

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 9]

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

1st Sitting	17 hrs	Friday, 22nd January 1982
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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (77)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (64)

Prime Minister (1)

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

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

Cde. B. Ramsaroop, 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.,
Minister of National Development

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

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

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

*Non-elected Member

*Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,

Minister of Foreign Affairs

*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,

Minister of Agriculture

*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,

Minister of Home Affairs

*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,

Minister of Education

Ministers (8)

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

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,

Minister 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. Y. V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,

Minister, in the Office of the Prime Minister

*Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,

Minister, Office of the President

*Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,

Minister, Health, in the Ministry of Public Welfare

Ministers of State (3)

Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,

Minister of State for Culture, in the Ministry of
Education, Social Development and Culture

Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,

Minister of State for Youth and Sport, in the Ministry of National Development

*Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P.,

Minister of State for Construction, in the
Ministry of Works and Transport

*Non-elected Member

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,

Parliamentary Secretary, Women's Affairs and Housing

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

Parliamentary Secretary, Education, Social Development and Culture

Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,

Parliamentary Secretary, Foreign Affairs

Other Members (23)

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.

Cde. M. Armogan, M.P.

Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.

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

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

Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., 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. Fredericks, M.P.

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. P.A. Rayman, M.P.

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

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

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

Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.

Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.

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

Government Chief Whip

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 (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam) (Absent on-leave)

Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

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

Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

Cde. I. 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)

Cde. A. Dorrick, 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.,
Minority Leader (Absent)

Deputy Speaker (1)

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

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. (Absent)

Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P. (Absent)

(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

PROCLAMATION SUMMONING THE SESSION OF PARLIAMENT

The Speaker: The Clerk of the National Assembly will read the Proclamation which was issued by His Excellency the President.

The Clerk read the Proclamation as follows:

"PROCLAMATION

By the President
Of the Co-operative
Republic of Guyana

(Sgd.) L.F.S. Burnham
President

Whereas by Proclamation dated 6th January, 1982, issued under article 70(1) of the Constitution, Parliament was prorogued with effect from 8th January, 1982:

Now, therefore, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon me by article 69(1) of the Constitution, I do hereby appoint the Parliament Chamber, Public Buildings, Georgetown, Guyana, as the place where a session of Parliament shall be held and 5 o'clock in the afternoon on the 22nd January, 1982, as the time when such session shall begin.

Given under my hand and Seal of the
Co-operative Republic of Guyana at
Georgetown, Guyana, this 6th day of
January, 1982, in the twelfth year of the
Republic.

By the President's Command
(Sgd.) C.E. Douglas
Head of the Presidential Secretariat."

PRAYERS

The Clerk read the following Prayer:

"Almighty God, we, who are here gathered together, do most humbly beseech Thee to guide us in all our consultations, so that we may together build a land where knowledge is free, where that mind is without fear and the head is held high, and where words come from the depth of truth.

Grant us, O God, Thine aid and guidance, so that we may deal justly, with the several causes that come before us, laying aside all private interests, prejudices and personal preferences, so that the result of our counsels may be to the glory of Thy Blessed Name, the maintenance of true religion, the preservation of justice, the safety, honour and

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happiness of the President and the peace and prosperity of Guyana.

Grant us, O God, the vision so to lend, that all the people of this fair land may enter into that state of brotherhood and unity, where the mind is led forward by Thee into everwidening thought and action."

1982-01-22

17:00 – 10:05 hrs

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: The Sitting of the Assembly will now be suspended until the arrival of Their Excellencies.

Sitting suspended at 17:05 hrs.

17:38 hrs

On resumption - -

ENTRY OF THE PRESIDENT AND CDE. VIOLA BURNHAM

Their Excellencies, the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, O.E., S.C., and Cde. Viola Burnham were announced. Their Excellencies entered the Chamber and were received by the Assembly.

The Speaker: I will now invite his Excellency to address the Assembly.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

His Excellency the President: Cde Speaker

Even though twenty-one days of this new year 1982, the **Year of Defence** have passed, I think it is not too late for me to offer you and the members of this National Assembly greetings and best wishes. At the same time, it is my hope that this will be a year of stimulating and productive debate, deliberations, and discussions, aimed at improving the general situation and circumstances of Guyana and bringing to its people new vistas and material achievements.

In common with most of the world, Guyana has had a difficult, if not bad 1981, and to the casual observer, 1982 seems to hold no better promise. Survival itself, let alone forward movement will require hard work, sweat and perhaps, blood. The nation looks, and is entitled to look to this, the highest forum, for leadership and sincerity rather than words and empty cant.

