

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

Volume 10/

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD SESSION (1983) OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

| | | |
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| 17th Sitting | 14:00 hrs | 1983-12-08 |
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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government – People's National Congress (58)

Prime Minister (1)

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

Other Vice-Presidents (4)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,
Vice-President, Production

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
Vice-President, Social Infrastructure

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

*Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
Vice-President and Attorney General

Senior Ministers (6)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,
Minister of Education, Social Development and Culture

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
Minister of National Mobilisation

*Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P., (Absent – on Leave)
Minister of Foreign Affairs

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

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

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

*Non-elected Member

Ministers (7)

Cde. U. E. Johnson, M.P.,
Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister

Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister for Youth and Sports, within the Ministry
of Education, Social Development and Culture

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,
Minister of Transport within the Vice-Presidency
of Social Infrastructure

*Cde. Y.V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Information and Public Service

*Cde. Dr. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,
Minister of Health and Public Welfare

*Cde. K.W.E. Denny, M.P.,
Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives

Ministers of State (2)

Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State within the Ministry of Internal Trade
and Consumer Protection (Absent)

Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.S., M.P.,
Minister of State in the Ministry of Regional
Development

Parliamentary Secretaries (4)

Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Housing, within the
Ministry of Health and Public Welfare

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P., (Absent – on Leave)
Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of
Education, Social Development and Culture

Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the
Prime Minister

Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry
of Agriculture

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. M. Ally, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. M. Armogan, M.S., J.P., M.P.
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.
Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.
Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.
Cde. E. B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
Cde. E. Melville, M.P.
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.
Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.

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

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (9)

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

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's 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

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.

Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.

(Absent)

Cde. I. Basir, M.P.

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

Cde. H. Nokta, M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

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

(Absent – on Leave)

Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

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

PRAYERS

National Assembly

14:00 hrs

OATHS

The Speaker: I will now ask Carl Greenidge.

The oath of office was administer to and made and subscribed by Cde. Carl Greenidge, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, as a Member of the National Assembly.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Thanks to Deputy Speaker

The Speaker: Comrades, and Honourable Members, I would like to take this opportunity of placing on record my sincere thanks to the Deputy Speaker, Cde. Ram Karran, for presiding and conducting the proceedings at the last sitting of the Assembly in my absence.

Congratulations to Cde. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P., Minister of Finance and Economic Planning

The Speaker: I wish also on behalf of the Members of the Assembly and myself to congratulate Cde. Greenidge on his appointment as a Senior Minister and extend to him best wishes in the performance of his responsibilities as Minister of Finance and Economic Planning. [Applause.]

We welcome Cde. Greenidge to the Assembly.

LEAVE

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Jackson up the 12th December, and Cde. Ainsworth up to 15th December.

Death of Mr. Arthur George King

The Speaker: Comrades and Honourable Members, there are on today's Order Paper formal motions of sympathy on the deaths of two persons who have served as Parliamentarians within recent years. A few weeks ago another person who might not have been known to many Members here passed away. He was Arthur George King who served as an Elected Member of the Legislative Council as the representative for the Demerara River Constituency for a period of twelve years from October 1935 to October 1947. I knew Mr. King personally for many years.

As a young man I was articulated to him and had the privilege of benefitting from his knowledge and experience. I am sure that Members would also wish to place on record their regret at his passing. I would like to extend sympathy to the surviving members of his family.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

The Following Papers were laid:

- (a) Financial Paper No. 2/1983 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$55,962,956, for the period ended 1983-10-31. [The Minister of Finance and Economic Planning.]

The Minister of Finance and Economic Planning: (Cde. Greenidge): Cde. Speaker, I beg to present Financial Paper No. 2/1983 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$55,962,956, for the period ended 1983-10-31 and in terms of Standing Order No. 68(1) I name Monday 12th December as the day for consideration of the Financial Paper in The Committee of Supply.

- (b) Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture for the year 1982.
- (c) Annual Report of the East Demerara Water Conservancy Board for the year 1981. [The Vice-President, Production.]

QUESTION TO MINISTERS

Question No. 1

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: (The Deputy Speaker): Sir, I beg to ask Question No. 1 standing in my name.

- QUESTION: (a) How many buildings have been demolished in the Mahaica Hospital Compound in the 1981 – 1982 period?
- (b) What were the buildings used for before demolition?
- (c) To what use were the unsold salvaged materials put?
- (d) What was the amount realised on the materials which were sold?

