

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 09]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1982) OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

12 th Sitting	14:00 hrs	Thursday, 1982-08-19
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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (75)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (62)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P.,
Prime Minister

Other Vice Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Narain, A.A., M.P.,
Vice – President, Works, Transport and Housing

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,
Vice – President, Economic Planning and Finance (Absent – on leave)

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
Vice – President, Agriculture

Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P.,
Vice – President, Party and State Matters

Senior Ministers (7)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,
Minister of Education

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
Minister of National and Regional
Development (Absent)

*Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.,
Minister of Internal Trade and
Consumer Protection (Absent)

*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,
Minister of Energy and Mines

*Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

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

*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs

Ministers (7)

Cde. U.E. Johnson, M.P.,
Minister of Co-operatives

Cde. J.N. Maitland – Singh, M.P.,
Minister, in the Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of
Economic Planning and Finance

*Non-elected Member

- *Cde. Y.V. Harewood – Benn, M.P.,
Minister, in the Office of the Prime
Minister
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister, in the Office of the President (Absent)
- *Cde. R.A. Van West – Charles, M.P.,
Minister of Health
- *Cde. K.W.E. Denny, M.P.,
Minister of Labour, Manufacturing
and Industrial Development

Ministers of State (2)

- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State in the Ministry of
Internal Trade and Consumer Protection
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of State for Youth and Sports,
In the Ministry of Education

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend – Kirton – Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Works, Transport and Housing
- Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education
- Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Other Members (26)

- Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
- Cde. M. Armogan,
- Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
- Cde. J.B. Calderia, M.P.
- Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.
- Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. O.E. Clark, M.P.
- Cde. E.B. Davidson, M.P.
- Cde. H. Doobay, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
- Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P. (Absent – on leave)
- Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
- Cde. J. Gill – Mingo, M.P.
- Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
- Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.
- Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.
- Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
- Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.
- Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
- Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.
- Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.
- Cde. H.B. Walcott – Nacimiento, J.P., M.P. - (Absent)
Government Chief Whip
- Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.
- *Non-elected Member

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

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P. (Absent – on Leave)
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Regional No. 1 – Barima/Waini)
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Regional No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam) – (Absent – On leave)
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Cde. I. Chowrimootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cyunui/Mazaruni)
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) Peoples’ Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P.
Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

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

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P.	
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P., Minority Chief Whip	(Absent)
Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.	(Absent)
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.	(Absent)
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.	(Absent)
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.	
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.	
Cde. Dalchand, J.P.	(Absent)

(ii) United Force (2)

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

OFFICERS

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

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:05 hrs

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cdes. Hoyte and Jairam and the honorable member, Mr. Feilden Singh for today's sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

The following papers were laid:

- (a) Annual Report of the Comptroller of Customs and Excise for the year 1980.

- (b) Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order 1982 No. 2, made under section 4 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, on 1982-07-14 and published in the Gazette on 1982-07-17. /The Minister, Finance in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance on behalf of the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance/.

MOTION

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 2

Assembly is in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Cde. Sallahuddin.

The Minister, Finance in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance

(Cde. Sallahuddin): Cde. Chairman, in accordance with Article 171(2) of the Constitution I signify that Cabinet has recommended the following motion for consideration by the National Assembly.

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly approves of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2 of the 1982 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Capital Estimates totalling \$475,000,000 for the period ended 1982-08-10”.

Cde. Chairman, in pursuit of our socialist objective we as a nation has an assumed responsibility for the operation of the major sector of the economy. Included in the major sector are bauxite, sugar and rice which now fall under the management of GUYMINE, GUYSUCO AND G.R.B. respectively. Today these public corporations face difficulties, many of which are financial and many of which are due to the depressed world market and prices particularly for bauxite and sugar. The present state of the world market for these products is known. A good example is the behavior of aluminum on the London Metal Market. In 1982 the price is but US45 cents per pound while in 1980 the price stood at US80.8 cents per pound. I may mention just in passing that a few months ago the price of sugar in the world market fell to the record low of £95 per ton.

14:10 hrs

(Cde. Sallahuddin continues)

To cover the decrease earnings of these Corporations, these agencies have had to borrow from the local banking system to finance the local costs of their operations. But it is important to understand clearly the reasons underlying the proposed equity input by the Central Government into the Corporations which operate in the three major sectors; bauxite, sugar and rice.

The Central Government has two separate but related responsibilities with respect to these Corporations. First, as owner on behalf of the people of Guyana, we as a Government must insist that each of the Corporations conducts its affairs with a managerial effectiveness which accords with financial prudence and tidiness. In this respect we have conducted several analyses which have highlighted the fact that non-working capital needs have been financed through the short term borrowing device of commercial bank overdrafts. Such needs, we contend, should be financed through other devices such as equity or medium or long term loans. The financial statements of the Corporations would then reflect clearly and properly the disposition of resources in the working of the Corporation. Accordingly, the equity contribution which we seek to effect by the passage of this Financial Paper in the Assembly this afternoon is an insistence by the Central Government as owner on behalf of the people on a tidy system of financial accountability.

There is another important consideration which underlies this Paper. As the fiscal and monetary authority of the country, the Central Government has the responsibility for controlling and, from time to time, for reviewing the growth of the money supply. To allow the unfettered growth of the money supply through the near automatic mechanism of the major Corporations drawing through overdraft on the resources of the banking system is almost to abandon this monetary function. Thus, another objective of the equity contribution is that of placing the Central Government in a position of being able to see clearly and to control how the activities of the major Corporations are affecting one aspect of the money supply growth. It is therefore the intention to establish clear limits of over draft accommodation by the commercial banking system to these Corporations. These limits, once set, we would ensure that they are rigorously observed by the respective managements.

In summary, therefore, the exercise of equity contribution does not represent the creation of new financial resources. Rather, it is a transfer of indebtedness to the banking system from the Corporations to the shoulder of the Central Government. No new resources are being generated. The Central Government is not finding new money from any source. It now becomes the responsibility of the Corporations and their subject Ministries to pursue overdraft management in accordance with their truly working capital needs. The Government will be liaising closely with the individual Corporations and the individual commercial banks to ensure that the system pursues this aspect of efficient financial management.

It is with these objectives in mind and within the present context of our economic difficulties that we seek the passage of this Financial Paper during through the Assembly.

Motion proposed.

The Chairman: We will now consider the proposals in the Financial Paper. There are four items, two relating to Agriculture and two to Energy. I do not know if it is the wish of the Assembly that we will do items 1 and 2 together and 3 and 4 together, or if you prefer to have them done independently.

[Comrades and Hon. Member indicated in the affirmative]

The Chairman: I propose items 1 and 2. Dr. Jagan.

The Minority Leader: (Cde. Dr. Jagan): I was going to deal with all the items together –

The Chairman: No, I will deal with items 1 and 2 which is Agriculture and then we will do items 3 and 4 because they are different subject matters to be answered. I will take items 1 and 2 now.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: I listened to the Minister very carefully in his presentation and basically one gets the impression that the Government finds itself in a position where these State Corporations are virtually bankrupt and agencies to which they are indebted refusing to permit them any further loans. The Minister put good colouring to it by saying that they want to effect tidiness in fiscal responsibility and to bring out managerial effectiveness and so on. He mentioned also that this exercise is due to the fact largely because of external factors such as depressed world markets. Clearly, this is only one factor, one of a series of factors which have led to this bankrupt situation.

The time has come for the Government to discontinue this kind of exercise, a slight-of-hand, three-card tricks exercise, and try to find some way out of the very serious crisis facing this country.

Effective management has to do not only with people but it has to do with the selection of those persons as well a appointment and promotion. We have constantly referred to the question of discrimination in appointment and promotion. When is that going to stop? When are nepotism and discrimination going to stop? Then there is the question of markets. We have there too to see where we are marketing our products. In the case of the two, we are dealing first if all with Agriculture, we have no problems there. Perhaps we will come to this –

The Chairman: Dr. Jagan, you were suggesting you would like to deal with 3 and 4 as well?

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Yes.

