

NATIONAL ASSEMBLYMINUTES OF PROCEEDINGSOF THE 19TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST  
SESSION (1986) OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELDAT 14:00 HRSON WEDNESDAY 1986-07-23IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, GEORGETOWNMEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (73)Speaker (1)

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

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

Ministers in the Cabinet (10)Prime Minister (1)

Cde. H. Green, M.P., Prime Minister (Absent - on leave)

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

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

Other Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

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

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

Other Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. W.A.L.H. Parris, C.C.H., M.P., Deputy Prime Minister, Planning and Development

Cde. R.H.C. Corbin, M.P., Deputy Prime Minister, Agriculture (Absent - on leave)

Senior Ministers (4)

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

\*Cde. C.B. Greenidge, M.P., Minister of Finance (Absent)

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

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

Other Ministers (11)Senior Ministers (3)

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

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

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

Ministers (4)

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

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

Cde. C.G. Sharma, A.A., J.P., M.P., Minister within the Office of the President (Absent - on leave)

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

\*Non-elected Member

/...

Ministers of State (4)

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

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.K. Habibulla, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the President
- Cde. Stella Odie-Ali, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Home Affairs
- \*Cde. Jean M.G. Persico, A.A., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Education

Government Chief Whip (1)

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

Other Members (24)

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

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

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

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

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

\*Non-elected Member

/...

Members of the Minority (11)

(i) People's Progressive Party (8)

Minority Leader (1)

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

Deputy Speaker (1)

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

Other Members (6)

Cde. Janet Jagan, M.P.  
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P. (Absent - on leave)  
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P., Minority Chief Whip  
Cde. H. Nokta, M.P.  
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.  
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

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

(iii) Working People's Alliance (1)

Mr. E. Kwayana, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

14:00 hrs

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKERLeave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cdes. Green, Chandisingh, Corbin, Kisson, and Beniprashad-Rayman for today's Sitting, to Cde. Dr. Shahabuddeen to the 10th August, 1986 and to Cde. Dr. C. Jagan up to 23rd August, 1986.

Acting Minority Leader

The Speaker: I have been informed that during the absence of Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, Cde. Janet Jagan would be performing the Parliamentary duties.

Postponement of consideration of items 1, 2 and 3 on the  
Order Paper

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, the Minister of Finance who should have been here on Sunday evening was unfortunately delayed. Therefore those Motions to which he would have to reply, that is, the Agreements with I.M.F., and Income Tax Reliefs will not be proceeded with today. Also, the Motion dealing with the Optional Protocol to International Covenant will not be proceeded with today as the Minister dealing with that is unavoidably engaged today.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

Review of the Operations of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund for the year 1985. The Minister of Information and the Public Service

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERSValue of Seizures at Timehri Airport and Gains by Sijan Plaza

- QUESTION: (i) Will the Minister tell the Assembly the annual value, for the years 1979 and 1985 inclusive, of the seizures at the Timehri Airport of the following items:
- (a) gold
  - (b) gold jewellery
  - (c) foreign currency
- (ii) Will the Minister say what are the Government's net gains from the operation of the Sijan Plaza:
- (a) in foreign exchange
  - (b) in benefits not quantifiable?

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, I beg to ask Question No. 6 standing in my name on the Order Paper.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Planning and Development  
(Cde. Parris): Cde. Speaker, the question standing in Mr. Kwayana's name

really comprises two questions, I believe, not necessarily related. The first refers to the matter of seizures at Timehri Airport of gold jewellery and foreign currency for the years 1979 to 1985 inclusive. In terms of answering that question, it has to be answered in the light of available records. There was a fire which destroyed Customs House during the period for which figures are being required which I assume all of us are aware of. From the available records, therefore, the situation is as follows. With respect to gold:

1979 Not available  
 1980 G\$1,900.00  
 1981 Nil  
 1982 Nil  
 1983 G\$31,343.92  
 1984 G\$529,168.68  
 1985 G\$264,270.00

With respect to Gold jewellery:

1979 Not available  
 1980 and 1981 Nil  
 1982 G\$1,466.45  
 1983 G\$72,569.00  
 1984 G\$48,119.15  
 1985 G\$12,131.72

Those are all Guyana dollars. With respect to seizures of foreign currency it is as follows:

1979 Not available  
 1980 G\$5,086.00  
 1981 G\$3,105.00  
 1982 G\$39,000.00  
 1983 G\$257,000.00  
 1984 G\$777,000.00  
 1985 G\$141,765.00