The Speaker: Cde. Van West-Charles.

The Minister of Health and Public Welfare (Cde. Van West-Charles): Cde. Speaker, in reply to question No. 1 (a) during 1981-1982 seven buildings were demolished five cottages and two – 2 storeyed buildings. (b) The buildings formed part of the Mahaica Hospital Complex.

(c) The materials salvaged were used for the construction of the eight chicken pens 100' x 30', and one pig pen 60' x 12', repairs to other existing buildings and bridges; construction of one plucking house and feed bond; staff changing quarters; two Guard huts and boarding up of the cinema. Some of the materials were donated to rebuild Mora Point Police Outpost.

(d) No materials were sold and the remainders are in the Mahaica Hospital Compound.

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Speaker, I beg to ask the Minister Question 2 standing in my name on the Order Paper.

Question: Will the Minister show income and expenditure at the Mahaica Hospital Cinema on a monthly basis for the period 1981 – 1982?

Cde. Van West-Charles: The income and expenditure for the Mahaica Cinema for the period 1981 – 1982 are as follows:

The Cinema was out of operation for four years and resumed operation on 16th February, 1982:-

| <u>Months</u> | <u>Income</u> | <u>Expenditure</u> |
|---------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| February | \$ 4,098.25 | \$ 2,330.00 |
| March | 9,823.24 | 9,571.90 |
| April | 10,283.84 | 9,891.68 |
| May | 11,490.36 | 12,243.25 |
| June | 8,447.17 | 7,255.00 |
| July | 8,162.70 | 9,237.21 |
| August | 3,631.20 | 2,940.80 |
| September | 6,367.74 | 5,814.10 |
| October | 8,035.63 | 9,902.92 |
| November | 8,445.81 | 7,215.65 |
| December | 5,367.90 | 4,248.10 |
| | <u>\$84,153.84</u> | <u>\$80,650.61</u> |

The surplus at the end of the year including \$2,000.00 stocks of carbon on hand was \$5,503.23.

14:10 hrs

Question No. 3

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: (Deputy Speaker): Your Honour, may I ask the hon. Minister Question No. 3, standing in my name.

QUESTION: Will the Minister provide a detailed account of income and expenditure of the poultry farm at the Mahaica Hospital during the 1981 – 1982 period, showing sales to the public and purchase by the Institution?

Cde. Van West-Charles: In relation to question No. 3, Cde. Speaker, August to December showed an expenditure of \$80,353.09. The income sales to the public was \$43,877.35 and to the institutions it was \$39,164.70. At the end of the accounting period Stockfeed to the value of \$3,000 and birds to the value of \$12,000 were on hand. From 1982 January to December the sales to the public were approximately \$153,535.75 and to institutions it was \$171,639.91. At the end of the accounting period Stockfeed to the value of \$88,000 and birds to the value of \$270,000 were on hand.

Cde. Ram Karran: Are these the yard-fowl variety or the pedigree?

The Speaker: Any other question?

Cde. Ram Karran: No.

Question No. 4

Cde. J. Jagan: Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask the Minister of Health Question No. 4, standing in my name.

QUESTION: Will the Minister say if he is aware that Guyana has the highest infant mortality rate and the highest child death-rate in the Commonwealth Caribbean?

Cde. Van West-Charles: Cde. Speaker, question No. 4 refers to the Infant Mortality rate. It is not true that Guyana has the highest infant mortality rate in the Caribbean. As a matter of fact, the latest figure we have is 33.5 per thousand. This is the second time I am answering this question and I would like to just explain a bit to the Assembly that in order to lower the infant mortality rate we need the involvement of everyone so as to promote the programmes of breast-feeding, oral rehydration therapy, child-spacing and the lowering of teenage pregnancy.

This involves the efforts of everyone. I would think that the Minority represents approximately 15 percent of the population in this Parliament and I think instead of constantly referring to the figures they should seek to assist the people that they represent in trying to carry the programmes to lower the infant mortality rate.

