

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME 7]

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSIONS OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

172nd Sitting

2p.m.

Thursday, 4th January, 1979

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (62)

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., Speaker

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (45)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

Senior Ministers (12)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives

(Absent)

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Works and Transport

Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House

- Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs (Absent – on leave)
- *Cde. H.Green,
Minister of Health, Housing and Labour (Absent)
- *Cde. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources
- *Cde. F.E. Hope,
Minister of finance (Absent)
- *Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture
- *Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, C.C.H., S.C.,
Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Absent- on leave)
- *Cde. V.R. Teekah,
Minister of Education, Social
Development and Culture (Absent)
- *Cde. R.E. Jackson,
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent)
- *Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A.,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

Ministers (2)

- Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information (Absent- on leave)
- Cde. O.E. Clarke,
Minister – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)

Ministers of State (10)

- Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael
Minister of State- Regional (Rupununi)
- Cde. P. Duncan J.P.,
Minister of State, Ministry of
Economic Development and Co-operatives (Absent)

***Non – elected Ministers**

Cde. C. A. Nascimento,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister

Cde. K.B. Bancroft, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro)

Ced. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequib Coast/West Demerara)

Cde. J.R. Thomas,
Minister of State,
Ministry of Health, Housing and Labour

(Absent – on Leave)

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin
Minister of State, Ministry of
National Development

Cde. S. Persaud,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)

Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman,
Minister of State,
Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. L.A. Durant,
Minister of State – Regional
(North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (5)

Cde. M.M. Ackman, C.C.H.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Office of the Prime Minister,
And government Chief Whip

Cde. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education, Social
Development and Culture

(Absent – on leave)

Cde. E.M. Bynoe,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Trade and
Consumer Protection

Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Economic Development
And Co-operatives

Other Members (14)

Cde. W.G. Carrington

(Absent – on Leave)

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler

Cde. J. Gill

Cde. W. Hussain

Cde. K.M.E. Jonas

Cde. J.G. Ramson

Cde. P.A. Rayman

Cde. A. Salim

Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

Cde. S.H. Sukhu. M.S.

Cde. C Sukul. J.P.

Cde. H.A. Taylor

Cde. L.E. Williams

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen

(Absent)

Members of the Opposition (16)

People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran.
Deputy Speaker

Other Members (12)

Cde. J. Jagan

(Absent)

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., Opposition Chief Whip

Cde. Narbada Persaud	(Absent)
Cde. C. Collymore	(Absent)
Cde. S.F. Mohamed	(Absent)
Cde. I. Basir	
Cde. C.C. Belgrave	
Cde. R. Ally	(Absent)
Cde. Dalchand, J.P	
Cde. Dindayal	(Absent)
Cde. H. Nokta	(Absent)
Cde. P. Sukhai	(Absent)

Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh J.P.	(Absent)
Mr. M.A. Abraham	(Absent)

OFFICERS

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

Acting Deputy clerk of the National Assembly - A. Knight.

The Speaker: Thank you, Comrades Ramsaroop and Jagan.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Erosion on the Essequibo Coast

The Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Kennard): Cde. Speaker, I wish to refer to the problem of erosion on the Guyana coastlands. Our coastlands experience a unique cyclic pattern of accretion and erosion which has been shown to be closely related to the north-westerly movement of shoals or macro-ripples of mud in the off-shore regions. Research has shown these sacro-ripples to have an average wavelength of about 25 miles and a period of about 30 years.

The oceanic coast of Essequibo between La Belle Alliance and Somerset and Berks, that is, a distance of some 11 miles, is now in the erosive phase of this cycle and the central part of this length is undergoing a period of intense erosion. This erosion has resulted since 1977 in small breaches and excessive over-topping of the sea defences in the area. The area to be first affected was at Dartmouth in 1977, and during 1978, the year just ended, at Westbury, Hampton Court and Devonshire Castle. The Government has moved rapidly since 1977 to mobilise resources and to launch a programme to deal with the situation of emergency repairs and the rebuilding of the sea defences in the affected area. Apart from these emergency works, a start was made last year, 1978, with the execution of permanent works to build a massive sea wall in the more vulnerable sections.

During 1978, the British Minister of Overseas Development, Mrs. Judith Hart, and I visited the coast to observe what was taking place and the works in progress. As a result of that visit the British Government has agreed to provide funds to assist in financing the works. To date, the sum of £3½ million sterling has been approved and the British Government has expressed willingness to increase that amount. These overseas funds will be merged with local funds to execute all works in the affected area.

