

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE 20TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (1986) OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD

AT 14:00 HRS

ON WEDNESDAY 1986-07-30

IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, GEORGETOWN

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (73)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (61)

Ministers in the Cabinet (10)

Prime Minister (1)

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

Other Vice-President and First Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P., Vice-President, First
Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney General (Absent - on leave)

Other Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P., Vice-President, National Mobilisation,
and Deputy Prime Minister (Absent - on leave)

Cde. Viola V. Burnham, O.R., M.P., Vice-President, Education and
Social Development, and Deputy Prime Minister

Other Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. W.A.L.H. Parris, C.C.H., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister, Planning
and Development (Absent - on leave)

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P., Deputy Prime Minister, Agriculture (Absent)

Senior Ministers (4)

Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs

*Cde. C.B. Greenidge, M.P., Minister of Finance

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P., Minister of Transport

*Cde. W.S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P., Minister of Trade (Absent - on leave)

Other Ministers (11)

Senior Ministers (3)

Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., Minister of Manpower, Housing and
Environment (Absent - on leave)

Cde. Dr. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P., Minister of Health

Cde. Yvonne V. Harewood-Benn, M.P., Minister of Information and the
Public Service

Ministers (4)

Cde. Urmia E.H. Johnson, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of
National Mobilisation

*Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P., Minister of Youth and Sport within
the Ministry of Education (Absent)

Cde. C.G. Sharma, A.A., J.P., M.P., Minister within the Office of the
President

*Cde. D.M.A. Bernard, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Education

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*Non-elected Member

Ministers of State (4)

- *Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P., Minister of State within the Ministry of Manpower, Housing and Environment
- Cde. J.T. Kissoon, M.P., Minister of State within the Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. D. Sawh, M.P., Minister of State within the Ministry of Forestry
- *Cde. Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P., Minister of State within the Ministry of Planning and Development (Absent - on leave)

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.K. Habibulla, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the President
- Cde. Stella Odie-Ali, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Home Affairs
- *Cde. Jean M.G. Persico, A.A., M.F., Parliamentary Secretary, Education (Absent - on leave)

Government Chief Whip (1)

- Cde. Jennifer A. Ferreira, M.P., Government Chief Whip

Other Members (24)

- Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. Agnes W. Bend-Kirton, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
- Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
- Cde. Joyce Gill-Mingo, M.P.
- Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
- Cde. Bissoondai Beniprashad-Rayman, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. Elaine B. Davidson, M.P.
- Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
- Cde. Joyce M. Munroe, J.P., M.P. r
- Cde. Edwina Melville, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
- Cde. Anna Ally, M.P.
- Cde. L.R. Arthur, M.P.
- Cde. J.R.L. Bovell-Drakes, M.P.
- Cde. N. Calistrø, M.P.
- Cde. G.W. Chin, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. F.M. Cumberbatch, M.P.
- Cde. M.I. Deen, M.P.
- Cde. Cyrilda A. DeJesus, M.P.
- Cde. Edith Deygoo, M.P.
- Cde. Clarice A. Edwards, M.P.
- Cde. C.L. Geddes, M.P.
- Cde. G. Marshall, M.P.
- Cde. B. Persaud, M.P.
- Cde. E.W. Trotman, M.P.

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

- Cde. E. Mohamed, M.P.
- Cde. Rose I. Semple, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

- Cde. Nellie R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
- Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)
- Cde. Bhagmatee Latchminarayan, M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)
- Cde. Y. Khan, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)
- Cde. Enid E. Abrahams, M.S., J.P., M.F. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
- Cde. K. Ally, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
- Cde. Patricia A. Daniel, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)
- Cde. B.L. Domingo, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)
- Cde. S.I. McGarrell, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)
- Cde. M. Stephens, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo) (Absent)

Members of the Minority (11)

(i) People's Progressive Party (8)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P., Minority Leader (Absent - on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (6)

Cde. Janet Jagan, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P., Minority Chief Whip (Absent)

Cde. H. Nokta, M.P.

Cde. I. Basir, M.P. (Absent)

Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, C.C.H., J.P., M.P. (Absent - on leave)

Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P. (Absent)

(iii) Working People's Alliance (1)

Mr. E. Kwayana, M.P.