Cde. J. Jagan: I cannot accept the Minister's explanation. I have here a World's Women Data Sheet of the Population Reference Bureau Inc., in collaboration with UNICEF which states clearly that for 1982 the infant mortality rate for Guyana was 44 percent, for Trinidad and Tobago it was 26.4 percent, for St. Vincent it was 38.1 percent, for Grenada it was 15.4 percent, for Dominica it was 19.6 percent and for Barbados it was 25.1 percent. All of these figures which are official figures state that Guyana's infant mortality rate in the year 1982 was the highest in the Commonwealth Caribbean. I am prepared to let the Minister read this but I am not prepared to have false information given in this Parliament. I object to it.

Cde. Van West-Charles: I said the latest figures were our figures. May I make a point? You cannot make a comparison with a small island like Grenada with Guyana. One has to examine the conditions that exist and the causes for it. As a matter of fact, what we are doing now in Guyana is, seeing that Guyana has been regionalised we are looking to see in which region we find the highest cause for the infant mortality rate and trying to invest and put the resources in that particular region. We are now looking at the statistics and will approach the matter in an objective manner. One of the things is to ensure that women who are pregnant attend the clinics. That is one of our main problems in Guyana.

Secondly, we have the immunisation programme and, thirdly, the oral rehydration therapy programme which is on-going. It is up to you, you are also to be involved in the programme.

Cde. J. Jagan: May I again repeat the question I asked, will the Minister say if he is aware that Guyana has the highest infant mortality rate and the highest child death rate in the Commonwealth Caribbean?

The Speaker: He said no, but he went on to give some reasons. He said as at present that is the information he had.

Cde. J. Jagan: In one year?

The Speaker: I am not going into the dialogue of who is right or wrong.

Question No. 5

Cde. J. Jagan: Cde. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Health Question No. 5, standing in my name.

QUESTION: Will the Minister say whether medicated salt for the control of malaria is still being distributed to people in the border areas of Guyana?

Cde. Van West-Charles: Cde. Speaker, this question relates to the distribution of medicated salt. The answer is no.

Cde. J. Jagan: May I ask him why is medicated salt not being used since we know that it is one of the best means of preventing the spread of malaria, particularly on the border areas. It is very important.

Cde. Van West-Charles: Here again Mrs. Jagan is misinformed. In Guyana there are two types of malaria. In Rupununi we have both types and in the other areas it is the Vivax. For some time, since 1960, medicated salt was used in the Rupununi but this was curtailed as a result of the growing resistance being experienced not only in Guyana but throughout the world.

In relation to the use of medicated salts within the North West and the Pomeroon, this was used up to 1982 and withdrawn. This is on the advice of the World Health Organisation; that after having used medicated salt for some time there must be a withdrawal period. In Africa and Asia they have begun to experience the resistance to Vivax because of the use of medicated salt.

Cde. J. Jagan: What precautions are you taking to eradicate the two varieties of malaria?

Cde. Van West-Charles: During 1982 a PAHO Consultant was down here and together without specialists we visited both areas. We did studies and the plan is to carry out an extensive programme of spraying the villages and all the houses in both the North West and Rupununi areas. We have also spoken to the airlines, both the state and the private airlines, about spraying their aircraft after having visited malarious areas.

Cde. J. Jagan: May I ask –

The Speaker: No more.

Cde. J. Jagan: Thank you very much.

14:20 hrs

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read the First time:

Drainage and Irrigation Board (Transfer of Functions) Bill 1983. /The Vice-President, Production./

Municipal and District Councils (Amendment) Bill 1983. /The Minister of National Mobilisation./

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

Sympathy on Death of Cde. W.O.R. Kendall, C.C.H.

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. William Oscar Rudyard Kendall, C.C.H., and pays tribute to the distinguished service which he rendered to Guyana and to its Parliament and directs that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing widow and children." /The Vice-President, Social Infrastructure./

The Speaker: Cde. Green.

The Vice President, Social Infrastructure (Cde. H. Green): Cde. Speaker, this House has grown accustomed to its happy times and sad moments. This afternoon, we have one of those moments.

On Sunday 18th September, this year, I received a telephone call from a friend who said that Rudy Kendall's son was trying to find someone in Guyana to pass a message to him that his father was no longer with us. When that news broke in Guyana, it was clear to all of us – those of us in the Party and entire nation that we have suffered a great loss in the death of William Oscar Rudyard Kendall, known to this House and to the entire nation perhaps better as Rudy Kendall.