The Chairman: Alright, go ahead.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: In the case of bauxite, we know that the sale agent of this Government is Phillip Brothers;

(Cde. Dr. Jagan continues)

a company, a US company, which is closely tied up with South African based giant monopoly Anglo-American Corporation. We know the position taken by the Government so far as apartheid is concerned. Yet, the Government refuses to take a stand on this fundamental question of racism and apartheid. It supports resolutions in the United Nations and elsewhere, but when it comes to effective action – not to have dealings with this body, it continues on the other hand to work through Phillipp Brothers.

We are told that imperialist pressures are being placed on this Government. Everyday we are being told about this. What do you expect? If you have an imperialist agency looking after your bauxite, trying to find markets and best prices, working hand in glove, being an agency of imperialism, what do you expect? And yet you complain. Cde. Speaker, there is no logic in that argument. Therefore, let us look at all the things which are causing the difficulties to these corporations. Let us try to correct them one by one:

- (1) Get rid of Phillipp Brothers – this will be in keeping with the wishes of the Guyanese people and the declarations of the ruling party and Government so far as apartheid and South African racism are concerned.
- (2) We say we should have effective management by stopping number one, the continuing policy of racial and political discrimination which is going on. The subversion of the state institution such as Public Service Commission, Police Service Commission, Judicial Service Commission and Teaching Service Commission must be stopped!

Right now, the Trade Union Congress remarked the other day that in the retrenchment exercises which took place there was discrimination. I am taking up with the Prime Minister right now, the case of a Teacher who has about twenty years service – no fault found with his work and he is dismissed because he does not belong to the ruling party. How are you going to get effective action when these things go on.

We now come to the other question which the Government pays lip service to and this refers to the area of the Minister of Labour. That is worker's control. No use telling us we are pursuing socialist objectives. Ask all the ideologs on that side who understand anything about socialism. How do you build socialism? Through worker's control. Not only state ownership of enterprises but through workers control. Where is there workers' control? The Labour Minister is an expert on this question. He has read a lot about it. He has been to the Soviet Union. He has seen how it works. Why is it the Government is unwilling to exercise this. Why?

We say bring in workers control in all state Corporations. If you do not want to do it in the private areas, we say start now because the difficulties facing these companies are not only markets. If you produce inefficiently, your cost will be too high. If you produce inefficiently, you will not be competitive.

The Vice President told us in his budget statement that we lost bauxite markets because we could not meet the suppliers' wishes and maintain our obligations under contracts which had been made. Therefore, let us try to put the things which need to be corrected in order first.

We know that the IMF ceilings have been broken continuously. They have not been met largely because of stagnation in production and productivity and this has nothing to do with the markets. It has to do with production and productivity. Therefore, trying ceilings such as overdraft ceilings have been exceeded. Why? Because the Corporations are not managed properly.

Recently, we heard in the newspapers of the terrific losses being made due to bribery, corruption

all over the place in the Rice Board; at Mahaicony Abary, in Wakenaam and elsewhere. Mr. Speaker, how many times have you not heard me speak about corruption there, the mismanagement in the Rice Marketing Board etc. Have we lost markets for rice because the prices have gone down? Why is it today the Americans are taking over our markets in Jamaica? Not only with food gifts, but also thirty percent of Jamaica's requirements in ordinary rice was sold by the United States because we cannot supply it. Look at Barbados. People have told me that Guyanese rice is in a bag in a corner somewhere and other packaged rice is all over the shelves. When you look at the bagged rice from Guyana, it is like dog rice. That is what they have done to the rice industry. How could you come and tell us you are pursuing socialist objectives? What has happened to the R.P.A?

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to repeat the facts of life. Despite the difficulties during the seven years of the P.P.P. Government rice production was increased by 74%, sugar and bauxite by 50%. Forget price for the moment. Had they continued at that rate of progress, they should have exceeded it because of all the loans that they have got and all the other advantages which came from independence. Where you could diversify your markets, where you could have all kinds of other facilities. What is the position? No markets. Production is where they are failing. Therefore, all these slight of hand tricks are not going to help us at the moment.

There is also the callous stupidity Cde. Speaker, where they are converting rice into flour and stopping the importation of flour. O.K. let us take the arguments. We do not have foreign exchange. Therefore we cannot buy flour. Rice is earning foreign exchange. It may not be American dollars but it is still foreign exchange. Foreign exchange earned in the Caribbean can be used to buy fertilisers and oil from Trinidad.

Cde. Speaker, there are other ways of getting wheat too. There are such things as triangular trade. When we negotiate a deal with the Cubans, we sold them rice, we sold them timber. We did not want sugar but we could have got a generator and cement to build a hydro station. Through their sale of sugar to the Soviet Union they could have get the generators and all the equipment necessary for the hydro project at Tiger Hill.

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Therefore, had they used their brains, for which they are being paid for so highly, then we would not have been in this mess, this stupidity, of converting rice which you could sell outside, not only in the West Indies. There are markets elsewhere in the world, not in the United States only. Petro dollars are as good as American dollars now. Arab countries want the rice but we cannot supply. This is a fact. And so they continue to grind rice into flour. Maybe the rice is so bad that nobody outside wants it. Maybe that is the explanation. I don't know what other explanation there could be for stopping the importation of flour and converting rice for which there is a ready market.

I notice that the Minister did not say anything about the price of rice in the external market. They have admitted in fact that the price is very, very high. But what is happening? They are losing that market as they lost the bauxite market, the bauxite monopoly, especially in calcined ore. They are losing the rice market in traditional areas where we had exclusive contracts. I want to know how it is that Jamaica can break the contract and buy rice from the United States. Let the Minister answer that. Let them answer this question. How is it that Jamaica is buying rice from the United States, which is contrary to the spirit of agreement which was made by the Guyana Government and which persisted for many years with the Caribbean? I was at one time involved in those discussions and I know. I know the time was when I was involved in that too, when we stopped the Jamaicans from buying "Uncle Ben's" packaged rice because we were in a position to supply them. In fact, our packaged rice then, super rice, was a better quality rice than the U.S. produced "Uncle Ben's."

I repeat: This is an exercise in futility. The Minister says this will not involve any transfer of funds. Obviously, because we have no money. Guyana has no money. They have cut the capital budget; they have cut the current budget. Other charges have been cut by 41 per cent and so this is just a kind of exercise to clean off the slate for the corporations which are heavily indebted at the moment – to clean off the slate and then the corporations will be in a position to borrow again. And when those companies look for money, they will then have to look not to the corporations but to the Guyana Government which is supposed to hold equity.

Cde. Speaker, a day will come when those companies, or those corporations and financial institutions abroad will not go along with this exercise because they will see not only corporations going bankrupt, but also a bankrupt Government. Then equity, all this legerdemain and sleight of hand, will mean nothing. They will all stop. So we repeat: Put your house in order, carry out those things which we have mentioned and last, but not least, diversify your foreign trade, establish close links with the socialist communities and other revolutionary democratic states. Take a firm, not a vacillating, hiding, but a firm anti-imperialist position. Don't only say that you are being attacked by imperialism, take a consistent anti-imperialist position. Show where you stand and that you are resolute about it. I am sure that if you do so you will be helped. Other countries like Ethiopia and Angola and others, which take clear-cut positions, are finding a solution to their problems. However, we are not doing so.

I would urge that the Government give serious consideration to those steps we have proposed.

Finally, I have sent today to the Clerk of the National Assembly a Motion calling for an investigation into the operations of the Guyana Sugar Corporation, the Guyana Rice board, the Guyana Mining Corporation and Guyconstruct. We have read elsewhere that Guyconstruct is bankrupt. We don't know why that is bankrupt. It does not have to do with any external markets. It has contracts from the Government. One state corporation getting contracts from other state corporations and yet it is bankrupt!

This government clearly should resign because of its inefficiency and incompetence. We don't fall for all these tricks.

Secondly, I would like to say this: These Parliamentary Motions that we put, also Questions, are not answered, are not brought up. As you know, Cde. Speaker, I have taken this matter up with you several times. They do not want to bring them up. We hope they will bring this up for discussion and approve of it because this is in the national interest. This is what the financial institutions and the World Bank and others will be in favour of too, to see not only in the words of the Minister that they want managerial effectiveness, but to see that it is done. Some years ago we had a presidential commission to look at the electricity corporation. It was headed by Sir Lionel Luckhoo. You know what he said! Even though it was a Government controlled committee, it made a lot of strictures.