OFFICERS

Cde. F.A. Narain, A.A., Clerk of the National Assembly

Cde. M.B. Henry, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) Leave

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to Cdes. Chandisingh, Parris, Persico, Bend-Kirton and Mr. M.F. Singh for that day's sitting.

(ii) Acknowledgement of Resolution of Sympathy

The Speaker informed Members that he had received from Mrs. Crum Ewing and family an acknowledgement of the Assembly's Resolution passed at the sitting on 4th June, 1986, and in which the Assembly expressed its deep regret at the death of Cde. Alexander Irving Crum Ewing, A.A., Honorary Officer of Parliament and a former Clerk of the Legislature. Mrs. Crum Ewing had asked that her grateful appreciation for the very kind and thoughtful expression of sympathy be conveyed to the Members of the National Assembly.

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(iii) Explanation on the Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker, referring to the debate on the 16th July, 1986 on the motion moved by Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud seeking to make subject to the approval of the National Assembly all upward variations by those in the charges by those Corporations which provide services to the Community, and on his ruling on the question of whether or not a mover of a motion had the right to move an amendment to his motion when replying, informed Members that, as both Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud and the Minority Leader had expressed their disargeement with his ruling, further research had since been done on the matter and advice on the Parliamentary practice had also been sought from the British Parliament.

In support of his ruling, the Speaker pointed out that while paragraph 3 of Standing Order No. 31 had stated that an amendment to a motion might be moved and seconded at any time after the question on the motion had been proposed by the Chair and before it was put at the conclusion of the debate, nevertheless, the provisions of Standing Order No. 33 (which gave the mover of the motion the right to reply at the end of the debate on a motion) must be read in conjunction with Standing Order No. 31(3). He explained that Standing Order No. 33 stipulated that after the mover of the motion had replied, no other Member could speak on the motion except a Minister, who could conclude the debate on a motion which was critical of the Government or reflected adversely on or was calculated to bring discredit upon the Government or a Government Officer. On account of that stipulation it would be out of order for the mover of a motion to move an amendment when replying. The advice received from the British Parliament had confirmed his ruling to be correct.

He further said that he did not refer to the matter only to satisfy Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud and the Minority Leader, but also on account of an article which had appeared in the Mirror Newspaper of Sunday, 20th July, 1986. He quoted excerpts from the article and expressed his dissatisfaction with that type of reporting. He also expressed the hope that the Mirror Newspaper would give a fair and proper report on the matter and report other Members of the Assembly fairly in the future.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

By the Prime Minister:

Annual Report of the Guyana Fire Service
for the year 1985.

(HA: 1/1/3^{TJ})(Circulated)

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

For Written Replies

No. 7 - Foreign Exchange Expended in 1985 - Notice Paper No. 39 published
1986-05-20

By Mr. Kwayana to the Minister of Finance:

QUESTION: Will the Minister say how much was lawful expended by residents in the year 1985 in foreign exchange issued or sold by authorised dealers in Guyana for the following purposes:-

- (a) officials travel by resident Government officials on Government business?

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- (b) payments by Ministries in respect of travel to Guyana by non-residents to attend conferences?
- (c) artificial flowers?
- (d) spare parts for privately owned transport vehicles?
- (e) spares for manufacturing
- (f) spares for agricultural equipment?
- (g) professional services, except medical, delivered within Guyana?
- (h) milk?
- (i) drugs for medical use?

No. 8 - Vehicles Imported - Notice Paper No. 40 published 1986-05-20

By Mr. Kwayana to the Minister of Finance:

- QUESTION:
- (i) Will the Minister say how many vehicles have been imported into Guyana to date, in each year since 1980, in exchange for bauxite sales in counter-trade arrangements?
 - (ii) What types of vehicles were imported under (i) and how many units of each type of vehicle were imported?
 - (iii) What is the total value of the vehicles so imported?

The Speaker informed Members that written answers to the above Questions would have to be circulated at the sitting in accordance with Standing Order No. 18(11). (Note: The answers were not available for circulation).

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MCTIONS

ITEM 1 - AGREEMENTS WITH IMF - Notice Paper No. 19 published 1986-03-06

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That before any other Agreement is signed with the IMF, the terms and conditions be debated in the National Assembly.

Cde. Nokta seconded the motion.

The Minister of Finance and Mr. Kwayana spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud replied.

The Minister of Finance concluded the debate.