Rudy was born seventy-three years ago on the 12th August, 1910 on the Corentyne and received his early education in the capital of East Berbice, New Amsterdam and it was there that he began his early public service, first in the municipal area and later at the....national level. As perhaps most of us know, he served on the New Amsterdam Town Council both as Councillor and later as Mayor. It was during this time that he underwent the preparation for the challenging tasks which lay ahead.

It was here that history was created because he defeated at the polls the then powerful and almost invincible Sir Eustace Woolford to become a member of the Legislative Council in 1947, representing the New Amsterdam Constituency. In that same year he served on the Advisory Committee for the Medical Department and remained a Member of Parliament for twenty one years until 1968.

Rudy maintained his talking with the people. He had a shoe making shop and those of us who can recall, or speak to people who can recall those days – he never failed to visit the black pudding shop next door and it was there that he met the ordinary man and discussed the social and political problems in New Amsterdam.

Under the New Constitution of 1953 he was again elected to Parliament for New Amsterdam. When the British suspended the Constitution later in 1953 he continued to serve as a nominated member of the Interim Government as well as on the State Council. During the period May 1954 to June 1957 he was given the responsibility for Communication and Works.

It was during the mid 1950's that the later Rudy Kendall played an important role in the merger between his Party – the United Democratic Party and the People's National Congress. Later as a member of the People's National Congress he again won the New Amsterdam seat to Parliament and was elected Duty Speaker during the 1961-1964 period. He held many posts as a Minister. He was Minister of Trade and Industry from December, 1964 to January 1966. Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation from February 1956 to December 1966 and Minister of Health and Housing from January 1967 to December, 1968.

His service to the nation did not end there as he was subsequently appointed to the Diplomatic Service as our Ambassador to Suriname. Some of us will recall the sterling contribution made by a member of the Suriname community at the end of his time as Ambassador. He was given the responsibility for setting up the Leathercraft Industry at the New Amsterdam based factory, an area that he had considerable experience in and at the time of his death he was a Director of Guyana Airways Corporation and another private concern and he served faithfully in both positions.

One of the illustrious sons of Guyana and an astute politician. Rudy Kendall was awarded the Cacique Crown of Honour by the Guyana Government in recognition of his distinguished service to the nation.

14:30 hrs

Rudy was a profoundly humane person, whose warmth and dedication won the respect of both friend and foe. His service for the socialist cause is ample testimony of his deep respect and concern for the welfare of our people. This eminent son of Guyana remained unruffled in adversity and difficulty and those of us who had the good fortune to deal with him knew that he remained calm although this man was a tough and serious person and very often his decisions in circumstances of stress showed a high degree of maturity and understanding of the realities of any given situation. These qualities, his ability to laugh when necessary, to be witty when it was good, caused him to be extremely popular not only in New Amsterdam but in this entire country.

If one were to describe Rudy Kendall one would say he was mature and hard working and I believe the tribute paid to him by the Deputy Mayor in September, Cde. Pilgrim, really sums up what Rudy Kendall was. He said that he was like a father to the people of New Amsterdam. Indeed, he was able to achieve that father figure not only in New Amsterdam but wherever he had a chance to serve.

His private life was marked with love and understanding for his wife and family and, being a public figure – those of us who are public figures would know – he made tremendous sacrifices both as a father, husband, a brother, and even as a son. Let us in this House, therefore, give honour with reverence and respect to a man who was noble and served his country well. Rudy, I think, can be remembered by all of us for the calm way he walked about, very often with a cigar. I don't think that when Rudy had to say unkind words to members of the Opposition, people whom he may from time to time have had to upbraid or criticise, he did it without acrimony. He did it with firmness and conviction.

I therefore wish to move:

That this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. William Oscar Rudyard Kendall, C.C.H., and pays tribute to the distinguished service which he rendered to Guyana and to its Parliament and directs that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing widow and children.

I recall, as I think of Rudy Kendall, the words of Michael Angelo: "Death and love are the two wings that bear the good man to heaven." May his soul rest in peace.

Question proposed.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Cde. Speaker, I wish on behalf of the P.P.P. to joint with the Vice-President in expressing our sorrow at the death of Rudy Kendall. As the Vice-President pointed out, he had a long record of service especially in this Parliament. I remember him from the early days of my political career when we sat in his Chamber. We did not agree, generally speaking, because we were on opposite sides of the ideological national spectrum. However, one thing that can be said about him is that he was a man who had close links with the people. One must not confuse this, however, in my view, with fighting for these people, but he did have that kind of nature that his links with the people were very close, so much so that when he won the New Amsterdam seat, one could ascribe this not to victory of the party to which he belonged but victory on the basis of his own personality, his own way of going about things. I think we used to call him sometimes "The Czar of New Amsterdam."