The second part of the Question, as I said, is separate and distinct from the first part. It reads: "Will the Minister say what are the Government's net

gains from the operation of the Sijan Plaza: (a) in foreign exchange. The answer is that the net gains from the operation of the Sijan Plaza amount to roughly YS\$112,970.00 for the year 1985. The second part of the question has to do with (b) in benefits not quantifiable. I suppose, taken as a question it means would the Minister say what are the Government's net gains from the operation of the Sijan Plaza in benefits not quantifiable. That has posed us a difficulty since if the benefit is not quantifiable we are unable by definition to arrive at a net position.

**TAKE**

**14:10 – 14:20 HRS**

**MISSING**

14:20 hrsPublic BusinessMotionsSYMPATHY ON DEATH OF CDE. FRED BOWMAN, FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. Fred Bowman and pays tribute to the distinguished services which he rendered to Guyana and to its Parliament and directs that an expression of sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing relatives, Widow and children."

Cde. Bend Kirton: Fredrick Bowman was born on the 13th September, 1908 at the Village of Plaisance on the East Coast of Demerara in the then British Guiana. He attended St. Paul's Anglican School, at the early age of 10 years, due to the prevailing economic circumstances relating to his family life he was forced to leave school and seek employment on a Sugar plantation for a mere 20 cents per day working from 4 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. of each day.

As a shovelman working on the Sugar Estates he became deeply concerned with the miserable conditions that prevailed under which sugar workers had to work and live. Even though so young he was determined that he would become involved with the struggle to eradicate the injustice meted out to his brothers and sisters as they struggled to survive, Cde. Speaker,

Boye as he was commonly called left the Sugar Estate at the age of 14 years to seek his fortune and development in the gold and diamond fields, there he worked as a tributer from 1922 - 1942. This he did with fluctuating effects.

As he remembered the struggling Sugar Workers he was propelled once more to leave the gold and diamond fields and rejoin the industry. Here he became involved in the Trade Union Movement and represented the workers cause at many levels. Fred, knew that the trade union struggle was that of workers emancipation and that this could only be achieved through a political struggle to change the order of things so with this in mind and the sharpening of his political consciousness, he became an active member of the People's Progressive Party from its inception and of which the Founder Leader Cde. L.F.S. Burnham was the Chairman and helped in the campaign expousing the workers cause.

Fred Bowman became a legislator in this Honourable House when the then People's Progressive Party won 18 of the 24 seats in the



House of Assembly at the first General Elections held in the Country under universal Adult Suffrage in 1953 as provided by the Waddington Constitution, here he defeated J.B. Singh who held that seat for 24 years in a Sugar Constituency.

Fred Bowman, was a man of deep convictions as he worked withing the movement he had dream that the workers would one day hold prominence and make decisive contributions towards their own development for this he made sterling contributions to the debates of this Honourable House.

When the Constitution was suspended on 9th October, 1953 and a State of Emergency declared, Fred Bowman was again in the forefront of the People Opposition of Colonial Rule and the presence of British Troops called for by the Govenor Sir. Alfred Savage. The grit and determination of this man must be commended for it was he who in his early Forties faced up with fortitude to a trial lasting one week and in which he was defended by one of Britain's most famous Queens Counsel, Mr. D.W. Pritt associated with our Founder Leader Cde. L.F.S. Burnham and other Guyanese Lawyers, he neither fainted nor faltered, despite many searches by the Colonial Police, restrictions and a prison term under the Undesirable Publications Prohibition of Importation Ordinance.

In 1957, Fred Bowman was again elected to the Legislative Council Representing the East Bank Constituency. He later resigned from the People's Progressive Party and helped in the formation of the Progressive Liberal Party which was short lived.

Fred also represented his Country at many International forums including the General Conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association held in Australia. During his worthwhile life he wrote several newspaper articles, poems, and beeklets on Sugar, Slave Trade and Theology. In his later years Fred Bowman retired from palitics and ventured into his own business manufacturing Diamond Floor and shoe polish and this was a success story of a small man becoming a real man.