We are saying now: Let it be a Committee from this National Assembly, selected by this body. In the United States if such a Bill were brought to this House it would go to a Select Committee, a finance committee, before investigation is mounted into all the operations of these agencies. There would be public hearings on these Questions. That is how bourgeois democracy works, but this so-called "socialist democracy" or "socialist dictatorship" is operating on the basis of everything below the ground. What they are forced to do is just to give some excuse outside that things are bad. What we want now is a thorough investigation by Committees from this House into all these agencies because I repeat: the Minister is giving glib excuses about external markets. These do not apply to rice; they do not apply to Guyconstruct. There the problem is deeper and that applies also to sugar and bauxite. We need to find out concretely and to put a stop to all the ills which are facing these companies, otherwise I regret to say there are going to be more serious problems in this country.

This country is taking a dangerous turn today. It is succumbing to imperialist pressure and I regret to say the conditions of the working people will inevitably worsen. The class struggle will inevitably sharpen and that will lead to an explosive situation in Guyana.

[Cde. Dr. Jagan continues/

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:40 hrs.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Sufficient people on the side of the Government understand this very well. In the interest of our nation, our country and people, we are asking that such an investigation be mounted now. Bring us into it without hiding anything. Let us not have to read about the corruption at the rice board in the papers. Let us find out where it is and let us see that those people are properly punished and take such steps as may be necessary to bring back these Corporations into bloom and into the full activity so that we can solve the problems of Guyana. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Green

The Vice-President, Agriculture (Cde. Green): Cde. Speaker, I am afraid my good friend, Dr. Jagan, has not said much for me to respond to except that I find once more, his consistency is his inconsistency. In his former remarks he once more charged that this party and Government is succumbing to imperialist pressures while a moment before he proposed solutions characterised and characteristic of his own way, the major imperialist power. I find it a little strange that he should recommend to this Assembly solutions that are consistent with the imperialist mechanism. I would just like to anticipate his motion, Cde. Chairman, and to ensure that in so far as the two Corporations are concerned for which I am responsible – Agriculture – we have over the past few months, been taking a hard look at the Corporations and putting in place mechanisms to ensure that they can function and perform at their optimum efficiency. If the People's Progressive Party has information, they are free to pass this information on to us and we will deal with it. Except in one case, Cde. Chairman, I suspect that we are already touching on some of their friends at the G.R.B.

Cde. Speaker, the Cde. Minister of Finance dealt I felt, effectively with the general situation except may I add that we must not behave in this Assembly as though the depression of the economy is a peculiar or an unusual factor to the state of Guyana. The world is in trouble. The world is in chaos, east, west, north and south. It is significant to the examples given in this honourable house by my good friend, Dr. Cheddi Jagan and suggesting that we eliminate the societies. In fact, the economy of the country is better, and in those two to which he referred, the standard of living and the peace of the people of this country are far superior. Again I find it a little difficult to understand the comparisons he is making. If he means that we must merely shout jargons and be aligned to one power group, let him say so. We take our non-alignment seriously. We take our economic difficulty seriously, and we shall continue to pursue that course. I think he made one other remark about markets which warrants a comment. I suspect he caught himself in the middle of his presentation and did not pursue the question. This party and Government is prepared and in fact, has been pursuing economic intercourse and commercial arrangements with nations in the eastern and western blocks. We do not discriminate when it comes to doing good business and selling our products. We have attempted, since taking Office, to disentangle and disengage ourselves from the traditional Western business difficulties and we have sold our products and will continue to sell our products to East and or to the West provided the terms are reasonable and the prices are right. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Jack, would you like to respond to the items?

The Minister of Energy and Mines. (Cde. Jack): Cde. Chairman, I have a certain feeling of let down because anticipating some serious and searching enquiries, I have fortified myself with a whole set of documents and papers and I can't use any of them now. I would like to say, however, that there seems to be, perhaps, a slight misunderstanding of the presentation made by Cde. Sallahuddin. He was not

saying and did not intend it to be understood that he was saying that this measure before the Assembly was a panacea for all the ills confronting the Corporations herein mentioned. The fact is, however that even from the presentation of the Hon. Leader of the Minority Party, I think if I understand him rightly, and I have been trying very hard to do so, then what he is saying is this is not enough. If he is saying that this is not enough, I would like to say that I agree with him. I always search for times when I could agree with him. But by that same tone he would have impliedly accept that this is one of the things that should be done and, therefore, we would hope to have his support for this measure. It follows from the logic of this argument. I do not want to spend too much time on all the things that have been said, but I think once again, I have to reply to the allegations concerning Phillip Brothers'. These allegations have been made by the Minority Party from time to time over the years. I recall that on one occasion we took great pains to set out the details in structure of Phillip Brothers' and what was it's connection with South African interest. At that time we pointed out that the stock and shares of private/public companies, in the United States, Japan and London are traded on the stock exchange daily if hourly and that the ownership of those shares change hands, and that it is not possible if you are dealing with those sort of companies, to ensure that when you make a contract with them that they share arrangement and the ownership arrangement will not fluctuate and change from time to time. Only recently, we signed a contract with Home Oil. At the time that we signed the contract with Home Oil, it was an independent company. During the life of the very contract by Hiram Walker. This goes on all the time. Big companies like they all either take over other companies or are taken over by other companies and it is a temporary measure. I do not have the whole family tree here, but I did present it and published it. If it would help, I would give instructions that Bidco send an update so that our friends can understand the ramifications and inter-locking nature of the company's structure.

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14:40 hrs.

(Cde. Jack continues)

There are many countries that have interest in a number of related companies. Some companies in steel have interest in bauxite. Some companies in bauxite have interests in coal and so forth. So that once you are dealing with companies of this nature, Phillip Brothers, you cannot ensure that there will be no South African shareholding at all. You cannot be sure of that. When one goes to buy shares on the Stock Exchange nobody asks you “Are you a South African or are you a Guyanese?” They do not ask. As a matter of fact in many cases people can acquire shares even without other people knowing. We do not have a Stock Market here but I am sure the Leader of the Minority Party is well acquainted with how a Stock Market works. I would like to believe that.

Now, Cde. Speaker, there has been mention of the necessity for us to have economic relations with socialist countries. Again they are preaching to the converted. We do have growing relationships with socialist countries. As a matter of fact if I am correct we are having a team from the G.D.R. coming in tomorrow night. I am sure that Dr. Jagan will meet some of these people. He probably knows they are on their way. We will be discussing economic matters with them. So that it is not true to say or even to suggest that we are turning our backs on socialist countries. What we have said is that we will continue to try and develop our economic and trade links with both East and the West and this is what a number of countries have done. With respect to the two countries that were mentioned by the honourable Member of the Minority Party I would like to say this publicly, that we on this side of this House have the highest regard for the revolutionary struggle with those people of those countries. But I must share the views of my colleague, Cde. Green, that those countries are not really examples for us in our own situation and it is perhaps significant that the two countries were chosen which as far as I know have not been visited by the Leader of the Minority Party. It is always good when you actually go and see and not just read reports coming out of journals and newspapers.

I do not think that there is a necessity to say much more except this, that I can give the House the assurance that we are carrying out a serious evaluation of the operations of Guyconstruct and of GUYMINE and that this measure here is a result of that on-going evaluation. It is part and parcel of the new measures which we intend to put in place.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of all the items.

Question –

“That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2 of 1982, Supplementary Estimates for the period August 10, 1982, totalling \$475,000,000
put, and agree to.

Assembly resumed.

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Speaker, I beg to report that this Committee of Supply has approved of the proposals set out in the Financial Paper No. 2 of 1982 and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

BILLS – SECOND READINGSNATIONAL ARCHIVES OF GUYANA BILL 1982

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to make provision for the establishment of the National Archives of Guyana and for other matters relating thereto.” [The Minister, in the Office of the Prime Minister.]

The Minister, in the Office of the Prime Minister (Cde. Y. Harewood-Benn): Cde. Speaker, on behalf of the Cde. Prime Minister I beg to move the second reading of the National Archives Bill 1982. This Bill is a very straight forward one. It seeks to establish a department of National Archives consisting of the Archivist and other personnel as may be necessary. It also sets out the functions of the Archivist, which include the direction management of the Archives as well as preservation, description, classification and management of Public Archives. It also makes provision for the appointment of an Advisory Committee to advise the Minister on matters of general archival policy.

