

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[VOLUME 11]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION (1986) OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

21st Sitting

14:00 hrs Monday, 1986-11-03

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (76)

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 (64)

Ministers in the Cabinet (9)Prime Minister (1)

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
Prime Minister

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

Other Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

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

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

Other Deputy Prime Ministers (1)

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

Senior Ministers (4)

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

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

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,
Minister of Manpower and Housing

*Cde. W.S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P.,
Minister of Trade

Other Ministers (14)Senior Ministers (4)

Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Regional Development

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

*Non-elected Member

*Cde. Dr. P.L. McKenzie, A.A., M.P.,
Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture

Ministers (7)

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

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

Cde. D. Sawh, M.P.,
Minister of Forestry

*Cde. J.R. Kranenburg, M.P.,
Minister of Transport

*Cde. V.V. Parvatan, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture

Ministers of State (3)

*Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,
Minister of State within the Ministry of (Absent)
Manpower, Housing and Environment

Cde. J.T. Kissoon, M.P.,
Minister of State within the Ministry of Health

*Cde. Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P.,
Minister of State within the Ministry of
Planning and Development

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 (25)

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
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. Elaine B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. Joyce M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. Edwina Melville, M.P.
Cde. Anna Ally, M.P.
Cde. L. Arthur, M.P. (Absent)
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.
Cde. K. Sankar, M.S., 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. B.L. Domingo, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini) (Absent)
Cde. S.I. McGarrell, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)
Cde. M. Stephens, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper
Essequibo)

(Vacant) (Region No.10 - Upper Demerara/ Berbice)

Members of the Minority (11)

(i) People's Progressive Party (8)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P.,
Minority Leader

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. (Absent)
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.
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. (Absent - on leave)
Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

(iii) Working People's Alliance (1)

Mr. E. Kwayana, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

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

14:10 hrs

OATHS

The Oath of Office was administered to and made and subscribed
by the following persons:-

- (i) Cde. Dr. Patrick Laurence McKenzie, A.A., M.P.
Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture
- (ii) Cde. Jules Richard Kranenburg, M.P.,
Minister of Transport
- (iii) Cde. Vibert Virnen Parvatan, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture
- (iv) Cde. Kayman Sankar, M.S., M.P.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) Appointments of New Ministers

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, I have been informed that three persons who are not elected Members of the National Assembly have been appointed Ministers with effect from 20th October, 1986. They are Cdes. Dr. Patrick Laurence McKenzie, Jules Richard Kranenburg, and Vibert Virnan Parvatan. Cde. McKenzie has been appointed a Senior Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture, Cde. Kranenburg has been appointed Minister of Transport, and Cde. Parvatan has been appointed Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture. By virtue of their appointments as Ministers these three persons have become Members of the National Assembly. They have just made and subscribed the oath as Members of the Assembly and can now take part in the proceedings of the Assembly.

(ii) Ministerial Changes

I have also been informed that there have been some Ministerial changes also with effect from that date. Cde. Seeram Prashad, formerly Minister of Transport, who was Minister of Manpower, Housing and Environment is now Minister of Manpower and Housing; Cde. Jeffrey Thomas/ is now Minister who was Minister of State within the Ministry of Forestry of Regional Development; Cde. Dharamdeo Sawh/ is now Minister of Forestry and Cde. Jailall Kisson who was Minister of State within the Ministry of Agriculture is now Minister of State within the Ministry of Health.

(iii) Resignation of Cde. Bissoondai Beniprashad-Rayman

In a letter to me dated 26th July, 1986, Cde. Bissoondai Beniprashad-

Rayman resigned as a Member of the National Assembly. Consequently, a seat in the Assembly became vacant. In accordance with section 99A of the Representation of the People Act, Chapter 1:03, I called upon the Representative of the List of Candidates from which Cde. Beniprashad-Rayman's name was extracted to further extract from the said list a name of a person to fill the vacancy.

(iv) Election of Cde. Kayman Sankar as a Member of the National Assembly

I have been informed that the name of Cde. Kayman Sankar has been extracted from the list and that Cde. Sankar was on the 31st October, 1986 declared to be an elected Member of the National Assembly. Cde. Sankar has just made and subscribed to the oath as a Member of the National Assembly and he can therefore take part in the proceedings of the Assembly.

