

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

/Volume 08/

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION (1981) OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

19 th Sitting	14:00 hrs	Thursday, 30 th July 1981
--------------------------	-----------	--------------------------------------

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (82)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government – People's National Congress (69)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P., (Absent on-leave)
Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P.,
Vice-President, Works and Transport

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

Cde. H. Green, M.P.
Vice-President, Public Welfare

Cde. B. Ramsarrop, M.P.,
Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations

Senior Ministers (10)

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

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.,
Minister of Regional Development

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

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

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

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

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

*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P., (Absent)
Minister of Agriculture

*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs

*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., (Absent)
Minister of Education

*Non-elected members

Ministers (13)

Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P., Minister, Environment and Water Supply, in the Ministry of Public Welfare	
Cde. U. E. Johnson, M.P., Minister of Co-operatives	
Cde. J.N. Maitland-Singh, M.P., Minister, Consumer Protection, in the Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection	(Absent on-leave)
Cde. S. Prashad, M.P., Minister, Crops and Livestock, in the Ministry of Agriculture	
Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P., Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance	
Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P., Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry of Agriculture	
*Cde. C.A. Nascimento, M.P., Minister, Mechanical Equipment, in the Ministry of Works and Transport	(Absent)
*Cde. F.U.A. Campbell, M.P., Minister of Information	(Absent)
*Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael, M.P., Minister, Forestry, in the Minister of Agriculture.	
*Cde. Y. V. Harewood-Benn, M.P., Minister of Public Service	
*Cde. H. Rashid, M.P., Minister, in the Office of the President	(Absent)
*Cde. Van Sluytman, M.P., Minister, Drainage and Irrigation in the Ministry of Agriculture	(Absent)
*Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P., Minister, Health, in the Ministry of Public Welfare	(Absent)

Ministers of State (3)

Cde. M. Corrica, M.P., Minister of State for Culture, in the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture	(Absent)
Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P., Minister of State for Youth Sports, in the Ministry of National Development	
*Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P., Minister of State for Construction, in the Ministry of Works and Transport	(Absent)

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Women's Affairs and Housing	
Cde. P.A Rayman , M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister	
Cde. E.M. Bynoe, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister	(Absent on-leave)

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.

Cde. M. Armogan, M.P.

Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.

Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.

Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.

Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.

Cde. E. B. Davidson, M.P.

Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.

Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.

Cde. P. Frederick, M.P.

(Absent)

Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.

Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.

Cde. A. McRae, M.P.

Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.

Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.

Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.

Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.

Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.

Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.

Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.

Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P., M.P.

Government Chief Whip

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

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

(Absent)

Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

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)

(Absent on-leave)

Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

(Absent on-leave)

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)

(Absent)

Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No.8 – Potaro/Siparuni)

Cde. A. Dorrack, M.P. (Region No.9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)

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. (Absent)
Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

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

Other Members (8)

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

(ii) United Force (2)

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the Prime Minister and Cde. Hoyte for today's sitting, to Cde. Jackson for eleven days from 26th July, 1981, to Cde. Bispat from 30th July, to 30th August, to Cde. London from 30th July to 8th September, 1981, and to Cde. Dalchand for six weeks from 17th July, 1981.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AN REPORTS

The following Papers were laid:

- (1) (a) Loan Agreement dated 24th April, 1981, between the Caribbean Development Bank an Guyana (CDB Facility III)
- (b) Loan Agreement dated 18th February, 1981, between the Government of Guyana and the Government of Canada for a development loan for establishing a line of credit.
- (c) Financial Paper No. 1/1981 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates (Advances made from the Contingencies Fund in 1980), totaling \$11,330,632.
- (d) Financial Paper No. 2/1981 – Scheduled of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates (Releases made by Special Warrants in terms of Article 219 (3) of the Constitution for the period ended 31st December, 1980, totaling \$69,697,311.
- (e) Financial Paper No 3/1981 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates (Advances made from the Contingencies Fund for the period ending 15th July, 1981), totaling \$8,710,045. /The Minister, Finance, on behalf of the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance./

In terms of Standing Order No. 68(1), the Minister named Thursday, 6th August, 198 as the day for consideration of the Financial Papers in Committee of Supply.

- (2) (a) Annual Report of the Guyana Fire Service for the year 1975.
- (b) Annual Report of the Guyana Prison Service for the year 1975. /The Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations, on the behalf of the Minister of Home Affairs./

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Rent control Enactments (Amendment) Bill 1981 – Bill No. 8/1981 [The Vice-President, Public Welfare.]

2:05 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

MOTION OF SYMPATHY ON DEATH OF CDE. RUPERT CLEMENT TELLO

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. Rupert Clement Tello 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, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations.”

The Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde Speaker, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name. The late Rupert Clement Tello has left us rather suddenly and we are considerably saddened because we know he shall not return to us in the flesh. But we take solace and inspiration and comfort in the fact that he has battled for more than three score years and ten, as the scriptures have predicted, before being given out by the Almighty umpire who is the Lord of Life.