With his passing, he has left to mourn a wife Mildred and two sons, one being Cde. George Bowman a former Parliamentary Secretary in the People's National Congress Government. Cde. Speaker, it was the great singer Paul Robeson who said and I quote:

**CONTINUATION  
OF  
CDE. BEND KIRTON'S  
SPEECH  
MISSING**

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I wish this afternoon to offer condolences on the passing of the late Frederick Bowman. Fred Bowman was known to me in the late 50s. I was listening to the history. Probably, there can be some contradictions but one known point of importance which was omitted. He always earned the reputation of defending two well known doctors and you all remember the phrase I am sure of the shadow man defeating two doctors, whilst standing as candidates of the People's Progressive Party. He did not only defeat Dr. J.P Singh in 1983, he also defeated him on the East Bank in 1957. He defeated him as a candidate of the PPP. At that time, I was the candidate manager and I was also president of the court because that election was hold under the first past the post system. He emerged from very humble circumstances. He emerged from the Sugar Industry and the fact that he was permitted to stand for elections and against persons of the stature and caliber of the late Dr. Latchmansingh and successfully showed the kind of capacity and policy programme of the PPP since its inception, it removed bureaucracy.

14:30 hrs

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

In that it broke the bureaucracy. It removed elitism and allowed into the Parliament persons of humble circumstance. Those facts are true of the comrade. He did very well which I think presents the very beautiful opportunity that people in all walks of life can contribute to the development of this country. I want once again to associate the P.P.P. with the words of condolences and to have our regrets and sympathy conveyed to his sorrowing widow and dear ones.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Motion on behalf of the United Force and to associate my Party with the remarks made by the last speakers. I did not know Fred Bowman personally, but I certainly knew him. I knew him a little more than casually. I met him on several occasions, had chats with him and I must say I have always found him to be a very amiable person. He was courteous, well-mannered and indeed appeared to be a very likeable person. I am sure Guyana has lost someone it could have done with were he to have continued in this life. To his sorrowing relatives, the United Force extends its sympathy and supports the Motion before the Assembly.

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Member who brought this Motion, one of great historical importance to this Assembly and to this country. The person we mourn today, Fred Bowman, was an outstanding person and what was most outstanding about him was the fact that he was unquestionably from the ranks of labour. He worked as a shovelman on the estates and at the same time he was an intellectual. He ~~gives~~ the lie to all those who ~~feel~~ that the working people are not capable of grappling with ideas. That is the outstanding thing about Fred Bowman's life. He was fearless and unflinching. Of course, in later years the pressures of society partly over-came him. But in spite of that, he left an outstanding record in the time in which he served the working people. He grappled with ideas at every level and this is something of great historical importance because there are many who feel that one has to be <sup>an</sup> academic or some such thing in order to understand ideas.

Fred Bowman was one of the many monuments that give the lie to this belief. He wrote his later life on African traditions and it just shows that even close to the end of his life he fought with ideas. This should be an inspiration to all working people, whether formally educated or not because Fred Bowman showed that with only a primary education he could stand up to the giants of the times and hold his own. May his tradition ever live in our memory to . . . the pages of our history.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

CONVERSION OF GUYANA NATIONAL NEWSPAPERS LTD. INTO PUBLIC COMPANY

"Be it resolved that Guyana National Newspapers Ltd. be converted into a public company;

Be it further resolved that the Company be governed by special legislation which protects the interests of the labour force, in shareholding, industrial relations and management;

Be it further resolved that participation be open to all citizens of Guyana and the citizens of the Caribbean Community with the Government and citizens of Guyana holding not less than a certain share of the equity to be determined by the Government;

And be it further resolved that the new company be required by law to function in such a way as to promote a pluralist democracy and ideological pluralism, in which the Government of the day has the right, along with others, to communicate information and express opinion." /Mr. Kwayana/

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, this Motion seeks to discuss the policy of the Guyana National Newspapers. Perhaps one could begin by saying that reading today's Chronicle one could get no sense of something close to a crisis in Government. It is evident by the fact that so many Ministers are absent. This is perhaps the way to begin or end debate on this Motion. It testifies to the uselessness of this newspaper, controlled, as it is, not by journalists acting together, but by the political directorate in this country.

The Motion arises from long-standing dissatisfaction with the policy of the Guyana Chronicle, not only on behalf of the party I represent, but generally. There are so many ways in which it is deficient. There are so many ways in

which it lets the people down and fails to inform. It is in fact managed and operated not in the interest of the people of Guyana but in the interest of the ruling Party so that scarcely any other thing gets into it. We do not feel that this is how a taxpayers' newspaper should be operated. We have no particular objection to the ownership of any particular part of the media being in the hands of a Government. But even if it is owned by the Government or by the taxpayers through the Government, it must have a national policy and must not at all be mistaken for a party organ which it is not. It is a public corporation under Guystac and financed by the taxpayers of this country and all shades of opinion are entitled to be represented in the pages of the Guyana Chronicle.