(v) Resignation of Cde. Patricia Daniel

Cde. Patricia Daniel, who was a Member of the Regional Democratic Council for Region 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice, and who had been elected by that Council to be a Member of the National Assembly, resigned as a Member of the Regional Democratic Council with effect from 1st September, 1986. With Cde. Daniel's resignation from the Regional Democratic Council, she has now ceased to be a Member of the National Assembly. I understand the necessary steps are now being taken to fill the vacancy in the National Assembly.

(vi) Congratulations to Members

Comrades and hon. Members, I would like on behalf of all Members of the National Assembly and myself to congratulate the four new persons: Cdes. McKenzie, Kranenburg, Parvatan and Sankar on becoming Members of the National Assembly. I welcome them to the Assembly and I extend best wishes to them in their respective assignments. I also extend best wishes to Cdes. Prashad, Thomas and Kisson in their new assignments.

(vii) Leave

Leave has been granted to Cdes. Chandisingh, Sawh, Williams and Mr. M.F. Singh for today's Sitting and to Cde. Gill-Mingo until 31st December, 1986.

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14:10 - 14:20 hrs

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Papers and Reports were laid:

- (1) (i) Annual Reports (4) of the Guyana Prison Service for the years 1982, 1983, 1984 and 1985.
- (ii) Annual Reports of the Guyana Police Force for the year 1985. /The Prime Minister/

14:20 hrs

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS ETC.

The following papers were laid:

- (1) Annual Report for the Ministry of Justice for the year 1985. [The Vice President, First Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney General].
- (2) Annual Report of the Ministry of Energy and Mines for the year 1984. [The Minister of Regional Development, on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister, Planning and Development].
- (3) Annual Report of the Guyana Co-operative Insurance Service for the year 1984.
- (4) Annual Audited Reports (2) of the National Insurance Scheme for the years 1983 and 1984.
- (5) Annual Report on the Office of the Auditor General for the year 1985.
- (6) Customs Duties (Amendment) Order 1986 (No.33), made under section 8, of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01 on 14th July, 1986 and published in the Gazette on 26th July, 1986.
- (7) Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order 1986, (No.34), made under section 4 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02 on the 5th August, 1986 and published in the Gazette on 9th August, 1986.
- (8) Constitutional Offices (Remuneration of Holders) Order 1986, (No.35), made under section 5 of the Constitutional Offices (Remuneration of Holders) Act, Chapter 27:11 on 24th July, 1986 and published in the Gazette on the 16th August, 1986.
- (9) State Pensions (George Carter) Order 1986 (No.44), made under section 4 of the State Pensions Act, Chapter 27:04 on 25th August 1986 and published in the Gazette on 27th September 1986.
- (10) State Pensions (Henwood Adrian) Order 1986 (No. 46), made under section 4 of the State Pensions Act, Chapter 27:04 on 13th October, 1986 and published in the Gazette on 18th October, 1986.

The Speaker: Comrades I have received two matters relating to motions of privilege from the honourable member Mr. Kwayana. One deals with that on the 30th July, 1986 the Assembly passed a motion at item five on the Order paper without dissent and contrary to the terms of that motion the Executive is proceeding with Municipal Elections under existing legislation as expressed in Chapter 28:03.

The other matter is he wishes to raise a question of privilege that the Assembly appoints a Special Select Committee to investigate all the evidence in possession of the police and or the Director of Public Prosecutions concerning the allegations against a former Deputy Prime Minister.

I received these matters only sometime this afternoon. I understand they were delivered about 10:30 hrs this morning and I have not been able

to address my mind properly to these matters of privilege and I cannot give any permission for it to be raised now, however, I am informed that we will meet on Friday at which time I will consider whether permission will be granted to raise these matters at hand.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Mr. Kwayana: On a point of order Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance is in arrears regarding is in arrears regarding some answers due to me that answers questions to Ministers which were due on the 30th July when we last met. I should like to have your guidance on this matter.