However, I would like to say, as I pointed out already, that although we did not share the same views and on many occasions we sharply criticised each other, nevertheless I can say that Rudy Kendall had an affable personality and did not get angry. He always displayed a friendly spirit. I think that was a good side which we all respected and consequently I am sure we all will miss him because of that. We wish to take this opportunity to express our sympathy and to convey that sympathy to members of his family.

Mr. Abraham: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the United Force and my party leader, Mr. Singh, I would like to associate myself with the sentiments expressed both by the honourable Vice-President and by Dr. Jagan and ask that our very deepest sympathy be conveyed to his surviving relatives and friends.

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, please stand in support of the Motion.

/All comrades and the hon. Member stood in silence./

Motion carried.

SYMPATHY ON DEATH OF CDE. L.E. MANN, C.C.H.

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. Laurence Everil McRandsford Mann, C.C.H., and pays tribute to the distinguished service which he rendered to Guyana and to its Parliament and directs that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing widow and children." /The Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives./

The Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives (Cde. Denny): Cde. Speaker, 47 years ago there was born to Eileen and James Mann a son named Laurence Everil McRandsford Mann, familiarly called Bonny. He attended the St. Andrews Primary School under the tutelage of the late I.I. Friday Durant and then Queen's College during the period 1947 to 1953 where his performance in academic work earned him the appellation of being brilliant. In the area of sport his contribution was fair. Cricket at the House level was one of the games he played. His colleagues, among whom was Skip Roberts, regarded him as being very quick-witted, regarded him as being an immense personality having a superlative sense of humour and great capacity and ability to make friends with ease. People tended naturally to gravitate to Laurence Mann.

Bonny attended the University of the West Indies at Mona, Jamaica, where he secured main Honours in History. Laurence Mann had love for marriage, having been married more than once but not more than twice. His children related to him very closely.

Bonny, at an early age in relative terms, showed his interest in politics. He became a member of the People's Progressive Party and later on became Parliamentary Secretary in the 1961-1964 P.P.P. Government, working along closely with the Minister of Education at that time, C.V. Nunes. Laurence Mann had a great regard for scholarship and erudition and the leadership of the Leader of the People's National Congress and President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Cde. L.F.S. Burnham.

14:40 hrs

For I remember on many occasions when I came to listen to the affairs of Parliament, he would be seen in the Lobby having discussions with the Leader ranging from matters political to matters philosophical. In Parliament his.....presence was among the people. On the P.P.P. benches he was always on the alert. He was quick on the....and heckling quietly. He later resigned from the PPP and proceeded overseas to further his studies, maybe to secure the second degree. Cde. Mann returned to Guyana and entered the diplomatic field as an assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was promoted Principal Assistant Secretary in August of the same year. Having then left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was appointed Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade and consequently became Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture. He rejoined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs later on with the rank of Principal Foreign Service Officer. His first overseas posting was as an Ambassador to E.E.C. and he moved later on to the key diplomatic posting as Ambassador to the U.S.A., Washington, in November 1975. Laurence Mann returned home in 1981 and was named Ambassador at Large with special responsibilities for Guyana International Economic Relations. He was seen as head of the Department of International Economic Co-operation in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance. By-lateral relations between Guyana and countries like Trinidad and Brazil were arrived at through the asiduous work by teams that were headed by Cde. Laurence Mann.

Guyana recognised his contribution and he was the recipient of the Award, the CCH. It is true as the Latin prose writer said: "Death is the gateway to life." Laurence Mann will be remembered as a husband, a father, a brother, a friend, a Comrade, a colleague, a historical, a politician, a Parliamentarian, a diplomatic, an academic and a nationalist. He died at a very young age having been born on 7th November 1926, and he died in August 1983 in the United States of America. I therefore respectfully move the Motion calling on the Assembly to record with deep regret the death of Cde. Laurence Mann, and to direct that an expression of condolence be forwarded to his sorrowing widow, and children. May his soul rest in peace.