This Bill seeks to place Guyana in the position whereby the organisation and administration of our archival heritage can be brought in line with current practice among the nations of the world. This Bill is in total conformity with the international position of archival policy because many countries previously without a coherent archival legislation, have now become endowed with laws establishing the bases of administrative organisation and the rationale of archives.

Our Cde. Leader has said that a country without its own history and its own heroes would find it difficult to survive. Vice-President Hoyte echoed these sentiments when at the opening of the building in Main Street which now houses part of our archives, he urged the need to create our own heroes “as we unseal the treasury of our ancestors’ merits and as we uncover the mighty monuments of their works and achievements”. These statements, Cde. Speaker, underline the importance and extremely pivotal role which an effective archival agency can and must perform. It is a role involving inspiration, it is a role involving motivation. We must be in a position where our very worthwhile legacies are maintained in order to inspire all who come behind.

The staff at the Archives have been performing in the past but their task was made much less effective than it could be by the lack of a legal basis for their performance. This law seeks to provide that necessary legal basis. The Government, I submit, Cde. Speaker, has demonstrated their commitment to develop an effective system. You know the traditional quarters at the former RACS building. There have been some more amenities. There is no argument at all that very much more is necessary if we are to be effective, if we are to be efficient. This Bill, providing the scope for organisations, providing the scope for more effective system of operation I submit will certainly help in this thrust. Thank you.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY15:00 hrs.Question proposed.The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: There can be doubt, sir, that the legal status of such an organisation is necessary especially at this time. But one word of warning. At least if I did not say so at this stage it would have been a grave omission. Having regard to our seventeen years of experience with this Government, this Party. The hon. Mover of the Bill referred to the Advisory Committee. Our experience of Advisory Committees in the past, all of them with very few exceptions, has been hacks of the ruling Party. The Archivist and archival activities require special knowledge and dedication and I will not be surprised to see that party hacks drawn from here, there and everywhere are sitting on this Archival Advisory Committee.

I would urge the hon. Minister and those responsible for this important institution to see that no political gimmicks are played and that the people who are appointed are people who are Guyanese endowed with the ability, the responsibility and the dedication to see that there are no twists.

My own experience in the Archives – and you know how often we have criticised the existence of the Archives at the Police Station. I am not talking about police interference, I am talking about interference from the Archivist and those employed there where certain people who do not meet their requirements, politically, are frustrated when they go there to do research. I hope the Archives is going to be an institution and the institution will be broad and will allow all Guyanese of whatever persuasion; political, social or cultural, an opportunity to research and to express what they think so that out of this pattern can come a truly Guyanese record in the Archives we are setting up today.

Question put and agreed to.Bill read a Second time.Assembly in Committee.Bill considered and approved.Assembly resumed.Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time, and passed.GEORGETOWN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce Act. /The Minister of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection./”

The Minister of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection (Cde. Hope): Cde. Speaker, in moving the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce (Amendment) Bill 1982, I wish to remind the Assembly that the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce has been operating in this country for a long number of years and over those years it has always been an institution whose membership was confined to business people in commerce. Within recent times that Chamber has attempted to respond to some of the views expressed by the Government along the lines that the business community should become more and more interested in manufacturing and fabricating in this country using our own raw materials and less and less concentrating on commerce and distribution.

(Cde. Hope continues)

What the Chamber of Commerce has attempted to do within recent years is really to encourage its membership to be more interested in manufacturing and indeed to take under its wings a number of manufacturers. So, today, the manufacturing community has representation not only on their own manufacturing association, but also within the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce.

We feel this has been a very good development and therefore the logical request that the Chamber has made is to seek to have its law, the law government the Chamber amended to change its name basically. To identify the fact or to emphasise the fact that now its interest is beyond commerce and in fact includes industry. This is one of the objectives of the Bill.

Another objective of the Bill is to in fact place certain responsibilities on the shoulders of this organisation the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. So that they would seek actively to encourage their members who are manufacturers to improve and to maintain standards – better standards in the quality of their product. I think this should be a very important function of the institution since now it seeks to be renamed. As our manufacturing enterprises expand the scope of the activity, it certainly becomes more and more important that the question of quality and the maintenance of standards and the supervision of those standards be part and parcel of our institutional building.

One other function that the institution will perform is to encourage the use of goods which are manufactured locally as well as to help in the general search for markets overseas. These are some of the new objectives which the Chamber will now take on which I think will be very relevant to the whole developmental thrust within the country. We feel Cde. Speaker, that the wish that the Chamber be now properly named to reflect its new responsibilities in a valid request. I therefore would like to commend this Bill to the Assembly and accordingly Cde. Speaker, have great pleasure in moving the second reading of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce Amendment Bill 1982.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read a Third time and passed.

PUBLIC CORPORATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Public Corporations Act” /The Minister of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection./

The Speaker: Cde. Hope.

Cde. Hope: Cde. Speaker, a moment ago when the financial paper was being debated it was pointed out that the Public Corporation, the activities and their efforts continuously examined with a view to making changes that were relevant and necessary for the improved performance.

As part of that on going effort, it is proposed that certain changes be made to the Public Corporation’s Act. One of these changes affects the Board of the State Corporations. Until now, the State Corporation Board, at least the Members of that Board have been drawn largely from persons employed, officials within the Corporation and the Chairman of the Corporation was also drawn from within the relevant corporation.

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One of the changes which we consider would be significant and necessary at this stage is to be able to expand the membership of the board to include not only those relevant officials within the Corporation but also to draw on other people outside the corporation who have the necessary experience and expertise that can be of help in the management of those corporations. This is one of the proposals in the Bill before us. We feel that this will be one way of improving the management structure, improving the monitoring and improving eventually the performance of the Public Corporations.

The other object of this Bill is to provide additional assistance to the President of Guystac. At the moment it is well known that the President of Guystac is the President of Guyana.

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15:20 hrs.

Under the law as it presently exists the President is the Chairman of the Guystac Board which is the overall board managing and giving policy directions to the Corporations as a whole. It is felt that in order to improve the effectiveness at the Guystac level, the President of Guystac would probably need some assistance and since the present law does not provide for another Minister to be placed within the Guystac group, the purpose of this amendment is to give power along those lines. When this Bill is passed the intention would be to have appointed a Minister who would assist the President in the carrying out of his functions in relation to Guystac. One of those functions would be to carry on the chairmanship of the Guyana State Corporation in the place of the President as well as to carry out other functions which the President may allocate from time to time.

We feel that these two measures are two important steps in this on-going evaluation of what is needed to improve the structure, to improve the management, to improve the control of the state corporations. They are also part and parcel of the effort that we are putting in place now to restructure the Guystac corporations. The object of all of this is to improve performance which would be seen not only in the balance sheet of the corporation but, hopefully, would also be reflected in the quality of service that the corporations give to the people of this country.

With that explanation I beg to move the Second Reading of the Public Corporations (Amendment) Bill 1982.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Cde. Jagan.

The Minority Leader (Cde. Dr. C. Jagan): Cde. Speaker, this Bill seems innocuous but there is more than appears to the eye. Why is it that at this time it is sought to amend the Bill to permit others to come within the Board of management? Is it that these have failed? Is it that those who have to provide the funds are saying: "We are not going along anymore. We are not going to lend you any more money until you put these bankrupt companies into proper shape"? We are aware that the international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the I.M.F, have been virtually pressing the government to retreat, to make more and more concessions.

The first such retreat was the New Investment Code which revered some of the guiding principles set out in the Sophia declaration and that, under pressure, is to be changed further with the World Bank having the opportunity to review the whole code so as to make it more palatable to the capitalists from outside. We have seen a retreat in foreign policy and, basically, let us face the fact that those who sit in Washington now, in the seat of power, want all over the world a capitalist course and they have mounted a worldwide offensive to realise this objective. The initial steps were taken in this country in 1974/6 towards an anti – imperialist position, which could, if properly administered, have laid a basis for socialism. Those steps imperialism would like to have dismantled.