The motion was put and negatived.

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ITEM 2 - INCOME TAX RELIEFS - Notice Paper No. 20 published 1986-03-06

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the income tax laws and regulations made no provision for certain dependent relatives over the age of 16 who are unmarried, have no children and are unemployed, even though they are dependent on the tax-payer for living expenses;

AND WHEREAS there are many single-parent families, where one person is the sole provider, but no special tax allowances are made for this human situation;

AND WHEREAS many persons have savings in co-operative societies and credit unions;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That - (i) allowances be given for dependent relatives over the age of 16 once they are unmarried and unemployed;

(ii) an additional personal allowance be given heads of one-parent families,

and

(iii) income tax relief be given on savings in co-operative societies and credit unions.

Cde. Belgrave seconded the motion.

The Minister of Finance and Mr. Kwayana spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud replied.

The Minister of Finance concluded the debate.

The motion was put and negatived.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 16:18 hrs, the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

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RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 16:40 hrs the sitting was resumed.

ITEM 3 - BECOMING A PARTY TO THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO INTERNATIONAL COVENANT - Notice Paper No. 22 published 1986-03-13

Cde. Janet Jagan moved the following motion:

WHEREAS Guyana is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but not to the Optional Protocol to the Covenant;

AND WHEREAS the Optional Protocol to the Covenant makes provision for individuals claiming to be victims of violations of any of the rights set forth in the Covenant to submit communications to the Human Rights Committee established under the Covenant, and for that Committee to receive and consider such communications from such individuals, but only if the State against which the violations is alleged is also a party to the Optional Protocol;

AND WHEREAS Article 42 of Part IV of the Covenant provides that if a matter referred to the Committee is not resolved to the satisfaction of the States Parties concerned, the Committee may, with the prior consent of the States Parties concerned, appoint as ad hoc Conciliation Commission (consisting of five persons acceptable to the States Parties concerned) whose good offices shall be made available to the State Parties concerned with a view to an amicable solution of the matter on the basis of respect for the Covenant;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls upon the Government to avail itself of the provisions of the Optional Protocol by becoming a party to it as a matter of urgency.

The Deputy Speaker seconded the motion.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Kwayana spoke to the motion.

Thereafter Cde. J. Jagan replied.

The motion was put and negatived.

ITEM 4 - POLICY OF MEDIA - Notice Paper No. 34 published 1986-04-17

Mr Kwayana moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That in the opinion of this Assembly the state owned media should fully uphold in theory and practice the fundamental rights of the Constitution and in particular the right to freedom of expression as provided by Article 146 of the Constitution;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That a Media Council, with all sections of political opinion equally represented, be established as the authority on policy of all state owned media;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the required legislation, while guaranteeing equal access to state owned press and electronic media of all shades of opinion should -

- (a) persuade all media, state owned and private, to implement within their resources the right of reply; and
- (b) guarantee the Government of the day adequate space for the communication of information and the expression of opinion, without a monopoly or semi-monopoly of providing information and expressing opinion.

Cde. Belgrave seconded the motion.

Cdes. Bovell-Drakes and J. Jagan spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Mr. Kwayana replied.

The Minister of Information and the Public Service concluded the debate.

The motion was put and negatived.

ITEM 5 - LOCAL AUTHORITIES ELECTIONS - Notice Paper No. 34 published 1986-04-17

Mr. Kwayana moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Chapter 28:06 of the Laws of Guyana, namely the Local Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Act and any Act or Order providing for the further postponement of elections of local authorities are repugnant to Article 12 of the Constitution of Guyana and should be repealed;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the rules of conduct for elections to local authorities and the conditions under which they shall be held be debated in the National Assembly and be subject to the unanimous vote of the Assembly.

Cde. J. Jagan seconded the motion.

The Minister within the Ministry of Education spoke to the motion and moved the following amendment:-

Deletion of the word "unanimous" in the second Resolved Clause.

The Deputy Speaker spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Mr. Kwayana replied.

The Prime Minister concluded the debate.

The amendment was put and carried.

Thereafter, the motion ~~as~~ amendment was put and carried.