This Assembly mourns his demise because he spent well nigh twelve years inhabiting it now only as a Member but as a Minister without Portfolio, Deputy Speaker and he acted as Speaker from 5th August, 1967 to the 15th February, 1968. In 1955 his was the acme of honour and personal pride when he successfully piloted a Motion through the Legislature to have 1st May each year declared Labour Day and a public holiday. To him this must have been the cap crowning previous Parliamentary achievements.

The late Rupert Clement Tello was an outstanding Guyanese from the county of Berbice from which so many of our wise men have come. The late Cde. Tello was born at Alness on the Corentyne 73 years ago. Early in his working life he launched out in the historic lifeline of Caribbean activity, that is, the sugar industry. He studied its technology and gained a managerial position while still a young man of 25. This was in St. Vincent where he managed the Argyle Sugar Factory. He went on at age 27 to be Resident Chemist at Bronsfield Sugar Factory and Visiting Chemist at Fairfield in Barbados.

2:15 p.m.

Here is a shining example of a Caribbean worker, who, while still in his 20's must have already had a broad Caricom vision by the time he returned to his native land British Guiana, as it then was, long before the likes of Caricom were to emerge. Shortly after, he took up a post with the expedition project in the Canje, Berbice area.

This love for workers and their involvement in production made the late Cde. Tello plunge actively into work in the field of workers' organizations and industrial relations. He was a worker bee in the hive, and his legs were always laden with pollen. The late Cde. Tello joined the Manpower Citizens' Association and was elected Branch Secretary of the Mahaicony/Abary Rice Development Scheme. There was no holding him back in the trade union movement from that point on. Elected Vice-President of the M.P.C.A in 1942, the next in 1943 he was to secure management employment at a rubber plantation at Greatlytes, Canje and at Amakura in the North West District. This was during the grey days of the Second World War.

In 1947, founded the Berbice Mine Workers' Union and negotiated a check-off of union dues, to first check-off of union dues negotiated between a private enterprise and the workers.

In 1954, he arrived at the apex of trade union office becoming General Secretary of the Trades Union Council. His contribution, Cde. Speaker, was immense in this post. It was a period of tremendous inquiry and commotion which produced some of our best trade union brains now founding fathers of their unions, Jackson, Perry, Pollydore, to mention a few.

He held the position of General Secretary of the Trades Union Council for over five years. He had a thorough knowledge of the trade union movement at both national and international levels and to this day his documented history of the British Guiana Trade Union Movement with its crisp factual and critical style is teaching material that is sessional in classrooms on industrial relations especially at T.U.C. and Critchlow Labour College levels, indeed, at the worker education level generally in Guyana.

Cde. Speaker, it is not by accident that the Branch Officials and Leadership Course conducted by Critchlow Labour College has a special cup allotted to it to be given annually to that student who makes a significant contribution both in and out of the classroom.

Rupert Tello was anxious that officials of the trade union movement should be of the greatest capability, clarity and conviction. He understood the politics of management and the management of politics, if you may forgive the twist of phrase. His critical but accommodating mind easily attuned itself to the best wafts in the wind of change of both corporate beast and political colossus. No doubt, this came about because of his thorough knowledge of the entire alphabet of the corpus and spirit of the weaknesses and glories of trade union administration.

He was certainly a man for many seasons. Indeed. Cde. Tello's interest to advance the political process in Guyana was manifest. This can best be illustrated by reading to this Assembly a part of the Eulogy delivered by the present General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress at the funeral service of the late Rupert Tello. He said, among other things, Cde. Speaker, I quote from that Eulogy:

“I have personally benefited from Rupert’s magnanimity and inspiration. It was through him I got my first exposure to the trade union international scene. I recall that day, the 14th April, 1956 that Rupert went to my office at the Transport and Harbours Department and said to me ‘Polly, my Executive Council has unanimously selected you to go to Tunisia, North Africa, on a special assignment.’ That assignment was to present a Motion to the I.C.F.T.U. calling for the restoration of this country’s Constitution which had been suspended by the British Government at that time. He said it was felt by his Executive Council that I was the best person to be given the assignment though I was not even then a member of the Council. Rupert could have gone to Tunisia himself if he had wanted to do so.”

Cde. Pollydore concludes in this part of the Eulogy:

“I did my best. The Motion which was adopted with some amendments set action in train for the first time for international trade union support for the restoration of Guyana’s Constitution. This was evidence of Rupert’s genuine interest to advance the country’s political process.”

Cde. Tello served as Chairman of the Guyana Electricity Corporation and the records reveal that he made a signal contribution during his period of Chairmanship. He continued to serve right on to the end. Indeed, he served as Chairman of the Waterfront Disciplinary Committee up to fairly recently. A bonhomie fighter, his were nerves of steel with a spirit of good cheer. As one of his co-members on the Board of Directors of Guyana Gajraj observed, “one could differ with the man without feeling alienated from him in spirit or in truth.” He had so excellently mixed within him the alchemy of new ideas with old-world charm. The pity of it is that characters of his type do not come by that often. And so we miss them all the more when they depart.