One of the ways in which imperialism works is first of all to have economic intelligence. They now know the guts, the weaknesses, everything about this economy, because the World Bank people and the I.M.F. conduct surveys after surveys. They know everything and because of that knowledge they are armed with all the facts, where to put the pressure, which little sore to press, a little bit more, and that is being done, step by step.

We know from experience of Great Britain when the people after the war gave an overwhelming mandate to the Labour Party at the 1945 elections that they wanted socialism. Churchill, a great national

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hero, a war-time hero, was turned down by the people because the people did not want capitalism, they wanted socialism. What happened? Steel, the railways, road haulage, electricity were nationalised. What happened? It is a classic example. Those steps, good steps, did not lead to socialism because of (1) the vacillating position of the Labour Party and Governments, successive ones, and (2) the fact that the nationalised entities were managed and run for and on behalf of the private capitalists, monopoly capitalists. The nationalised enterprises were managed by the same managers in many cases. For window-dressing purposes some labour Party people were put in and this eventually led to policies being framed in favour of capitalism and also the direction not going along towards socialism. Services such as roads haulage, such as railways, were providing cheap transport to the capitalist sector. The coal industry was bankrupt under Tory Conservative management. They were glad for it to be taken over by the state, but when they were taken over by the state, coal and steel were sold at lower than world market prices to give to the capitalists. The capitalists got more profits out of the coal industry under the state ownership, the so-called “socialism” of the Labour Party than when they were running it.

This is what imperialism is now trying to do in this country. Everywhere pressures are mounted, in domestic policy, in foreign policy. This Government has admitted to the World Bank in documents it has presented after it has been pressed that there will be no more nationalisation in this country.

(Cde. Jagan continues)

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Further, even what is nationalised they will restrict. They will compress them so that they can manage those few well, and who will do the management. This is the statement which they have written to the World Bank after pressure from the world bank. This is what they told the World Bank. “The public sector entities will provide appropriate involvement of well established enterprises, both foreign and local in order to obtain managerial support, technological direction and marketing thrust. Whatever are wherever deemed desirable, the Government will permit equity participation of much foreign and local enterprises.”

This imperialist model of partnership was enunciated in 1970 after many third world countries began to nationalise resources owned by multi-nationals. The U.S. Secretary of State, Douglas Rogers, made a tour of Africa in 1970 and pointed out that American business is prepared to have in partnership, local capital or foreign government, where local capital is not strong enough to buy shares in that country. That was a maneuver to forestall nationalisation so that the people under the new international economic order which was coming in the air, took over national resources to forestall that. This Government moved, in 1970, for meaningful participation in bauxite which was based on the partnership model. From imperialism to nationalisation, and now they are going backward because they are bankrupt.

In management, do you expect capitalists who hate socialism to fund state enterprises to build socialism in the country? Ask Chandi Singh if that is possible, ask Jack, but Jack is gone. They have read some texts on socialism. Ask all of them here. Can you get capitalist managers and boot-lickers and corrupt people who are filling their own pockets, to manage enterprises to ensure not only that there will be profits, but they will get a good reputation and help you to advance to socialism? That is why I said we must not see all these things just as innocuous little Bills coming up before the Assembly. All that is being done here – the Bill I spoke on originally – all these are coming from the pressures of imperialism. Imperialism knows that this country is bankrupt. All the corporations are bankrupt. They do not want to give them anymore money and they want to ensure that they have a Parliamentary Approval so that the state will be liable.

Incidentally, Cde. Speaker, Mr. Jack, the Minister of Mines and Natural Resources gave us a discourse on the way of the stock-exchange. Every school boy knows that. He said that anybody can buy shares in the stock-exchange.

The Speaker: Dr. Jagan, you should have taken your opportunity to reply to him then.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: I could not have spoken then.

The Speaker: Yes, we were in Committee, you could have spoken again.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: I crave your indulgence.

The Speaker: Alright, we are going on good. Go ahead. *[Laughter.]*

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Since I had that opportunity, the fact of the matter, is Phillip Brothers was linked before and after today, with the giant company called Anglo American Corporation in South Africa. In Nkomo’s book, “Imperialism”/Neo-Colonialism” – the last stage of Imperialism” there is a whole chapter on this company. Do not come, therefore, and fool us. If you want to say imperialism will not lend us any money if we kick out Phillip Brothers, say so. If you do not want to say so, keep quiet. But we know that is a fact, because if you do that imperialism will be angry with you.

Guyana is important. The Bauxite of Guyana is strategic. Guyana and Suriname’s bauxite are of a high quality which is used- to use the words of the Americans- to sweeten low grade Bauxite from the

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mines of the United States. It is still strategic. Eighty-six percent of the bauxite come from this area of the world – the Caribbean. That is why they want to hold on to the Caribbean with a little bit of crumbs in the C.B.I. and a lot of bilateral military arrangements. We see all those bilateral agreements are now being manifested in what we see before us here, to change the direction of Guyana so that it will move completely towards a capitalist direction. That is the sum total of all the pressures which are being put on them today. Unfortunately, they continue to talk, using set socialist rhetoric to fool the masses that they are not betraying them. This one has, particularly, to do with management. Management! I repeat what I said at an earlier stage. Effective management does not only come from the managers; effective management will come only when we have democratic nationalisation and workers control. We want to make that point very clear, and we want to bring to the attention of this Assembly, the experience of other countries that you cannot have capitalists to build socialism. Experiences in England and elsewhere have shown that they have sabotaged, they have subverted and they have lost whatever little beginnings were made as was shown in England in the first Labour Government after the war. What very little progress was made, was lost and this led to the defeat, not only to the defeat after six years, the Labour Government which was a landslide victory, but also to the return of the ultra-rightist in the seat of power in England. Mr. Speaker, we would like to oppose this Bill. We oppose it fundamentally. We oppose it because we had the experience here when the nationalisation of Demba took place. They only nationalised Demba because Demba refused to go along with their idea of meaningful participation – their partner-ship model. Demba refused, and they nationalised. When they had made their nationalisation, they announced in this very Assembly that Opposition forces in the Parliament will have representation in the Board of Management. Look at the records. Opposition will have representation in the Board. Out! R.P.A. was running the Board with eleven out of sixteen in the People's Progressive Party's time. When they came in they reduced it to three. Rice Producers Association was reduced to three, now they have none. How is bringing Capitalists from outside going to run it? Let us take the Rice Industry as an example. The Board was run during the war by a fully nominated number of experts. All the big capitalists were running the Board. They were nominated by the colonial government, and what happened? They controlled the price of the rice to the farmers at half the world's price. They gave the farmers half the world's price and it stagnated and strangled the rice industry. That is our historical experience.

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(Cde. Dr. Jagan continues)

That is our historical experience. Therefore I repeat, management is not just a question of putting people who have experience. Of course we want experienced people but we also want committed people, committed. We also want the representatives of workers there because that is also historical experience. If you want to get good management, if you want to get effective management it is not only experts. These people come along here with this kind of thesis that you need, involvement of well established enterprises, both foreign and local. Well established! This morning over the radio I heard it was not working a little while ago, just like its parent over there. Bankrupt. One of the biggest corporations. It is not only a question of management. Many in the United States are going bankrupt. They have a lot of experience in management. Some of the best managers, technocrats and managerial technocratic revolutions was posed at one time as the solution by Dr. Arthur Lewis when he came here. He proposed to us, when he drafted the 1966 – 1972 plan, that all we needed were good managers and then everything will come right. Well we have seen that. That has not done it.

Therefore, if you want to produce results it is vitally important not to have things run from the top bureaucratically. We are not against bureaucrats and technocrats but they must be in constant consultation and under the control of the workers in an enterprise if we are to have success both in management decision making and to stop corruption. That is also eating the sinews of this society. That is what the New Nation said. Management coming from outside or wherever they are coming from is not going to stop that. In fact there is a lot of corruption going on in this country today linked up with the state and private people on that side. Many are becoming millionaires, thus bringing them into the corporations is not going to stop this. It is only giving opportunity for more deals and further development of state capitalism. We, therefore, in principle support efficient management because whether you are going to run private enterprise or state enterprises you have to have management – good manners. But management alone is not the only function of the managers.