The Speaker: I think you are enquiring in respect of some paper in respect of a motion or a question which the Minister had promised to lay in the House on that date and which was not forthcoming. Now that you raised it I will make investigation and let you know on Friday what the position is.

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

Acute shortage of rice bags

Cde. C. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, I wrote you on the 27th October in connection with a matter of urgent definite public importance, namely the shortage of rice bags which is seriously affecting the rice industry. I hope that you and the House will agree to have the debate on this matter on an adjournment motion. This matter as I said is very very urgent.

The Speaker: You cannot be in default because you have sent this matter a long time, I had ample opportunity to consider this motion and I confess I am in some doubt as to whether it really qualifies or not, as I explained to you. However, against all the usual norms where is there doubt, you allow it to be given in favour of the other side, on this occasions I am changing the norm and I will allow you to raise it later on.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Presentation and First Reading

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Municipal and District Councils Act”.

[The Minister of Regional Development].

LOCAL DEMOCRATIC ORGANS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1986 – Bill No. 13/1986

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Local Democratic Organs Act.”

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1986 – Bill No. 14/ 1986

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Local Government Act.”

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ENACTMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1986 – Bill No. 15/1986

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Municipal and District Councils Act and the Local Authorities (Postponement of Elections) Act and to validate certain acts of councilors. [The Minister of Regional Development].

14:30 hrsPUBLIC BUSINESSCde. Dr. Jagan:MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT - DEFINITE MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCEAcute Shortage of Rice Bags

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, I think this is the worst year for the rice industry. Not too long ago I wrote the Prime Minister, spoke to the then Minister of Agriculture about the situation which faced the farmers namely an acute shortage of water. Fortunately a couple of weeks after I wrote them, rains came. But with that came another problem and that is a shortage of rice bags. This has been a problem but this year it has become more acute. Bags which are owed to farmers, hundreds of thousands have not been returned. This is even an illegal act. Apart from that there is not enough bags to satisfy the needs of the people. Consequently, the industry faces a severe loss. Because of the shortage of bags some of the paddy will not be reaped at all because of the rains the conditions of the fields and the fact that the combines cannot properly reap the paddy any longer. We know that in a very wet condition especially after heavy rains paddy falls, the stalks are broken and it is difficult for the combine to reap the paddy. So there will be loss on that count. But there is also the fact that the paddy cannot be reaped because there is nothing to put them into. We fail to understand why this should be so when the Government is claiming that agriculture is so important to the economy of this country, when the Government is fully apprised of the needs of the country so far as this input is concerned. Yet we find a situation in this very bad state. I was told that farmers are now resorting to carrying the rice to the silos without bags. They are putting them in trailers. If there was quick delivery at the silos maybe this could suffice at least to meet the situation partly, but what happened? They too have a perennial problem for farmers having to line up for days sometimes for weeks in front of the silos. The silos are not working properly. It is a fact. They are not working properly. As a result of that and administrative inefficiency the paddy is not taken in as fast as it is brought to the silos. As a result of this paddy is being destroyed. I was told this by the Rice Producers Association staff only this morning. I went to Riumzigt silo and there I found that the intake is so slow that large quantities of the paddy in these containers which the people are using as substitutes have been

destroyed. They are becoming discoloured and once the grain is discoloured the farmers will loose because it is graded on the basis of moisture content, colour and so on. Not only will the farmer loose but the country will loose. Cde. Speaker, we are in a serious situation. Imagine with all the money the Government has been spending on this venture with all the new varieties, many improved yields, yet rice production is falling. Since last year or in recent times we are producing less rice than was produced twenty years ago. In 1964, 101 tons of rice was shipped out of this country, last year it was about 60 tons. Your figures are not accurate but that is the sum projected for last year. The year before it was 47,000 tons and they said last year it was 60,000 tons. Cde. Speaker, why is it when we have so much land now drained and irrigated, for instance in the Mahaica Mahaicony Abary Scheme, when we have such improved varieties, when yields per acre have increased we are find a decrease in production and we are finding that we cannot get our export market requirements. Last year this country did not supply contractual arrangements for bauxite and rice. Why is it? The problem in the world today is to find Markets. Unfortunately for us today, that is not the problem. Our problem is production and productivity. Cde. Speaker, if agriculture is going to be the basis on which the economy is going to be revived, why is it there ^{this} is/shortfall of inputs? Fertilizers are not coming on time. Insecticides are not coming on time. When the farmers want water they cannot get it because they have antiquated pumps and they do not have them serviced properly, like the Maramarabise pump in the Canje river. Why is it that these pumps are not being serviced? We are going to be told that it is a foreign exchange problem. Then the priorities of the Government must be so set that the rice sectors of the economy on this occasion rice and agriculture must have priority.