During November and December just passed, unusual high tides have further exacerbated the erosion and, accordingly, the emergency works have had to be intensified. The area of main assault from the sea at the moment is the Hampton Court/Devonshire Castle area where there has been over-topping. Fortunately, there has been no significant damage to property or to agriculture. At the present time mobilization and the execution of works are continuing. Large quantities of stone, cement and a large work force were on the site to grapple with the problem. In addition, orders have been placed overseas for equipment and for large supplies of cement.

The situation is under control but works will have to continue for some time to bring it fully under the technical standard of perfection which our engineers desire in order to ensure permanent protection of the area. We have been able to recruit consultants for this project. We have been able to enter into contracts for the execution of the works, and I wish to give the assurance to residents, farmers of the area, and to this House that everything possible is being done to ensure maximum protection of property in this area.

**REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY
ON DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

Breaches in the sea defences on the Essequibo Coast

Cde. C. Jagan: Cde. Speaker, I wrote to you this morning and saw you in your Office to raise a matter of urgent public importance with respect to the breaches at Hampton Court and Devonshire Castle/Walton Hall in the Essequibo Coast area. Our information is that a dam, nearly 500 to 600 feet, has been washed away at Hampton Court. This is causing flooding not only to that area but to neighbouring areas of Devonshire Castle and possible, also, Walton Hall.

I have with me a letter from residents of Devonshire Castle and Hampton Court including a Member of Parliament, Mr. Isahak Basir which has been written to the Regional Minister, Cde.

Van Sluytman, Minister of State for Agriculture, requesting an urgent meeting to discuss matters pertaining to these breaches, not only at Hampton Court but also at Devonshire Castle where, my information is, there is a breach of about 70 feet and this has caused already, despite some information that came over the radio today that there has been no loss to crops, one thousand acres of rice to be in danger. My further information is that not enough work of an emergency nature is being done. There is not enough material, there are not enough vehicles in the area and if urgent steps are not taken, there can be a tremendous loss to farmers in the area apart from other kinds of losses, livestock, etc. I am speaking about the loss to rice.

In this regard, therefore, I think it will be important for the Government to speak not only to its own Ministers and officials, but also to deal with this matter very urgently by speaking to the residents concerned to see what can be done expeditiously in this matter. One of the individuals, I understand, who is virtually the Prime Minister of the Essequibo Coast, a Mr. Hopkinson --

The Speaker: Dr. Jagan, you cannot go into those details, whether he is the Prime Minister of Essequibo or Berbice. We are dealing with the substantive Motion.

Cde. C. Jagan: "Bhajje" is a well-known character, if not Prime Minister, on the Essequibo Coast and he has indicated - -

The Speaker: I think you missed my point. What I am saying is, that is a matter for debate. You are urging now that I should grant this Motion. Please confine yourself to the very short notes you have made.

Cde. C. Jagan: Why I am saying that this matter is urgent for debate is that an important individual such as Mr. Hopkinson has said that this area should be declared an emergency area and the G.D.P. should be mobilized to do work in the area. These are important considerations

for this important debate. Very often we get wrong information about what is happening in this country. That is why, Cde. Speaker, I urge that we have an adjournment debate on this matter so that all the facts can come out much more fully than the Minister gave them a little while ago.

The Speaker: Cde. Jagan, I have found myself in some difficulty. One of the matters I had not intended to allude to is, for me to permit such a debate to continue, it says clearly, it must be not when facts are in dispute.

We have a statement by the Minister and we had one from you. You are saying it is seventy feet and the Minister is saying five feet. You have a dispute there and then. That in itself disposes of it. But I had not intended to use that as a means of disposal of it. The Minister has said, and I think this is one of the most important points members should pay attention to, that where the grievance is continuing it is not sufficient even if it is of recent occurrence. Here you have heard from the Minister in his statement, and I don't think anybody is going to deny that, that we have a coastal problem all along, not only on the Essequibo but throughout the entire country of Guyana. There are breaches continuing all the time. You have heard of one in 1977 and again in 1978, and of one only a few days ago. It says where the grievance is continuing it is not a sufficient reason. So I regret, therefore, in the light of those constraints, I cannot permit the Motion.

Introduction of Bills

The following Bills were presented and read the First Time: -

(1) Local Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Bill 1978 – Bill No. 26/1978.

[The Minister of Economic Development]

(2) Guyana Forestry Commission Bill 1978 – Bill No. 27/1978. **[The Minister of**

Energy and Natural Resources]

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 8th January, 1979 at 2 p.m.
[The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House]

Adjourned accordingly at 2.38 p.m.