Few of us are old enough to remember a period in the world's history where the international economic climate was bleaker than it is today; when depression and recession, unemployment and unachieved targets have deeply affected countries east and west, north and south, rich and poor. The exceptions stand out like oases in the desert of economic crises, want, and deprivation. Even the rich countries complain of the inhibitions imposed by the fluctuating rates of exchange, and increasing protectionism, and admit, though not always publicly but at least impliedly, to the total obsolescence of the World Economic Structure and Monetary System. For countries like ours, of the South, there is the added problem of unstable and sometimes unremunerative prices for our exports to the north, like for instance, bauxite and sugar.

As if to try us more, and test our mettle, Cde Speaker, there is the Venezuelan threat to our territorial integrity and the economic pressures to which we are consequently and simultaneously being subjected.

The threat is real. Our neighbour as you have learnt recently, arms herself with sophisticated weaponry and votes against the resolution in favour of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign countries, the only developing country to cast its vote on the same side as the majority of the developed giants.

Venezuela has publicly stated that she is preparing a document to establish the undesirability of our proposed hydro-electric scheme, which scheme if effectuated, would change our economy for the better and bountifully benefit not only Guyana but the region of which Guyana is a significant part.

Cde Speaker, what arrogance! What disregard for the provisions of the Geneva Agreement and the Protocol of Port-of-Spain itself which does not come to an end until the 18th of June this year. If that is not undue and totally unacceptable interference in our economic and internal affairs, what is? What can be?

This is not the time for any Guyanese to ask whether the Venezuelan threat is real. This is the time, it is submitted, when this House, this Country, this Nation must prepare energetically but soberly, to respond decisively to this threat whether it takes the form of military and/or economic aggression.

During the course of debate and thereafter, my Government hopes to discuss formally and informally with the Minority Parties and other representative groups in the society, the techniques and tactics to be employed in the circumstances. Defence Bonds will be available to the public by mid-February. We shall all have an opportunity to match our expressions of patriotism with deeds of sacrifice. Institutions like the Guyana People's Militia must be strengthened and others brought into being with a view to ensuring the fullest involvement and participation of the people of Guyana in defence of their patrimony.

It may be observed, at this stage and in the circumstances, that defence extends beyond our borders and includes the telling of our story to the world, the story of how a small and peaceful nation has become the object of unadulterated recolonisation and expansionism.

We have been accused, Cde. Speaker, of internationalising the question, but is this accusation not Falstaffian, when those who themselves have internationalised it through the World Bank and other international and multilateral agencies, accuse little Guyana of their own sins, faults, and defaults?

1982 has been designated the **Year of Defence**, defence not only in terms of resisting the spoliation of our land but also in terms of saving our economy from the ruinous effects of the crises that are abroad. These two defence aspects are interrelated.

A relatively small economy such as Guyana's may suffer the disadvantage of being unable to influence world trends decisively but sometimes, Cde. Speaker, small is not only beautiful but also, potentially effective. If we in Guyana were to exploit and develop our relevant resources intelligently, efficiently and effectively, we can survive and even perhaps prosper in the context of the world's needs, crisis or no crisis.

It is not that I suggest or posit that Guyana can be an insulated or isolated entity, but at all times, the world, and our immediate neighbours more particularly, need what we can produce for ourselves and for them. The world, for instance, unless it disappears, will always need food. The world, for instance, will always need wood and wood products. The world, for instance, will always need the metals whose ores lie in the bowels of our earth. We have the potential, thanks to our natural resources, for being self-sufficient in many areas of basic needs.

During this **Year of Defence**, my Government has a programme for the acceleration, expansion, and diversification of our agricultural programme, and with the completion of the Solvent Extraction and Refinery Plants at Farm on the East Bank of Demerara, we shall be self-sufficient in edible oil in 1982.

The implementation of the Constitutional provision for transferring **Land to the Tiller** which is being practically pursued, should ensure the availability of more arable land for farmers and would-be farmers. These with the assistance of the government, should be in a better position to contribute to the national recovery and forward thrust.

The official commissioning of the Leather Factory in New Amsterdam within weeks from now, and note I say **official commissioning** because it has already started to operate, will take us one step further in the direction of clothing ourselves. This will be followed shortly by the completion and installation of a boot and shoe factory based on our local resources.

Cotton production under the aegis of the Guyana National Service, will be expanded, not only to ensure the local manufacture of the greater part of our needs in textiles, but also to provide a significant input to our programme of achieving self-sufficiency in and the surplus production of edible oil which surplus we hope will be a sizeable one for export.