14:40 hrs

(Cde. Dr. C.Jagan continues)

for the foreign exchange needs of the industry. I fail to see why we cannot have rice bags in time and as I said, not only that, there is also other forms of dissatisfaction. The Rice Producers Association which used to be managing and controlling the Rice Board with 11 out of 16 members today only has 2. They have no say. The farmers have no say in the administration of their industry. This is why we are not producing. Mr. Speaker, is it right that the farmers' organisation which used to service the industry today has been denied the grant which it used to get in colonial times, not just the time of the P.P.F. Government, when the R.P.A. was set up? Those measures helped to keep the industry in a viable state, in a profitable state since then. With the dismantling of that democratic structure, imposing on that democratic structure bureaucratic structures run from the top, we have a perilous situation today in the rice industry.

How are we going to solve the problem. A concession which was granted sometime ago to the Rice Producers Association that they can have a representative at each silo so that when the farmers bring their paddy to the silo they can have their representative there to see that they get a proper grain, has been taken away from them. Farmers cannot even see through their own representative what they should get according to standards which are laid down by the Government and the Rice Marketing Board. There are so many of them now, I do not remember all their names. One bureaucracy after another is set up. These are serious times and we must not only talk if we want to take this country out of the grave economic situation in which it finds itself.

Now we are going to stabilise the sugar industry at half its projected production by this Government. Maybe soon we will hear that we are going to stabilise the rice industry to half its potential production capacity. The farmers cannot plant rice but Guysuco now will leave sugar which it knows and go to produce rice. Cde. Speaker, ask the gentlemen around this table --

The Speaker: I do not think we are debating the rice industry or the sugar industry. What we have been permitted to debate is the great shortage

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14:40 - 14:50 hrs

of rice bags in the country. Let us confine this debate to that issue.

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan: I am talking about rice. We must not be restricted to bags.

The Speaker: No, sir. The Motion you have been permitted to raise and discuss is because of the lack of enough bags there is a tremendous loss in the rice industry. Do not let us get into the other aspect of it.

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan: Okay, Cde. Speaker, next week I will come with another one dealing with the rice industry. Cde. Speaker, this is one industry and I am trying to tell the people responsible --

The Speaker: You are talking of the whole rice industry and I am not allowing that.

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan: You should be practising law instead of being the Speaker. I am saying there are many things wrecking the rice industry and the most urgent one now is the question of rice bags. /Applause/ You are clapping, do not clap, bring the bags and give the people. Cde. Speaker, I want to know from the Government how many bags they ordered this year. When was the order put in? Was it paid for? If it was anticipated that so many bags were needed and so much foreign exchange was necessary to be spent, why is it we have this serious shortage. Do you think this is the reason why the previous Minister resigned? Or, is it that we are going to have a better Minister now to do the job? I am glad to see we have somebody who is also dealing with this matter from the point of supplying. Cde. Speaker, we would be happy to hear not only that the bags are here but that there will be no shortage in the future so that this industry will be able to prosper. The people in it who are suffering gravely will be able to run their affairs properly and the country can get out of the economic rut into which it has found itself.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Speaker, I rise to second this Motion and to express my opinion in relation to this question of bags. I want to make it clear in this Parliament that we on this side of the Assembly are very concerned about the rice industry and all industries in Guyana, and I want to make a few observations so that those who are not aware of what is going on in the rice industry dealing with empty bags are made aware.