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Chairman, I beg to associate myself and my colleagues with the Motion by the Hon. Minister and directs that an expression of sympathy be extended to the family and relatives of the late Member.

Mr. Abraham: I wish to do the same Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I will now put the motion.

Motion put.

/Members of the National Assembly stood in silence for one minute./

Motion carried.

BILLS

Second and Third Readings

ACQUISITION OF LANDS (NOT BENEFICIALLY OCCUPIED) BILL 1983 – BILL

No. 20/1983.

A Bill intituled:

"An Act to make provision for the acquisition of land which is not beneficially occupied other than State Lands of Government Lands, so as to ensure rational use of such land and for matters connected therewith."

The Speaker: I understand by agreement that the Bill dealing with the Acquisition of Lands (Not Beneficially Occupied) will not be taken today but at our next sitting. Cde. Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives.

FACTORIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 1983 – BILL No. 22/1983

A Bill intituled.

"An Act to amend the Factories Act. /The Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives./

Cde. Denny: Cde. Speaker, I rise to move the second reading of the Bill known No. 22 of 1983 today, referred to as the Factories (Amendment) Bill of 1983. I think, Cde. Speaker, it is appropriate to note that this piece of Amendment is very simple. All it seeks to do is to remove the words man and woman wherever they exist and replace them at Sections 21:2 and 22:3 of the principal Act to replace it with the word 'Adult ' with the definition of an adult being a person 18 years and over.

Cde. Speaker, as a result of the decision that was taken to remove discrimination from women and to uphold equal status for men and women in accordance with Article 21, Sections 21 and 26 of the Factory Act Chapter 95:02 which sections gives the Minister authority to make regulations prescribing different hours of work in relation to the women and young persons. But what it would then indicate, Cde. Chairman, is that the regulations prescribes different hours of work for adults and young persons only. Both Bills are for adults and young persons only. In such circumstances, Cde. Chairman, I have given the ratio and the rational dealt with for these amendments and I ask that the Bill be read a second time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported with Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

14:50 hrs

Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed.

EMPLOYMENT OF YOUNG PERSONS AND CHILDREN (AMENDMENT)

BILL 1983

A Bill intituled:

"An Act to amend the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act." /The Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives./

Cde. Denny: Cde. Speaker, I rise at this juncture to present Bill No. 23 of 1983, the Employment of Young Persons and Children (Amendment) Bill 1983 and ask that it be read a Second time.

It must be noted in the first instance that the nomenclature of Chapter 99:01 was Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children, but under this Bill the name is Employment of Young Persons and Children. Under the former name young persons were prohibited from working at nights in industrial undertakings. This piece of legislation was instituted in the year 1938 to implement the articles of Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1934, No. 41, which was ratified by the British Government at that time on behalf of British Guiana as it was then. However notwithstanding the ... of this Convention subsequently by the British Government, our laws had not been amended accordingly and as a consequence that measure was maintained.

The measure was really against the employment of women at nights in industrial undertakings, but it is good to note that women held responsible positions in other areas of national activity, for example, in the areas of management, in the areas of administration etc. In keeping with the policy of this Government as set forth by the Cde. Leader when he was Prime Minister, a Paper was presented to this Parliament in honour of International Women's Year 1975 and cognisance must be taken of Articles 29 and 30 of the People's New Constitution where they are to remove all discrimination against women. The Labour Code Commission itself, which is the body on which the People's Progressive Party was represented, made recommendations to amend the Laws of Guyana accordingly.

Subsequently, the Desiree Bernard Committee made some new recommendations. Guysuco, for example, is one of the public entities that made approaches because of the fact that they are engaged in the whole question of industrial training. In keeping with this Bill it seeks to give effect to the recommendations.

Clause 10 of the Bill provides for the deletion of part 3 of the Schedule to the Act, that is the deletion of the Convention on night work for women which was revised in 1934, thus enabling all women to work by night in any public or private industrial undertaking. The W.R.S.M. which is a very important institution in this country also recommends this approach. The argument is sometimes advanced that in the socialist climes women are exempted from certain types of jobs and they do not do night work. That point of view is not necessarily true and it would not be true to argue that this approach is a backward step. It would not be true to argue that it is a step of retrogression. Rather, in the view of this Government it is a progressive step which is designed to remove the discrimination which women have suffered for so many years. Nearly 20 to 40 years ago that might have been relevant, but in this day and age when many organisations, apart from the W.R.S.M. and CASWIG, speak of equality, I think that we all should be supportive of this important measure.