If we look at its record during the election campaign - we had reason to make a study of this newspaper. Studying one week after nominations, we found that most of the references to the Opposition parties --

The Speaker: Mr. Kwayana, may I remind you that there is an appeal pending by the Guyana Chronicle against Dr. Makepeace Richmond in relation to the non-advertising of a political advertisement, I think, in the 1980 elections. So you will have to be very careful in skirting that aspect of the matter.

Mr. Kwayana: This will considerably restrict debate on this Motion, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I am only telling you what the rule says.

Mr. Kwayana: If you take "Letters to the Editor", in January, according to research, not carried out personally, there were no "Letters to the Editor" in the Guyana Chronicle and Sunday Chronicle. Of course there were a few letters in the Helen Haynes column, hard-pressed individuals with some emotional problem. That is the most consistent type of letter that appears in the pages of the Sunday Chronicle.

14:50 hrs

We know that they themselves have had to go and borrow newsprint from other agencies and that apart from this this is not the way a nationally owned agency, owned and financed by the tax-payers, ought to behave. What we are asking is that if there can be no change of policy, the Minister of Information, during the Committee of Supply, re-examine the policy of the Chronicle in support of better communication. Here is a wonderful opportunity. Chappel is engaged in development and he is communicating libelously. I am sure that if this ad came out in some of the Guyana Newspapers we would be cited before the courts. Relations with Chappel should be broken off and I expect that it will be broken off if the Government has self-respect which it ought to have. The Minister concerned has left the Assembly no doubt to join his colleagues in some matter of grave importance. We do not have a Parliament, Parliament is not a forum Mr. Speaker, unless all opinions in the Parliament, whether the editor or the Publisher or the Minister of Information, agree whether or not that information could be published. I must refer to the colonial days when people like Fred Bowman and other spoke in this very chamber, when Cheddi Jagan between 1947 and 1953 almost singlehandedly represented the masses in this country. His speeches were published in the colonial press and of course, they responded. But we are now at a stage where for some reason or the other opinions expressed by those of us <sup>who</sup> are officially regarded as representatives of the people, are hidden from the people. All substances are hidden from the people. I have also made the point that there is not only discrimination against members of the Opposition Party, very often back benchers of the ruling party suffer. I made this point in the Committee of Supply and no one denied it. A few of them spoke and in some cases very little. We have the opportunity of improving the situation. A remedy is before the Assembly and I expect that it will be embraced by all persons of good will who wish to uphold the fundamental rights granted in the 1980 Constitution and make them a matter of daily practice.

Gde. Basir seconded the motion.

Motion proposed.

**TAKE**

**15:00 – 15:20 HRS**

**MISSING**



15:20 hrs

And I say very seriously this afternoon that the ..... and that has been a very objective contribution and I would like to say sincerely and I say earnestly to persuade the Minister and to keep in focus the point with the Chronicle to look at the publications objectively and to make policy decisions, to make allow that paper to be more free to be more liberal and not only the paper, to establish that liberalism to the people under the Constitution . I think if that is done that would be a step forward. [Applause.]

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, the Minister speaking for the Government accused me of camoflague. I wish to accuse her of evasion. She did not address the issue of the motion. She addressed the question of freedom of the people at street corners who criticised the Government. What is very interesting is her reference to a paragraph of the motion which I shall quote with your permission.

"That participation be open to all citizens of Guyana and the citizens of the Caribbean Community and with the Government and citizens of Guyana holding not less than a certain share of the equity to be determined by the Government;"

