing legislations for sufficiency in implementing the various programmes and to make recommendations for such changes where necessary, in order to ensure the achievement of the various objectives of the Programme.

Supportive of any Agrarian Reform Programme is water resource development and management, since, land without water is of little use to farmers. Government will, therefore, continue with its programme of establishing Drainage and Irrigation Schemes in areas where lands are suitable for agricultural development and instituting suitable mechanisms for water resource development and management.

Implementation of the Agrarian Reform Programme will significantly increase production and productivity levels in the various agricultural sectors and, apart from providing more substantial farm incomes for farmers, will impact significantly upon the economic growth of the country through agriculture."

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Presentation and First Reading

1. EVIDENCE (PROCEEDINGS IN FOREIGN TRIBUNALS) BILL 1991 - Bill No. 31/1991

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bills:

A BILL intitled AN ACT to make new provision to enable the High Court to assist in obtaining evidence requested for the purposes of proceedings in foreign tribunals.

2. PUBLIC HEALTH (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 - Bill No. 32/1991

A BILL intitled AN ACT to amend the Public Health Ordinance.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILLS - Second Reading

1. NATIONAL SECURITY (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) (REPEAL) BILL 1991 - Bill No. 22/1991 published 1991-09-16

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to repeal the National Security (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act.

(Read a first time on 1991-09-18)

The motion was put and carried.

The Bill was read a second time and thereafter taken through the remaining stages and passed as printed.

2. FIREARMS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1991 - Bill No. 23/1991
published 1991-09-16

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Firearms Act.

(Read a first time on 1991-09-18)

The motion was put and carried.

The Bill was read a second time and was thereafter taken through the remaining stages and passed as printed.

3. PAROLE BILL 1991 - Bill No. 24/1991 published 1991-09-16

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to make provision for releasing convicted prisoners on parole and for matters connected therewith.

(Read a first time on 1991-09-18)

The motion was put and carried.

The Bill was read a second time and was thereafter taken through the remaining stages and passed as printed.

4. THE INTEGRITY COMMISSION BILL 1991 - Bill No. 19/1991
published 1991-09-14

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the establishment of an Integrity Commission for the purpose of receiving complaints against persons to whom the Act applies, to investigate breaches of the Code of Conduct and to receive a sworn declaration of all assets from any person to whom the Code of Conduct applies; to provide for a Committee to which the receipt of all gifts shall be reported; and for matters connected therewith.

(Read a first time on 1991-09-11)

The motion was put and carried.

The Bill was read a second time and was, thereafter taken through the remaining stages and passed as printed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.50 p.m. on a motion by the Minister in the Ministry of Health the Assembly was adjourned to the 26th September, at 2.00 p.m.

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AMNA ALLY
Presiding Member

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

1991-09-26.