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14:40 - 14:50 hrs

Persons in this Assembly should not allow themselves to suffer from environmental isolation to deal with the industries but they must have a complete idea of all industries in Guyana. In relation to the empty bags, this is only rice farmers, but what about the coconut farmers, what about the cassava producers? All these categories of production have to do with empty bags. Over 10 years there is this question of empty bags. It is a serious problem in this country and I find it difficult to defend this Government. I do defend this Government. Year after year there has been a constant lining up of the trailers with terrific amounts of paddy.

14:50 hrs

(Cde. Basir continues)

I should tell this House right now that there are more than forty six trailers laden with paddy while we are here interested in production to export these produce to have foreign currency, our produce is being allowed to deteriorate. Cde. Speaker, not only empty bags is the main question but when a rice farmer goes into the fields and he is of the opinion that he cannot get fertiliser, he cannot get empty bags, the roads are not well kept.... of that rice farmer, as such it was admitted in this Parliament that instead of having fifty thousand rice families as we had in the past, we are now down to about nineteen rice families and all this has come about because of the poor infrastructure in relation to the rice industry. It is unfortunate that I have to say this but we have so many Ministers in Agriculture it is difficult to know who is who and I hope within a short time I will be able to make very good acquaintances with our new Cde. Minister here. Comrade I sometimes wonder to know why can't we examine Guyana and see that we need a bag factory in Guyana, we need a fertiliser plant, we need a cement factory and I sometimes ask myself why we spend fifty seven million dollars to build so many things and an important thing like agriculture we don't have a bag factory. Don't tell me we can't do it, we have experimented with so many things and there was no attempt whatever to havegrown in this country. Cde. Speaker, if you travel along the Essequibo Coast now, there should have been forty six thousand acres of farmland and thirty thousand of rice land, only twenty thousand is being planted. Why? It is not because people simply want to run away but because bags are not there. I can invite you over as I normally do in this Parliament, go on the Essequibo Coast, you will see thousand of bags of paddies lying under the houses and these people like to have their paddies taken into the mill. Right now on the Essequibo Coast there are some farmers buying bags to assist. It is a very serious situation. We don't only want to come here and say what we are saying, we want to put an end to this situation. Cde. Speaker, I want to invite this Parliament and invite you also because there is no rice industry, there would be no production, no Parliament and no Speaker also. Cde. Speaker, this situation is most disgusting in this country and we are supposed to report to the people but

the situation dealing with bags is disgusting. I would like to urge this House and ask the Minister concerned to make every effort to deal with such an important industry. One Minister came here and said we must have these bulk trailers, that is the trailers must haveand fetch the paddy and bring it to the mill. I have seen several bulk laden trailers of paddy brought to the mill and by the time you get it to the mill it is sub-standard. This is precisely what happens right now in Anna Regina, one man brought A grade paddy, sold the paddy, when they are ready to prepare the paddy it is third grade paddy. I don't want to go into the statistics to tell you how much the farmers are getting but the question of having implemented trailers is not practical on the Essequibo Coast because dams are badly kept and when the combiners allow the paddy to go into these wooden trailers many of them find themselves in the trench. If we are to continue keeping noise after noise about empty bags and so on, some Minister, or somebody concerned ought to take this matter seriously and therefore I wish to urge this Parliament to make a desperate effort to save this industry and many other industries which are vitally important to Guyana.

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, I want to tackle this matter from another angle. Some questions have been asked, I have aof the knowledge of what goes on in the distribution of bags especially from the West Coast of Berbice, in various parts of the Essequibo Coast and other parts of the country. There are cases in which Agricultural Officers would assign say three hundred bags to a rice farmer according to the number of acres cultivated. When he goes into Burma that is cut down say by a half to one hundred and fifty, but even that one half is not available. This is the kind of plight and dilemma that the farmers are in. Others more knowledgeable of the rice industry have spoken at length, I want to pose the following questions and I hope the answers will come when the government replies. Is this trade in bags handled by the public sector or by the private sector? Is it a matter also for speculation as is sometimes said? Some months ago when I was in Corriverton there was serious reports from many rice farmers that the bag twine was being sold at extraordinary prices on the street and was not available to farmers. Allegations were made, I wrote to the Rice Authorities to ask them whether

they could confirm these allegations. There was no reply, but we must be told how this very important trade is handled, whether it is the responsibility of a particular public sector agency is it one of the things up for grabs for private negotiations and dealings while the interest of the rice farmer, of the industry and the country suffers.

The Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture (Cde. P. Mckenzie) –

Cde. Speaker, with reference to the availability of bags for paddy and rice at this time, permit me to say that arrangements were made to several agencies to obtain \$1.9 m bags. The agencies included Leonards of Holland, Fiat Limited of Italy and International Resources Corporation of the United States. The schedule of supply of the bags was to be one hundred and fifty bags in June and three hundred thousand in each July, August and September and in addition Cde. Speaker, the manufacture of bags by Wrays Enterprise, a local company is due mainly to delays in shipping arrangements and in payment for those bags, delays in payment for the bags, they did not arrive until commencing mid October when one hundred thousand bags arrived from Trinidad, ten thousand from the United States and on 29th October at 16:00 hrs the MV Villan arrived from Rotterdam, Holland with four hundred and sixty jute bags.

Cde. Speaker, the number of bags in the country at the commencement of the crop were three hundred and fifty thousand bags and these were available and they were made up primarily of bags purchased from traditional suppliers, shipment brought in from the United States and through recycling.

15:00 hrs

Cde. Speaker, the bags have been sent to the regions and in some cases as I speak are on their way to the regions. Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. By both road and river transport. In addition Wrays Enterprise has now received its delayed supply of raw materials and will be producing 25,000 bags per day commencing today. Additional raw materials for Wrays Enterprise is expected in December or in January of next year and those raw materials it is anticipated that they will be producing bags at the level which I spoke until May next year. Cde. Speaker, as it relates to the future further arrangements have been made for a supply of 1 million bags for next year and for twines with the International Resources Corporation of the United States. In addition to that foreign exchange has been made available to the local manufacturer Wray Enterprise.

Thirdly, Cde. Speaker, the Cde. President has appointed Cde. Vibert Parvattan as Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture and one of the specific reason is to be responsible for inputs into the agricultural sector. I therefore expect that Cde. Parvattan will ensure that all arrangements and such emergency arrangements that will be carried out.

Lastly, Cde. Speaker, the production of fibre has a high priority on NARI'S programme as has been identified in their annual report of 1985. As it relates to the distribution of bags, Cde. Speaker, that distribution is a co-ordinated function of the Ministry of Agriculture and GRMMA. We have no reason to believe^{at}/this stage or there is no information to the contrary that that arrangement will not be satisfactorily carried out. We feel confident, Cde. Speaker, that the problem has been solved and we see no reason for a recurrence of it at this time. /Applause./

Cde. Sankar: Cde. Speaker, I agree that there is a shortage of bags. There is no denial about that, The people who get up in this Parliament and try to mislead you about bulk reaping is a farce. All of us who sit in this Parliament here are knowledgeable that there is a serious foreign exchange shortage and we do not know of bulk reaping. If we look at our bulk storage in this country we have the capacity of approximately 2 million bags from Black Bush Polder, Riumzigt, Anna Regina. It is our duty to agitate for what is wrong but I think like wise it is our duty to encourage what must be done in this Industry. GRMMA are offering \$4.00 per bag of dry paddy on roadside. Any paddy, although I am a competitive Miller in GRMMA, I will still say the gesture is very good because we started this three years ago when Gavin Kennard was advisor to the President. We thought it best that instead of offering grains we ought to give an incentive for dry paddy. Any paddy that is dried and taken to these mills are being discharged forthwith. As a farmer as I stand here tomorrow I will close all my mill and dry all my paddy for \$4 per bag. I will make more profit in milling the paddy into rice when I dry it. What we should do is to sit and look into this industry and to see those aspect of it which is good and those that are bad. As far as I am concerned I am on the GRMMA board. We would like to have foreign exchange. I had a shipment of rice back dated to be shipped out of the country 17 days which would have meant approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ a quarter million dollars. Next to that shipment of bags wasn't coming. My experience in this rice industry is not today it is long.

Cde. Speaker, concerning bulk loading, if we can get our silos driers in order come next year it will be a much better siutaion in this country. Applause.

Adjournment

The Speaker: Cdes, this has brought us to the end of today's sitting.
Cde. Thomas.