Historical experience of those countries which have built socialism proves this. We for the ninth time we refute the argument that the whole world is in crisis which Vice-President Green announced today. We refute that argument. Socialist states are having trouble. Revolutionary Democratic Countries are having trouble. Time Magazine of August 2, 1982 said that the -literacy rate in Nicaragua has risen from 50% to 87% in a little over one year in spite of all its problems. Next, thousand of campesinos (peasants) have received titles to confiscated farmlands. Regan has given the counter-revolutionaries a fund. America is setting up a fund of \$19,000,000 I think it is. This is why they have trouble.

Who is causing trouble for you? Where is the counter-revolutionary? Here the P.P.P. is trying to show you how to build socialism and instead you are taking orders from Wall Street, from the World Bank, from I.M.F. and from imperialism. Therefore, do not tell us that the whole world is in trouble. We know that imperialism is used to sabotage socialist countries, to wreck the revolutionary democratic states and causing all kinds of problems. Consequently, we must sympathise with them, support them and give them solidarity and not come here and condemn them and at the same time make out socialist propaganda for those right-wingers who say there is nothing good in socialism. /Cde. Sallahuddin: Soviet Union sold 300 tons of gold/.

/Cde. Ram Karan: What you want them to do, swallow it? /Laughter/

The Speaker: Comrades, let us finish that. If you start that argument Dr. Jagan will tell you

why they had to sell 300 tons.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: At least they have gold. We have gold too, but we cannot sell it. They have money to buy food. They have money to buy flour.

The Speaker: Let us come back to the Bill.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: These are so bankrupt they are making this country's rice into flour! So we are opposed to these measures not in the simplistic way that it is presented but we are opposed to it in total context of what is happening in Guyana. We repeat, effective management will not come simply by putting in capitalists. If effective management could have solved the problem the U.S.A. today would be Heaven because they are supposed to have the most efficient managers of the world. But they have, as we know, going on to 10% unemployment now. So we merely want to draw to the attention of the Government that merely importing people here is not going to help to resuscitate our economy. We need a lot more than that! What we need try to achieve is to strive for a future which will be one of progress and prosperity for the people of Guyana.

Mr. M.A. Abraham: Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that on this point I will have to differ with my colleague on this side of the Assembly. Cde. Jagan in the sense that if this Bill does facilitate that wee bit more of private enterprise capitalism it will have our unqualified support. I most urgently ask of whoever the President will appoint as Minister Acting that this person gives immediate, I repeat, immediate attention to one of the most vital members of Guystac. I refer in this case to the Guyana Airways Corporation. In spite of what officials of that Corporation may say to the contrary I wish to state that all is far from well with our fleet of GAC Aircraft. All is far from well. Therefore services into the interior are being disrupted for quite a while. Our planes have been breaking down much too frequently for comfort in recent times, in recent weeks. I refer especially to our Avro planes, 748 Hawker Sidley.

This nation is by now fully aware of the near fatal crash of this plane a few weeks ago in Lethem with a full load of passengers. I was one of the many who witnessed that breath-taking, frightening landing.

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(Mr. M.A. Abraham continues)

My friend the hon. Member Cde. Dorrick was there also. Sir, was it a case of a faulty machine or was it a case of pilots? We would like to know. We owe this Assembly and this nation a careful and lucid explanation of what caused that landing that morning. I ask that a thorough investigation be carried out and that we be given every assurance that such a landing does not happen again. The damage, we all know, has run into millions, not to mention what might have happened to the forty-three lives on board. Just a week previous to that, one of these same Avro planes – I am not sure whether it was the same one that crashed – was taking off at full throttle at Timehri Airport bound for Lethem when one of the engines conked out. There was panic on board the aircraft. The plane began to zig-zag on the runway. Thanks to the expert handling by the pilots, there was no incident and it came to a standstill.

Last Wednesday, 11th August, the most recent incident occurred, we had another scare in Lethem. I was aboard that flight, hon. Member, Cde. Dorrick, was also aboard that flight. The engine had just begun – as we say in local parlance – to revv up when the next thing we knew is we saw one of the third crew rushing up to the pilot wondering what was happening and some persons were saying that smoke was billowing from the right engine of the aircraft. Fortunately, there was a technician on board and with his help, with his expertise, they were able to take out a spare part from the damaged aircraft and substitute this on to our aircraft. With the expert and wise judgement of Captain Chan-A-Sue, one of our very best pilots still around, we took off from Timehri and we landed safely. There were many on board the plane that night, traveling with their hearts in their hands, not the least being myself.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what exactly is the position. Do we have adequate spare parts to keep our aircraft safely in the air?

The Speaker: Mr. Abraham, your whole contribution up to this point is not very relevant to the Bill before us, but seeing you do not speak frequently I was giving you an opportunity to do that. But I am afraid I would not be able to allow you to continue on the G.A.C. matter much longer. If you would like to address your mind to some other relevant portion of the Bill, I will certainly be glad to hear you.

Mr. Abraham: Just to complete on the same matter of the Guyana Airways, I am informed that we are losing our technicians at Timehri very rapidly and one of the reasons, I am told, is because they are very dissatisfied with their small salaries. If Government could try its very best to give these people better salaries and let us keep them at home, I think we stand not to lose at all.

The Speaker: Cde. Hope.

Cde. Hope: (replying): Cde. Speaker, both the comments made by Dr. Jagan and Mr. Abraham are based on a complete misconception and misunderstanding of the Bill. There is nothing in this Bill to suggest in any way whatsoever that its purpose, its intention or its effect would be a re-introduction of private enterprise in the Public Corporations. I do not think I can offer any solace to Mr. Abraham with respect to the private sector and this Bill. I would like to say to Dr. Jagan that this Bill seeks merely to expand the membership of the Board beyond the members of the Corporation concerned, to take people from outside, from other Public Corporations or other members of the Guyanese public to be members of the Board. We have that arrangement right now in a number of our financial enterprises,

The membership of the Co-op Bank spreads widely over the community. The membership of Gaibank spreads very widely over the community. When we enable that to be done, by no stretch of imagination could we be said to be aiding the expansion of the private sector or giving an opening to the

external private sector to come into the Public Corporations. Therefore I say the comments of Dr. Jagan are based on this complete misconception.

It is also illogical, because how could Dr. Jagan at the same time complain that members of the Opposition are not on these Boards if, in fact, he is suspicious and would oppose the expansion of the Board to enable membership from people outside the Public Corporations concerned. It does seem to me that Dr. Jagan in his usual inconsistent way is, in fact, complaining of this problem and at the same time opposing the means by which this can be done. I am not saying it will be done, but the means by which it can be done.

Dr. Jagan sees in this Bill an effort to de-nationalise. I am saying, despite the various utterances of Dr. Jagan in this past and even now, he is not in a position to say anything or castigate this Government with respect to nationalisation. This Government has a very impressive record of bringing the commanding heights of this economy – words which we used in the old days – within the public sector and it is this same Dr. Jagan, we all will recall and the records will show, who in 1970 gave the assurance to the President of the United States that he will not nationalise either the sugar industry or the bauxite industry. How then he could be saying that he sees in this Bill efforts to de-nationalise the Public Corporations. He did regale us with the history of the fortunes of the Labour Party in Britain. But we are not dealing with Britain, we are dealing with Guyana; we are not dealing with the Labour Party, we are dealing with the People's National Congress.

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(Cde. Hope continues)

I cannot see what was the relevance of that long he gave us on the fortunes of the Labour Party and Government.

Cde. Chairman, to say that the Government has said here or anywhere that it intends to bring back the imperialist in this country, that the Government intends to de-nationalise critical industries or any industry whatsoever within this country is clearly wrong, and inaccurate. Very clearly, it was almost three months ago that the General Council which is the highest forum of our party before or in between congresses did agree that this Government, this Party has no intention to change its present course. I think these things are important and they need-----

/Interruption by the Speaker/

The Speaker: Cde. Hope, it is two minutes to four. I would like to know whether the Assembly will like us to continue all the matters on the agenda or we take the break.

/Pause/

If nobody would answer, I would do what I like to do. If I am not getting any consensus I will adjourn.

Comrades and honourable member indicated in the affirmative.

The Speaker: O.K. we will continue. Cde. Hope.

Cde. Hope: I was saying Cde. Speaker, that these are the records so far as the P.N.C. is concerned and nothing in that record can lead us to believe or any reasonable person to assume that the Government is in the course of handing back our nationalised industries to foreign trans-nationals. I was saying Cde. Speaker, that those were the points raised.