The Tractor Assembly Plant which is part of the Agricultural programme during the last quarter of 1981, produced seventy-two units and during this year will produce several hundred more.

Gold production which showed an increase of over seventy per cent in 1981 as against 1980 is programmed to show a further increase of at least fifty per cent in 1982, and Guymine should have its production stabilised and be in a position to meet the market demands.

At the same time, the national production of Forestry should increase in both the private and public sectors and so should our capacity to satisfy traditional markets, particularly in the Caribbean.

Now that the Energy Authority is firmly established and as a result of measures taken and to be taken by my government, it is reasonable to forecast that without impairing efficiency, we shall be able to reduce significantly our consumption of hydro carbon fuels. Our goal is a reduction of at least ten percent. The energy programme which will unfold during the ensuing months is directed to conservation by the elimination of waste and a more effective use of fuel. At the same time, sources of energy alter-

native to oil are being and will be further developed during this year. Noteworthy in this context, is the proposed installation by Guysuco of the equipment necessary for converting bagasse into power for the use of the sugar industry, and for feeding into the central grid.

The exploration for oil continues apace and results are attractively promising, while our plan for harnessing our hydropower potential proceeds.

Cde Speaker, in all of the plans for the resuscitation and expansion of our economy and the provision of commodities and services to our people, the recently established regions have a pivotal role. The members and the establishments of the Regional Councils are supposed to be not only monitors, but also initiators of programmes and plans for the economic and social development of the respective regions. They are at the same time agents and partners of the central government, which will continue for some time to fund their major activities. Their closeness to the people, and their awareness of conditions and potentials, should make them effective leaders in the task of development, rather than mere collectors of revenue.

The regional system has had a number of problems conceptual and personnel. These are however being overcome, and the stage is set now, so to speak, for further democratisation and effective people involvement. The remaining relevant central government services including health and education will be regionalised in 1982, and elections to the remaining Councils to complete the entire system will be held shortly.

Cde Speaker, as one looks back at 1981 with its troubles and its woes, one readily recognises that physical production was not up to target in most areas. Even sugar which was by far the best performer achieved only ninety-five per cent of its revised target. We may coldly and objectively ascribe these failures to circumstances entirely beyond our control, like bad and/or unseasonal weather, or others only partially within our control, like inadequacy of equipment and spare parts, but it cannot be denied that a substantial contributor to failure was weak and

unimaginative management, indiscipline and lackadaisical performances at all levels. Some panicked instead of calling upon their intellectual reserves and storage of initiative. Others were prepared to pursue the even tenor of mediocrity allowing themselves to be overcome by problems and difficulties, rather than facing and solving these. Such luxuries we cannot afford in 1982.

Though the industrial climate was relatively stable; though there was a payout of \$57.0M to employees at all levels, managerial and non-managerial, efficiency lagged as also consequently, did production. My Government accepts its share of the blame and will seek to take certain corrective measures during the course of this year, but this Cde Speaker is a problem for the entire work force and people of Guyana. We cannot turn the tide if we tolerate, condone or indulge in acts and conduct indicative of inefficiency and irresponsibility. Henceforth, the efficient and productive will be rewarded, the inefficient and unproductive will either be reoriented or replaced.

Incentive schemes have been put in place, and discussions with the T.U.C. with respect to the economy and perspectives for 1982, have already begun at the level of the Vice Presidents for Economic Planning and Finance, and Public Welfare. Simultaneously, my Government has embarked upon a programme of bringing more closely together management and non-management workers and setting up more effective monitoring systems.

It is no consolation to point to failures, poor industrial relations and missed targets in other countries. Ours must be the concern for **our** country, Guyana, and therefore ours is the task of identifying our failures and we should then single-mindedly set out to eradicate the causes thereof, without fear or favour. Ours is also the task of recognising and acting in accordance with the implications of our economic programme for recovery. It is your government's task to provide facilities for training and retraining. At the same time it will be the duty of Guyanese to appreciate the need in many cases, for developing new occupational preferences and skills.

At this stage it is important that we expand our exports and exporting capacity. It is appreciated however, that many of the inputs for some of the relevant industries have to be imported. Consequently, it is my Government's proposal, that those exporters who have the potential for being net foreign exchange earners, should enjoy a certain priority in the allocation of our scarce foreign exchange. In this exercise, the Ministry of Trade will be the relevant agency. Let me observe, however, that it is the duty of exporters to integrate backward and to produce those inputs that can be produced locally. Licences, I am advised by my Government, will not be granted for foreign elements which are alternatives to what is and/or can be produced locally.