The Minister was kind enough to say that the motion was inviting foreigners to participate. I want to know where in this motion is there a reference to foreigners. I would like to ask every single Member why Members of the Caribbean are called foreigners by a Minister of this Government and I hope that in the course of this afternoon she will kindly withdraw that remark because it can do no good whatever. Economic integration must be taken seriously. I noted the word foreigners. She accused the motion by adjudicating participation by foreigners. I do not know in any economic community when we talk of economic integration one can refer to fellow members of that community especially on matters of prevention of foreigners. This is the mentality that is undermining the whole of Caricom unfortunately. Reference is made to the Head of the Unesco. I want to refer to another statement that was made here in Guyana on a Conference held here about the right of replying. connected with an issue current at the time. He said information must flow freely both ways or else it is not free. Can anyone say that the information flows both ways? I have given a record which has not been challenged of the number of letters appearing in that paper. How then are the people participating in it? The letters published in a paper are one of the main features by which people can express their opinion, not by proxy, but directly and if there is such a squeeze on letters,

then we have no proof of this participation. In the Parliament recently there was an incident of a Mr. La Curz. Answer was made by the Minister. Another Member referred to another letter he had gotten from the Commissioner of Police contradicting that reply. Saying in fact, that the people had already been disciplined and transferred when the Minister made a contrary statement that did not appear in the Chronicle. Because the Chronicle is operated in such a way as to remove all appearance of criticism from the Government and not to permit it whatever. We can take as a case study this whole matter of Mr. Chappel which is very sensible. We are talking about media. The Chronicle does not permit investigative reporting. A couple of years ago I was talking to a leading journalist of the Chronicle. There was an incident and I was advising him how to investigate. He said to me that he had no experience on that he came up in the press release days.

Now in South Africa there was a big storm over the fact that the Government decided that during incidents no reports were to visit the scene and all that could lawfully appear was what came out of the Ministry of Information. How far are we from that in this country? Everything that appears from any important incident is an issue from the Ministry of Information. They say in one of their annual reports that their function is to guide these publications. I wish to quote from a Memorandum of Understanding between the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Nassau Life Insurance Company Ltd. in order to spell out on financial and project co-operation. Part of it says that the parties, that is Mr. Chappel and the head of the Republic delegation, Mr. Clarence Blue:

"The parties further agreed that within the first year following the implementation of the tax aid jurisdiction, the Nassau Group will aim to procure the registration of about 20 to 30 Off shore banks and approximately 1,000 off shore corporations among others for which revenues accruing will be about \$4 million U.S." officially

This shows that this gentleman is/an agent of the Government. It is an agreement that he should procure off shore banking ---

The Speaker: I do not think it is right for you to say that it is an Agreement. I think you read from it and said that it was a memorandum of understanding.

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, as a trained Lawyer are you suggesting that memorandum of understanding signed by two parties is not an agreement.

The Speaker: I am not answering that ---

Mr. Kwayana: Thank you, that may assail a feat.

15:30 hrs

(Mr. Kwayana continues)

This is just evidence of an important deficiency of this paper we have been discussing today.

I will end it here so that we can proceed with further business. The Minister is bent on her development support communications idea which omits the human factor. We are dealing with development with the abstract as if human beings with ideas are not concerned even if those ideas are against the ideas of the Government at that particular moment. In an interchange of ideas there may be a possibility of conversion. But now, we think of development in terms of bridges and abstract things apart from the human person and that is why the Minister can claim that the Chronicle is carrying out the mission of development support communication when the ideas of a variety of humanbeings with a variety of opinions never surface in the Guyana Chronicle. I am not here to give mechanism - Interruption - yes, we can read the Open Word. If you read the Open Word you will see that up to the last issue an article critical of the Open Word was published. The Open Word had criticised the Prime Minister and someone from the United States wrote a letter critical of the Open Word and that letter was published. That is the way. I need so no more.

Cde. Harewood-Benn: Cde. Speaker, I just want to deal very briefly with two things. First of all, as regards Mr. Kwayana's accusation of my being evasive, I reject that. Perhaps I would like to counter charge him of putting in a red herring as far as the foreign aspect or element is concerned. I have absolutely no doubt or fear that my remarks would be misunderstood by the people since they would appreciate it in the context in which it was done and they would not have, as I suspect my hon. Comrade had, a mind set somewhat of hostility and perhaps deliberate misunderstanding. I do not have a fear that they will misunderstand that.

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you will permit that remark of deliberate mis understand. I wonder.

The Speaker: If I am to take objection or cognisance of every little thing

like this I would have a hard time.

Mr. Kwayana: It is not a little thing.

The Speaker: They have been called thieves and nobody says anything.

I thought you were getting up on a point of clarification, or privilege or you were objecting to the Minister's statement.

Mr. Kwayana: I am not the person.

The Speaker: I did not say you.

Mr. Kwayana: I cannot account for anybody else.

The Speaker: Yes, Cde. Minister.