I will deal with one other aspect and that is the investment code. It is true that the investment code is to be reviewed. Cde. Speaker, since that investment code was promulgated and efforts were made to explain it to the public, I think our public producers within this country have been saying that there are parts of that code which was not clear to them. They thought they observed ambiguities. It is the function of this review which is really done in deference to our private enterprise – it is the function of that review to clarify what was thought to be ambiguities and again it has nothing to do with this bill.

As I said this Bill is purely to do two things, one – to extend the board so as to make it possible for persons outside of the Public Corporation themselves to be members of the board and two – to offer ministerial assistance to the present President of Guystac.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read a Third time and passed.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (DISQUALIFICATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the National Assembly (Disqualification) Act.”

/The Minister of Home Affairs/

The Speaker: Cde. Thomas.

The Minister of Home Affairs: (Cde. Thomas): Cde. Speaker, in moving the second reading of the National Assembly Disqualification Amendment Bill 1982, I would like to state that this simplistic measure really seeks to up date the law concerning the grounds in which a person is disqualified for membership for the National Assembly. Under section 2: A of the National Assembly Disqualification Act, which this Bill really seeks to amend, a person is disqualified from membership from the National Assembly while he holds or acts in any office of emolument in a civic capacity in the service of Government. The holder of such an office has always been considered as a person in the traditional public service of the country.

Under article 232 of the Constitution a definition is given for public service and that definition is service of the Government of Guyana in a civic capacity. It was so defined in the 1966 Constitution and also in the 1961 Constitution of Guyana. Therefore, when the National Assembly Disqualification Act was enacted in 1961 with the title Legislation Disqualification Ordinance, it was clear that only persons in the traditional public service were disqualified for membership of the National Assembly. Members or Officers of Public Corporation or corporate bodies in which the controlling interest vest in the state or in any agency on behalf of the state do not fall in that category of holders of public office under the Constitution.

The inclusion of the office of a member of the Guyana Electricity Corporation which was under the Guyana Electricity Corporation Act of 1957 really disqualified for membership of the National Assembly and did not make it abundantly clear. This is done out of abundant caution. The reason was that the Board of the Electricity Corporation then included three senior Government officials who were ex-officio. Now, the Public Corporation's Amendment Act of 1961 amended the Electricity Act and re-constituted the Electricity Corporation as a Corporation constituted in the like manner as if it were a public corporation established under section 46 of the Public Corporation Act, so that the requirement to appoint any official member was removed.

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16.10 p.m.

There is therefore no real necessity now to include the office of a member of the Guyana Electricity Corporation in the Second Schedule to the National Assembly (Disqualification) Act. This bill therefore seeks to make that deletion in the Second Schedule and to declare, for the avoidance of any doubt, that persons in or in the service of a public corporation, or in a corporate body in which the controlling interest vests in the state or in any agency on behalf of the state, are not disqualified for membership of the National Assembly.

Section 4 of the National Assembly (Disqualification) Act also disqualifies for membership of the Assembly directors or managers of companies which are parties to Government contracts. This is due to the personal interest the directors or managers of such companies may have in those contracts. Directors or managers of companies in which the controlling interest vests in the state or in any agency on behalf of the state have no such personal interest in contracts with Government. We therefore seek to remove the disqualification for membership of the National Assembly from directors or managers of such companies.

As I stated earlier, officers of corporations are not disqualified for membership of the National Assembly. The First Schedule to the National Assembly (Disqualification) Act, however, specifically disqualifies for membership of the National Assembly the Manager of the Guyana Rice Marketing Board, which is now designated as the Guyana Rice Board and the General Manager of the Guyana Rice Corporation, who assets are now vested in the Guyana Rice Board. Therefore there is no justification to disqualify these two officers while not disqualifying other officers of other corporations. The Bill seeks therefore to remove this anomaly by seeking to delete these two officers from the First Schedule and in this and in the other respects mentioned to bring the law really abreast of the time.

It is with those comments that I move the Second Reading of this National Assembly (Disqualification) (Amendment) Bill 1982.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karan.

Cde. Ram Karan: Sir, a little over 50 years ago – I don't think my friend was born then – great tragedy occurred in this country. In this Chamber at that time there was a great protest against action similar to that promulgated by my friend in this Bill. I remember when the Governor used to be surrounded by the Honourable the Nominated Member, Mr. So and So, Director of Public Works, the Honourable Mr. B.R. Woods, Conservator of Forests, the Honourable Archibald McDougall and so on. Then, of course, there were the honourable unofficial nominated members: there were the nominated members, official, and the honourable unofficial nominated members.

In this day and age, the age of democracy, the age where universal suffrage should reflect the members in this Chamber, we have had democracy torn apart from having people sitting here who have not had the support of any part of the electorate. There are all sorts of technocrats here and now you are seeking to bring in the civil servants who are in receipt of emoluments under the crown. I remember the first time I came into this Chamber I had to resign my job as an employee of Government before nomination, long before I was elected. The principles set out in those days, colonial days, were good because you could not at any time speak for two masters at the same time.

What is the reason for the removal of this disqualification from people who are already well appointed to bring them into this Chamber? The tradition has always been there in Parliaments of this kind, going back to the Parliament in Britain, where Ministers speak for subjects under their head. Is the

Hon. Minister of Agriculture incapable? Or is the Hon. Minister of Agriculture not to speak for the Rice Marketing Board? Is the Hon. Minister of Trade – we have just heard him – incapable of speaking for these semi-business corporations? I think we are carrying things a little too far, but my friends the P.N.C. Ministers always cry, “Foul!” They wear their belts on their foreheads and if you attempt to make a blow, they say you are hitting below the belt. But that is not the case; it is an extension of favouritism which we have long deplored in this House. How in the name of God can a man running an organisation like the Rice Marketing Board, which is in deep trouble – one reads of all sorts of rascality taking place there in the silos, on the West Coast, in Mahaicony, even at the Board itself – how can that poor chap, even if he has the competence to administer that Board if he comes and sits here to waste time and drink iced water? What assistance can he give this House? Is the Hon. Minister of Agriculture not competent to hear from him and give answers to Questions? Of course Questions are never answered, so what is the purpose of bringing him here? To administer the Board from here? We ask questions, we move Motions. Sir, you were Chairman of the Constituent Assembly. This is a constitutional question. This is a thing that is imposing a condition which Your Honour did not see when you presided over the Constituent Assembly.

The Speaker: I only wear my glasses.

Cde. Ram Karran: This ought to have been done there so that the people could oppose it. The Constitution was amended in 1980. Here in 1982 we are introducing a constitutional amendment by bringing in people who are in receipt of emoluments under the crown to sit in this Chamber.

[Interruption] Ask my friend the Hon. Attorney General. That is the term he uses in Court. In fact, he said that this Government has enjoyed the powers it received from the crown. I am quoting him. I cannot go wrong if I quote the hon. Attorney General [Laughter.] That is what he said. That is why they will not grant a fiat. It is not an anachronism. I am quoting from the Attorney General. If I go wrong, tell him he is wrong. If they are in receipt of emoluments under the crown, as they say, then they ought not to sit in this august Chamber. That is the defence when they refuse to give fiats to people who have actions against the Government. He said it was the power received from the crown so they cannot pass it. The Attorney General said so in the Supreme Court.

I think that this amendment is a travesty of justice insofar as this House is concerned. It is a blatant attack upon Your honour, who sat as Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, for him to come in this sneaky way to amend the Constitution to say that people whom you have debarred, and whom other Constitutions have debarred, are to come now and do like Guggisberg and say that all the heads of Government Departments must come and sit here. They used to come here with their regalia, dressed in their uniforms, and they used to sit and vote against interests of the people. That is what the Government seeks to do in this alleged attempt to right the wrongs that have been going on in this country for 18 years.

The Guyana Marketing Board has failed. The officer you seek to bring in here has been in Skeldon for a long time.

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16.20 hrs

Cde. Ram Karran: Sir, I do not feel that this side of the Assembly can support it. I feel sir, that the Government will be better advised to withdraw this bit of legislation and let the Parliament go on as it is, limping along as it is until it is changed by the people in a short time.