If we are to move now from the national scene to the Regional one, Comrade Speaker, it would be to note, in the first place, that recent events including bilateral discussions, disclose that the Caribbean Integration Movement is gaining a new life. Without exception, all Caricom Heads of Government have agreed that there should be a Summit this year, probably about mid-year.

Guyana, as you are aware has always been regionalist in its outlook and approach and has consistently contended for the value of closer co-operation between Caricom members. We welcome this latest move and at the same time, reiterate our conviction that it can bode only good. My hopefulness is based on my personal contact with most of my colleagues in the Caribbean.

At such a Summit, the need, to pay careful attention to the areas of food and energy, and to develop a strategy and programme for regional self-sufficiency in these areas, is palpable.

Guyana has the potential to augment the supply of and satisfy the needs with respect to food in the entire Caribbean, and its energy possibilities are not miniscule. We have always maintained that our economic and production thrust, have been calculated to bring an advance not only to Guyana, but also to our friends and cousins. We have no reason to change that attitude. We have never been, and reason dictates that we should never be, the proverbial dog in the manger.

If we in the Caribbean cannot by co-operation and integrated planning achieve economic viability in the region, we can never give substance to our formal political independence; we shall never be able in our dealing with others to enjoy respect, and sovereignty will be but a chimera.

Internationally, Guyana inspite of its difficulties, has continued to be a not insignificant member of the world community. Ours has been a principled stand in favour of freedom and of self-determination in countries like Namibia and Southern Africa and areas like the Middle East. We may not capture the headlines, but our role in the Non Aligned Movement is recognised by the knowledgeable. We continue to be a member of the Coordinating Committee of that Movement. We were one of the developing countries who participated in the Cancun Summit, and we are one of thirty-three who will be going to New Delhi during the course of the next month to consider what further initiatives may be required. We have been re-elected vice-president on the Council of Namibia, and for the second time in six years have been chosen by our Latin American colleagues to serve on the Security Council of the United Nations.

These positions give us an opportunity, not to strut and fret upon the international stage or to harbour delusions of grandeur born of misplaced arrogance, but to demonstrate our belief in a new world which we can help to call into being; a world where peace predominates; a world where the great mass of mankind may truly inherit the earth.

But, Comrade Speaker, our part in shaping this new world, is ultimately dependent upon our ability to defend Guyana; to defend our territorial integrity; to defend our economy; to defend the gains of our revolution. This is our task. This is our honour.

1982-01-22

17:38 – 18:14 hrs

His Excellency presented a copy of the Address to the Speaker.

THANKS BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker: Cde. President, may I on behalf of the Members of the National Assembly and myself express our warm appreciation for your good wishes extended to us for the year 1982.

Your Excellency, on behalf of the National Assembly and myself, I wish to thank you most sincerely for the honour you pay us in coming here and delivering the Presidential Address to us on the occasion of the commencement of the Second Session of our Fourth Parliament.

With your presence here, we see Parliament constituted, for under the Constitution, our Parliament consists of the President and the National Assembly. Without you, there is no Parliament. Without you, no laws can be made for our Republic, as only Parliament can make laws.

This is the second occasion since our new Constitution came into operation, since you ceased to be a Member of the National Assembly and assumed the Office of President, and since our last general and regional elections, that you, Cde. President, have come to the National Assembly.

We here have missed your presence in the Assembly and also your great oratory. While the Constitution does not permit you, Cde. President, in your present Office, to be with us here to participate in our proceedings, nevertheless, the Constitution empowers Your Excellency to attend and address the National Assembly at any time.

We here look forward to your presence with us and it is our hope that you will be able to come here at least annually to address us.

To your Presidential Address, we have all listened with keen interest and attention. The Address will as usual be debated by Members of the National Assembly and I am sure that the Government's Policy adumbrated therein will be approved by the Assembly.

In thanking Your Excellency, may I, on behalf of Members of the Assembly and myself, also express our grateful thanks to Cde. Viola Burnham for her gracious presence with us this afternoon. Please be assured, Cde. President and Cde. Viola Burnham, of our highest esteem and regards.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE PRESIDENT AND CDE. VIOLA BURNHAM

Their Excellencies withdrew from the Chamber.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 1982-01-25 at 14:00 hrs.
/The Vice President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations./

Adjourned accordingly at 18:14 hrs.