The Long Title of this Act is also said to be amended by Clause 2 of the Bill to reflect the amended conversion of the Act as such, the new nomenclature, the Employment of Young Persons and Children. I therefore move the Second Reading of the Bill and ask that it be read a Second time.

Question proposed.

Cde. Ram Karran: Your Honour, I recall the story of the man coming off duty in the early morning in the vicinity of Urquhart and main Streets, walking one very cold morning. As he passed one of those houses he was asked if he had the time. The man is alleged to have replied, "I have neither the time nor the inclination." It is not from the social angle alone that one refers to the backwardness of this measure. One recognises today that even policemen are afraid to brave the roads at night. What about our precious women? What about the decent able-bodied men who fear the dark because of the very serious social conditions in our country? Even if the Government was persuaded to have this measure, the social conditions of the country require them to have held their hands on this Bill.

I am not concerned so much at this stage with the awkward social conditions affecting our women in the country. It is from the other aspect, the scientific or the biological make-up of our women that requires some protection by law. It is useless for you to say, as the Minister seeks to argue, that in order to give them freedom to move the limitation – let us give our young people freedom to commit suicide when they are fed up of what is going on in the country and not give protection to our women.

The arguments of the W.R.S.M. proposals as put up to the Labour Code Commission was that the opportunity for work must not be denied our women. Therefore, the limitation which is placed upon them, not so much from the British Government's acceptance of the Convention, but the Convention stipulated which we are dealing with from the I.L.O. relating to night work of women, says clearly that women without distinction of age shall not be employed during the night in any public or private or industrial undertaking or in any project thereof other than in which members of the same family are employed.

15:00 hrs

(Cde. Ram Karran continues)

Convention 9, section 3 which was passed replaced....and I have seen a document from the W.R.S.M. which stated that the Government will not remove it.

Socialist countries have seen to it that the biological make-up that they carry out are reflected in many of our operations of trade. Women are not accustomed to working at nights or overtime. Pregnant mothers themselves have to cope with this. We must protect our precious women. I do not know what are the actions of the P.N.C. but women are being used to work in the night and a letter was sent to the Minister of Labour but no action was taken. Women are working in the night and they have been working in the night for a long time. The honourable Minister saw in 1948 when this convention was made – there was very little justification for it then because the ... that were in existence then were not sufficient as they are today in almost every place in Guyana.

Cde. Chairman, let us have some ... on women, not only in the day time but particularly at nights. We need to protect not only those who move around today but those who are to succeed us and I think that this is criminal on the part of the Government to embark upon this measure at this particular time. Of course, there are laws protecting people who are exposed to certain chemicals. Sir, I would urge the honourable Minister to withdraw this measure until there was a thorough study of it.

The Speaker: Cde. Denny.

Cde. K. Denny: Cde. Speaker, Cde. Ram Karran and I have been around for some time and we recognise that jobs ought to be provided for women. Cde. Speaker, you know it is very ... when this Government cannot find jobs for people – the same People's Progressive Party will come to this forum and say that we are not using every mechanism at our disposal to ensure that jobs are provided for the people of this country including women, but when we are engaged in a progressive step it is being criticised as retrograde.

Cde. Speaker, at present women in this country work by night and Cde. Ram Karran is qualified to know that women work at night. The conditions in this country at present are different from what they used to be twenty-two years ago and the biological make-up of women is a fact of life and that does not make them not qualified to be in order types of jobs.

Cde. Speaker, on the question of ... it must be a ... of imagination by Cde. Ram Karran to say that they sent a letter to the Minister of Manpower and Labour. That is not true and he went on to quote the ILO convention. I know the P.P.P. Cde. Speaker, when it suits them they go for it and it is for this purpose they quoted from the ILO Convention, but when it is for this purpose they quoted from the ILO Convention, but when it suits them they say we should not worry with the ILO Convention. We are not going to ... but we are going to build a society dependent on our historical and other circumstances and in the view of this Government Cde. Speaker, we are convinced that this step is a progressive one and it is going to create employment opportunities for the women in this country and I want to tell this House that posterity will not blame me, austerity will praise me.

15:10 hrs

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 as printed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 1983-12-12, at 14:00 hours." /Vice-President, Party and State Matters./