In 1979, the last Rupert Tello received a National Award of the Medal of Service for his contribution to the trade union movement. In the same year, he received a gold medal from the T.U.C. for outstanding service. The high esteem and love in which he was held by his intimate relations, his wife and his children, is therefore no surprise when one considers the ripples of the widening circle of affection he stirred among people generally. The poet says “Time’s a cheat. Fleeter he seems in his stay than in his flight.” A sharp reminder, indeed, Cde. Speaker, that while we are here we must co-operate to accelerate the story of the development of mankind in our little national corner of the world. Tello did that and, therefore, like Duncan in Shakespeare’s Macbeth we know that after life’s fitful fever he sleeps well. May his soul continue to sleep in peace most pleasant.

Cde. Speaker, I wish to endorse this Motion in my name to the effect that, this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. Rupert Clement Tello and pays tribute to the distinguished service he rendered to Guyana and to this Parliament and directs that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing widow and children.

Motion proposed.

Cde. Ram Karran (The Deputy Speaker): Your Honour, I wish to add support to the Motion so ably moved by my friend the hon. Vice-President and to say that I have had the fortune of meeting Brother Tello, as I am sure he would prefer to have himself called if he were alive, early in this Chamber. Although we were both actively engaged in the trade union movement in the ‘40s, yet, strange as it may seem, we never met, Brother Tello and myself. It was only in 1954, when he was appointed as a member

of this Chamber, that we met.

There was a time – and my friend referred to it – when, with the suspension of the Constitution of Guyana, Brother Tello played an active part in organising support for the I.C.F.T,U. Conference, but it was, I think, in the T.U.C. when some of the members – I remember the names he called: Andrew Jackson, Brentnol Blackman and myself and all those who were associated with the meeting of the W.T.U. in the year 1953, they and their unions were expelled from the T.U.C. and I remember well that Brother Tello and some others played a very significant part in rallying the T.U.C. around the new forces that had developed or had gathered after the suspension of the Constitution. I remember well all that took place and, in looking back, I am sure that those of us who look at things in their proper perspective would recognise that it had to some extent endangered the working people of this country and had damaged the trade union movement to a large extent.

But, coming back to Cde. Tello – I do not think he liked himself to be addressed in that way: as I remember, he was one of those people who strongly believed – and I compliment him for his views – that it was “better dead than red” as a sort of philosophy. After meeting him, both in this Chamber and outside, I found that he had very strong views on these political matters and there was the humorous side of him, of course. Even in these matters, there were jokes on the things that were communistic. I remember we used, at the time of the trial of Kenyatta in Kenya, to have a famous epithet for certain members of the Guyanese public life. Some of them are still alive but we got this phrase from what appeared in the newspapers about the “loyal kikuyus”. As you know, sir, these were the people who were supposed to support the British and were against the nationalist movement.

Another humorous thing about my friend was when he sat in your Chair, sir. When members in trying to express themselves quoted French or Latin or even Hindi phrases, the Speaker would rule “No foreign languages at all”. There was a great deal of amusement in the House because even English cannot be, as you know, expressed very fully without idioms and without expressions that do more justice to the language.

One must compliment members who, as I said just now, held strongly to their views even though over the years one would have recognised some mellowness, which we all did. In the early days, when I knew Cde. Tello, or Brother Tello, I had a sort of feeling “You cannot get near to this chap; he is dangerous” but in the latter years, long after he had left this Chamber, you would meet with him on the road and talk with far more ease.

I want to add my quota of sympathy to his relatives and hope that since my friend has gone to the place where “the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest”, the contribution which he has made in this country and in other spheres will be recorded to his best advantage, bearing in mind the other quotation “The evil that men do lives after them; the good is often interred with their bones.”

Mr. Feilden Singh: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my party, the United Force, and on my own behalf, I would like to support the Motion. Rupert Clement Tello was, for a vast number of years, a valued member of the United Force party. I had the good fortune to know him personally. We may always have agreed but at least I recognised that he had the courage of his convictions.

1981-07-30

2:25 – 2:30 p.m.

We would like to extend to the sorrowing wife and relatives of the late Rupert Clement Tello our deepest sympathy. May his soul rest in peace.

The Speaker: I will now put the Motion and ask that members show their approval by standing for one minute.

Motion –

That this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death of Cde. Rupert Clement Tello 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.

Put.

Agreed to, with members standing.

ADJOURNMENT

Cde. Ramsaroop: Cde. Speaker, may I move the Adjournment of this Assembly to Thursday, 6th August, 1981, at the hour of 2 p.m. when the Financial Papers will be considered.

The Speaker: Do you mean to say only the Financial Papers, because I think there is a Bill that Cde. Green just introduced.

Cde. Ramsaroop: That will not be dealt with.

The Speaker: The Sitting of the Assembly is adjourned until 6th August, 1981.

Adjourned accordingly at 2:30 p.m.