Cde. Harewood-Benn: People involvement. Cde. Speaker, there is a big element of people's involvement apart from the newspaper itself. Do you have to have numerous letters to the editor to indicate there is people's involvement? Is that the only evidence, the only kind of criteria that we need? There are many other areas where you can have effective people's involvement and I think that we subscribe very adequately to that.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud referred to fair reporting. I think the reporting is fair, there is no distortion and that is the important thing. That/<sup>is</sup>the is problem that I and many others like me have with some of the other papers. There are no distortions, they are quite fair in terms of our ability to print and we take that obligation to be fair seriously.

With regard to concealment, I repeat the point about our sense of responsibility. We do not have to deliberately conceal something. Don't you give us credit for some sense, Cde. Speaker? Hundreds and thousands of people know, how are you going to deliberate conceal it when the man on the street knows it. Isn't our credibility going to be at stake. You can say a lot of things about the People's National Congress Government, but we are not stupid. That would be the height of stupidity. We do not deliberately conceal anything. Rather, we respect the responsibility and obligation that we have to provide accurate statements to the public.

Cde. Speaker, I wonder if you will indulge me. Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud says he agrees basically with what we are doing but he had reservations. It was his Party, I think in 1962 that attempted to establish a Press Council with statutory powers to control the press. It was the P.P.P. which

advocated press censorship and in correspondence between Mr. J.B. Kelshaw, Private Secretary to the Premier, Dr. Cheddi Jagan and to the Chairman of the Commonwealth Press Union and the Caribbean Press Association on August 5, 1962 Mr. Kelshaw wrote: "The question of censorship will depend entirely on what measure of self-control the local papers are able to exercise." It is also the Minority Party which, when in Government, withdrew all Government advertising and all Government subscriptions from the locally owned Chronicle. I say no more.

I have been reliably informed - this is something I have heard, I cannot say I have read it myself - that Lenin said the only correct function of mass communication is that of an instrument in the hands of the Party and a transmission belt between the Party and the masses. Mr. Speaker, this Motion is not necessary. I believe that it was inspired by misunderstanding, a lack of appreciation of some of the realities and as such I cannot commend it to my colleagues.

Question put, and negatived.

CINEMATOGRAPH (AMENDMENT) BILL 1986

"A Bill intituled:

"An Act to amend the Cinematograph Act to provide for the regulation of video exhibition and to make consequential amendment to the Tax Act." The Minister of Information and the Public Service/

Cde. Harewood-Benn: Cde. Speaker, I am sure this Bill will not involve a lot of controversy. I think it is very straightforward. With the development in technology, with the advent of so many video cassette recorders, there is a pressing need to establish some kind of order in the functioning and operation of some of the video clubs, parlours, restaurant, etc. They have been mushrooming all over, developing in all kinds of situations and to a great extent unmindful of the need to ensure public safety, public comfort and generally to look after the welfare of people.

**TAKE**

**15:40 - 15:50 HRS**

**MISSING**

15:50 hrs

I recall too, Cde. Speaker, that those members of the PPP particularly those who sit on the censor board have often raised with us the difficulty of having their voices heard within the censor board. Often they have raised objections to a number of films that are passed through the censor board and I think it is an appropriate moment to ask the Minister whether the censor board follow these guidelines and whether they really are fulfilled and whether they are intended to be in accordance with the objective of the Constitution of the country. I think that that is a particular area that the Minister of Information and those concerned should look into, the working of the censor board when you take into consideration the type of films that pervade our society today.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, I was ill and I did not really have a chance to study this bill but I would like to raise some points that come to my mind at the present moment. They are talking about censorship here. We all know that that in Georgetown and most of the places round and about Georgetown antenna up in the air where every day sometimes throughout the night pictures are being shown in the homes of people and sometimes they invite their friends to see those pictures. They are coming direct from the satellite. I appreciate the difficulty where there is no way you could censor something like that. They are censored perhaps in America, they are rated there, they tell you what the rating is and so on. But here in Guyana the Guyanese can look at them without any control being exercised by the Government of Guyana. Okay so all these people are allowed to see these films as they come through the satellite into their television screens. What are we trying to do here. When those films are recorded into tapes we are saying that those tapes must be censored before they are shown to the public audience. But they have been shown to Guyanese audience on so many occasions and so many homes, private homes, yes, but they are Guyanese people seeing these and we are talking about Guyanese people looking at the public ones too.