ITEM 6 - DEVALUATIONS OF THE GUYANA DOLLAR - Notice Paper No. 36 published 1986-04-17

Cde. J. Jagan, on behalf of the Minority Leader, moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly condemns the devaluations of the Guyana dollar which have so far resulted in the fall in its value from US\$1.00 = G\$3.03 at 10th January, 1984 to G\$4.15 at 8th April, 1986;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That there should be no further devaluation unless and until it had been debated in the National Assembly.

The Deputy Speaker seconded the motion.

The Minister of Finance spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Cde. J. Jagan replied.

The motion was put ~~and~~ negated.

ITEM 7 - ATTACKS ON LIBYA - Notice Paper No. 38 published 1986-04-18

Cde. J. Jagan, on behalf of the Minority Leader, moved the following motion.

WHEREAS US warplanes on Tuesday, April 15, 1986, bombed targets in Libya, killing and injuring military and civilian personnel;

AND WHEREAS this aggressive action is a clear violation of international law and has had the immediate effect of increasing tension in the Middle East and the world;

AND WHEREAS it has been stated in Washington that the US is prepared to do so again "if necessary":

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly deplores this unlawful bombing of a member state of the United Nations and calls upon the Government to condemn it at the United Nations and in all other international forums.

The Deputy Speaker seconded the motion.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke to the motion and moved the following amendment:-

Substitution of the following for all the words appearing after the first "WHEREAS":

Art. 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations requires all Members to "refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations";

WHEREAS the international community has condemned all acts of terrorism, whether perpetrated by individuals, groups or states;

WHEREAS the General Assembly of the United Nations has by Resolution 39/159 of 1984 taken a firm position against state terrorism;

WHEREAS on Tuesday, 15 April 1986, the United States of America launched an armed attack against the territory of the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya leading to loss of life and property;

WHEREAS this armed attack, allegedly undertaken by way of self-defence under Art. 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, has serious implications for peace in the Middle East and the world;

AND WHEREAS the United States authorities have stated that the United States is prepared to attack the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya again if necessary:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly -

- (i) expresses its abhorrence of all acts of terrorism;
- (ii) regrets the resort to armed force by the United States of America to settle its differences with the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya;
- (iii) regrets in particular that the United States of America, a permanent member of the Security Council of the United Nations, did not take any complaint against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the Security Council which has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security;
and
- (iv) approves of the steps taken by the Government, in concert with the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations, to secure full respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States and for the settlement of disputes and differences of opinion between States by peaceful means.

Mr. Kwayana spoke to the motion.

Cde. J. Jagan spoke to the amendment and moved the following amendments to the amendment of the Minister of Foreign Affairs:-

- (i) Substitution of the word "condemns" for the word "regrets" in paragraph (ii) of the Resolved Clause.
- (ii) Substitution of the word "deplores" for the word "regrets" in paragraph (iii) of the Resolved Clause.
- (iii) Deletion of paragraph (iv) of the Resolved Clause and substitution of the following therefor:
 - "(iv) calls on the Government to condemn the US attack on Libya in the United Nations and in all other international forums."

The Deputy Speaker seconded the amendment.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs spoke on Cde. J. Jagan's amendments.

Cde. J. Jagan's amendments were put and negatived.

The amendment by the Minister of Foreign Affairs was put and carried.

Thereafter the motion as amended was put and carried.

BILL - Second and Third Readings

ITEM 8 - INTERPRETATION AND GENERAL CLAUSES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1986 -
Bill No. 10/1986 published 1986-07-19

The Prime Minister, on behalf of the Vice-President, First Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney General, moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A Bill intituled An Act to amend the
Interpretation and General Clauses
Act.

The motion was put and carried.

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

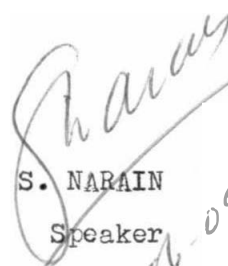
Recess for the National Assembly

The Speaker reminded Members that the National Assembly would be in recess from 10th August to 10th October and it appeared that that sitting would be the last before the commencement of the recess period.

He extended best wishes to all Members.

ADJOURNMENT

At 20:12 hrs, on a motion by the Minister of Information and the Public Service, the Assembly was adjourned to a date to be fixed.


S. NARAIN
Speaker
86-09-25

PARLIAMENT OFFICE
Public Buildings
Georgetown.

1986-09-25