The Speaker: Cde. Thomas, do you wish to say anything in reply?

Cde. Thomas: With a lot of reluctance, Cde. Speaker, I venture to just make one or two observations based on the arguments of our friend across the table.

The Speaker: The arguments? Are you sure you mean that?

Cde. Thomas: Well, at least we have to recognise that he was on his feet at some stage and I will say right away that nominated members who came to this Assembly in colonial times were nominated and they were top Public Servants who came to represent their particular interest. Now, in our case we are not seeking to bring into the Assembly nominated members who head these Corporations. I am sure he did not understand the Attorney General in court, and he did not read the Bill.

I would like to respond to what was described as democracy torn apart. I understand the predicament of the member because he attempted to talk about democracy torn apart and at the same time spoke in going terms of British Parliament and precedence. Obviously what is torn apart is bourgeois democracy and I want to tell him that even if we were considering the democracy which he attempted to defend, he will recognise, if not remember, that ever since the institution of the first Parliament in the early 13th century, I refer to Simon De Mansfort's Parliament A.D. of 12:15 he will recognise that the intention was to make representation broad based. He said that we seek here to amend the Constitution and I think that should be corrected because under Article 155 of the Constitution – I am sure it is plus six and with your permission I would just refer to it quickly:

“Without prejudice to the provisions of paragraph (1), (2), (3), (4) and (5), Parliament may provide that a person shall not be qualified for election as a member of the National Assembly in any of the following cases, that is to say –“

and it goes on to identify those. So, finally, Cde. Speaker, those are all the matters I can attempt to respond to. [Applause.]

Question put, and agree to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed as printed.

SHOPS (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT) BILL 1982

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Shops (Consolidation) Act.

[The Minister of Labour, Manufacturing and Industrial Development.]

The Speaker: Cde. Denny.

The Minister of Labour, Manufacturing and Industrial Development. (Cde. Denny): Cde. Speaker, at this juncture I beg to move the Shops (Consolidation) Bill 1982, and ask that it be read a Second time. Cde. Speaker, based on my immediate predecessor's visits, that is Cde. Vice-President Green, and my own visits since I became Minister to work places including the Sugar Industry throughout the length and breadth of this country. Views proffered by workers indicate that their levels of production and productivity tend to fall because of the fact that they have to ask for time off from their jobs to go to

get food items including essential ones. Based on that, Cde. Green solicited and canvassed the views of the tripartite - well those involved in the tripartite arrangement in industrial relations. Those involved are C.A.G.I., the T.U.C. and the Government. This Bill is coming from the Government. The T.U.C. agreed, C.A.G.I. had its own doubts, but the point that must be understood, Cde. Chairman, is that this Government in the interest of the working people of the country believes that this amendment is necessary. In the first place, the term 'Shop' is a rather generic term in the context of the Act, Chapter 91:04. Also, we are amending the term 'Urban Area'. Under the old legislation 'Urban Area' referred merely to Georgetown and New Amsterdam, but in this change I am seeking this afternoon, the term 'Urban Area' is expanded to include all the urban centres like Linden, Rosehall and Corriverton, which means that it will be in keeping with the Municipal and Districts Councils Act. Any attempt at this juncture merely to keep it at Georgetown and New Amsterdam Cde. Chairman, in the view of the Government is an anachronistic approach. It is an approach that is designed to turn the clock back.

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(Cde. K. Denny continues)

It is not what I would call the type of change that is in the interest of the working people of this country.

You have two sugar estates, namely Albion/Port Mourant and Skeldon. The argument, Cde. Speaker, might be advanced that the fact that you are causing these shops to open later is that you are imposing hardships on the people. That argument will be illogical because they would have more time to get their goods when they come out of the backdam, having left the backdam two in the afternoon or one, as Ram knows. I do not want to hear the argument that it does not really matter whether they get goods whether we change the hours because goods are not available. I suspect this is a type of specious argument that will come out of the opposition.

The Speaker: Cde. Denny, do not let us go into that. Let us hear what they have to say then you will have an opportunity to reply.

Cde. Denny: Cde. Chairman, I therefore want to indicate that this is designed for people to get all the goods that are available in shops. The term shop is a wide term. So what the bill seeks purely to do is amend the definition of urban areas in the Shops Consolidated Act, Chapter 91:04 and at the same time provide for new opening and closing hours. The new hours proposed are: On Mondays and Fridays only from 9.30 to 18.15 hours. Clearly, this is not a controversial piece of legislation that seeks to amend the principle act.

In the circumstances I wish to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Question put.

Cde. Ram Karran: I wish first of all to congratulate the honourable Minister for his maiden presentation to the Assembly and to express regret that he sought to put in the mouth of his opponents what he thought was the argument. That is not the argument. The argument is this that in the urban areas of Georgetown and New Amsterdam at the moment shops close at 4.00 'o' clock and I compliment the Minister and Government in extending these hours for two days because many people who work from 7 to 4 'o' clock cannot find time to buy the goods they require. But in so far as the sub-urban area of Georgetown and in the almost rural areas in Rosehall and Corriverton the shops at the moment do not close at 4. They close at 7 and on Saturdays very late and the Comrades who come from the rural areas will tell us that.

What we are seeking to do is to retain these hours because those areas even though they are urban on paper are really rural and we are seeking to withdraw from these workers whose production and productivity will certainly fall if on certain days of the week you close your shop at 4.00 p.m. These people, as the Minister knows, do not own refrigerators. They have to leave the backdam, seven miles in some cases, to go and secure goods. All I appeal to the honourable Minister is to accept the amendment because it makes sense and it is more realistic. In all urban areas, even in Bel Air where I live the shops open at 7.00 p.m. It is almost urban. You have the farmers who in the hot sun would prefer to go in the shop and in the late evening when the sun is down, goes and work in the garden. This is applicable only where Georgetown starts. Georgetown starts from 7bed dam in Industry, as they call it Crown dam to Demerara river. You have a large slice of what we call the city. That is completely rural. Most of the people work in the Ogle estate or L.B.I. estate.

For the honourable Minister to withdraw from them the opportunity of purchasing their requirements between the hours of 6 and 7.00 p.m. and to impose on them that they should go to the shop at 4.00 p.m. that to my mind is a hardship. The same is applicable to Rosehall which is a town in name

but is still rural. I know the limitation on the other side protects. The workers cannot work for more than 8 hours unless he gets overtime and whether the hour starts at 7 or 9.00 a.m. and goes on to 7.00 p.m. or whether you start at 7.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. it is the same 8 hours that he got. The law allows for the owner of the shop to pay overtime to these workers if they have to overtime. In the rural areas, as I know the law, you start out early, you have a two or three hour break and it does not matter to the people who live in the area and the shops go to late. That is what I appeal to the honourable Minister to accept. I am sure that when he has spoken to his advisers, particularly those people in the countryside he will see it is not all he tries to impose. In any case the people cannot get the goods whether you make it or not.

The Speaker: Cde. Denny you now have an opportunity to reply to all the observations Cde. Ram Karran put forward.

Cde. Denny: Cde. Speaker, I would request later as I just made the point that the matter be referred to next week Wednesday. Merely to tell my friend that at present the Shops Consolidated Act, Chapter 91:04 dealing with rural areas. As I said on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursday and Fridays the hours are 6.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m. and from 3.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. It would make more hours available for the purpose of shopping. [Interruption]. They are not the only ones in the community. There are children.....

The Speaker: Cde. Denny, you have only one speaker, that is me. Do not worry with Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Denny: What I am pointing out to my colleague is another forum, The Trades Union Movement, is that in terms of the number of hours for the opportunity to buy goods which are available they will have more hours and his argument, Cde. Chairman, does not only appeal to me but I am asking that the matter be deferred so we could have a more indept look and examine if there is any justification in the type of argument that he has advanced.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

The Speaker: I will not go to the Committee stage. I will allow this matter to remain for next Wednesday. I think we will be adjourning to for further consideration as the Minister requested. I have been robbed of the opportunity, Cde. Denny, to congratulate you on piloting your first Bill through. I am sure that next time I will do that.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to Wednesday, 1982-08-25, at 14:00 hrs.”

[Vice – President, Party and State Matters.]

Adjourned accordingly at 16:38 hrs.