The Speaker: I think the Minister was at pains to point out the difference between private homes and public entertainment. You pay for public entertainment. In other words as I understand her, I am free to see what I want, but it is a different thing when the paying public has to see it.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker I thought the intention was to exercise some control over what is being shown to the Guyanese public be it private or public.

As I understand it now the intention of this bill is that you can show any think in your home. You can invite your friends and show the most obscene video film in your home but if you are to pay for it the Government can control what you should see and what you should not see. I am not saying that we should not do this whether it is a good thing or bad thing. What I am saying is that Guyanese people are being allowed to see whatever comes through the satellite and there is no problem with that. That is the point I am making.

The Speaker: Mr. Singh, if you do not want to see what is being shown don't you turn it off? Well I do.

Mr. M. F. Singh: I do not seem to be able to get over my point. I am merely pointing out that if it is a question of control then we are not really exercising anything like that because they can see it privately in any case and I am saying it is a good thing but it will be a tremendous burden on the Board of Censors as I understand it. They will have to censor every single tape what with the amount of films in the cinemas and with the shortage of film censors will surely make the legislation ineffective. Does it really help the morale of the Guyanese people. Whatever you take out from the tape in censoring they can still see on the Television screens.



Mr. Kwayana Mr. Speaker, I should like to know how this Bill becomes a priority. When the President addressed this Assembly he spoke for example, about drug control legislation. It has not surfaced yet. It was never in any of the statements about a plan of action in legislation. Yet it has suddenly come up and we have not yet been told the real reason. I want to know whether it is not in conflict with Article 146 of the Constitution which says that<sup>"</sup> no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression."

That is to say freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to ones defence public safety, public order, public morality or public health, and these laws must be reasonably required. That is a matter of interpretation at that higher level. Indeed it talks about protecting reputation, something similar to the libel law and then it says regulating the technical administration or the technical operations of telephony, telegraphy both wireless broadcasting or television. It says nothing about Video. It mentions television but as previous speakers have noted it does nothing about Television. Television is free to come from wherever possible. It is wholly discriminatory in favour of private showings to which members of the public are not admitted. But the ordinary people or those unfortunate people who do not have their own Video mechanism come under the control of this act. Now who are members of the public. Are friends of the person who is showing the thing in the home members of the public or not. This Bill is not clear. Any video club, and what worries me is that it is not concerned with scale, whether it is a video Club or a video centre and is showing to 200 or 500 is not the concern of this Bill.

16:00 hrs

(Mr. Kwayana continues)

A public showing is a public showing and I feel this is discriminatory. There are many places where there is no cinema and we do not know quite how this thing will be administered. Organisations must now apply for police permission to have a fund raising show, another area for police permission which I think is an unnecessary area.

Views have been expressed on the censorship. I am not willing to give to this Government any additional powers of censorship. The question of art is a question to which our party has a particular approach and we believe in freedom of art and we believe that the public is the best judge. We believe the public will select the best productions if they have a choice. It is when they have no choice and only one kind of thing is fed that they have to go for that thing. But we have seen the public respond to positive exhibitions of various types of art and I think the Government has a responsibility in the development of the domestic artistic activity to put all of these things in the shade. The Member is asking me what can we do with that. I really have an answer but I do not think this is the time for it.

I am interested in the bringing forward of the legislation promised for the control of drugs and I hope that apart from punitive measures it will also have educative measures which I know the hon. Minister has been stressing a long time. /Interruption/

The Speaker: Just a minute Mr. Kwayana. We have just past 4 o'clock. The rule says if anything is passed after 4 o'clock it will not be effective. So I have to be careful because it would be a waste of the whole afternoon. Is it agreed that we continue to sit after 4 o'clock?

Comrades and hon. Members indicated in the affirmative.

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, I never know when I am speaking and you intervene whether I should sit or stand. Could you advise please.

The Speaker: Generally you should sit.

Mr. Kwayana: Those are my general views on the Bill. As I said, I will finish in a few seconds. I think it is not complete enough, it does not

(Cde. Harewood-Benn continues)

1986-07-23

National Assembly

16:20 - 16:25 hrs

16:20 hrs

My understanding Cde. Speaker, on that point is that what Cde. Reepu Daman was talking about applies only to public exhibition and not things that are organized for private homes.

Clause 13 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 14 to 18 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Bill reported to the Assembly, read the third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Be it resolved, "that this National Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed. /The Minister of Information./"

Adjourned accordingly at 16:25 hrs.