

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 8]

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.

22nd Sitting

2 .p.m.

Friday 2nd October, 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. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P.,
Prime Minister (Absent)

Other Vice – Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Narain, A.A., M.P.,
Vice – President, Works and Transport (Absent)

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

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
Vice – President, Public Welfare (Absent)

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 (Absent – on leave)

Cde. O.E. Clark, M.P.,
Minister of Regional Development (Absent on leave)

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

*Non-elected Member

- *Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Absent)
- *Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,
Minister of Energy and Mines (Absent)
- *Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
Minister of Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Absent – on leave)
- *Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent)
- *Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture (Absent)
- *Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs (Absent – on leave)
- *Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Education (Absent)

Ministers (13)

- Cde. J.P. Chowrimootoo, J.P, M.P.,
Minister, Environment and Water Supply, in the
Ministry of Public Welfare (Absent)
- 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 (Absent)
- 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 Ministry
Agriculture

*Non-elected Member

- *Cde. Y.V. Harewood – Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Public Service
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister, Office of the President (Absent – on leave)
- *Cde. R.C. 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
- 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 (Absent – on leave)

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

Other Members (23)

- Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.
- Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
- Cde. M. Armagon, M.P.
- Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
- Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P. (Absent – on leave)
- Cde. J.B. Calderia, M.P.
- Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.
- Cde. E.B. Davidson, M.P.
- Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.

*Non-elected Member

Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P. (Absent – on leave)
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. (Absent – on leave)
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)
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) (Absent)
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/ Upper Essequibo) (Absent)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People’s Progressive Party (10)

Minority leader (1)

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

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.,

Minority Chief Whip

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.

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

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

(Absent)

Cde. I. Basir, M.P.

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

Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

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

(Absent – on leave)

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

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. Frank Narain, A.A.

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

PRAYERS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Comrades Chandisingh, Clarke, Shahabuddeen, Moore, Maitland-Singh, Rashid, Fredericks, Wright and Tiwari for today's sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Report was laid:

Annual Report of the Guyana Prison Service for the year 1977
/Vice – President of Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations on behalf of the Minister of Home Affairs/

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILLS – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

NATIONAL INSURANCE BOARD (TRANSFER OF SUPERVISION AND CONTROL) BILL 1981.

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend certain enactments for the purpose of transferring the supervision and control of the National Insurance Board from the Guyana State Corporation to the Co-operative Finance Administration.” /The Minister of Finance in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance on behalf of the Vice – President of Economic Planning and Finance/

The Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Sallahuddin): Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that the National Insurance Board (Transfer of Supervision and Control) Bill 1981 be read a Second time. Cde. Speaker, it is common knowledge that when the National Insurance Scheme was introduced in 1969 both the policy and administration of the Scheme fell within the ambit of the Ministry of Labour. But, because Cde. Speaker, it became necessary over the years to allow the N.I.S. to perform the roles and assume new responsibilities, in addition to the social security responsibility, of the N.I.S., social security remained its most important responsibility to the workers of this nation.

It also became necessary to augment the financial contribution which could be made to national development through the mobilization of funds by way of the N.I.S. and therefore, for some years the financial and administrative arrangements of the National Insurance Scheme was handled by GUYSTAC while the social security aspect and policy remained in the hands of the Ministry of Labour.

But, Cde. Speaker, for easier administrative purposes since the Co-operative Financing Institutions established in 1976 is the institution which ought to supervise all the financial institutions, it was thought that it would be a better arrangement to have the NIS brought formally under the purview of the Ministry of Finance and then eventually under COFA – Co-operative Financial Administration.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

(Cde. Sallahuddin continues)

Already, Cde. Speaker, between the years 1970 and 1976, five financial institutions have been created and now form the family of C.O.F.A. They are the Guyana National Co-operative Bank, the Guyana National Co-operative Bank Trust Corporation, the Guyana Co-operative Mortgage Finance Bank, the Guyana Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank and the Guyana Insurance Scheme. This measure is intended to include in that family the National Insurance Scheme. Therefore, it became necessary to affect a series of amendments by way of amending the Public Corporation Act, the National Insurance and Social Security Act itself and, finally, the Co-operative Financial Institution Act. Essentially, as I have indicated already, it is an attempt to streamline, to upgrade and to refine the financial and administrative arrangements within the family of financial institutions.

While we do that, we want to emphasise and also to re-emphasise that the National Insurance Scheme still remains first and foremost a public institution which has the responsibility to discharge to this nation social security benefits. Thank you, Cde. Speaker.

Question proposed.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, having listened to the Cde. Minister of Finance in his introduction to this Bill, I share the view that his introduction as to the reason for the transfer of the administration and control of the National Insurance Board from Guystac to the Co-operative Finance Administration is as bare and vague as the Bill itself. The primary reason advanced this afternoon by the Cde. Minister is that since C.O.F.A. was established in 1976, under which five financial institutions have already come, it has become necessary for the N.I.S. also to fall under C.O.F.A. in an attempt to streamline, upgrade and refine the administrative and financial arrangement of the N.I.S.

Five years have passed. I wonder if the reason advanced by the Cde. Minister is the real reason, since they are so vague and bare. The way this is done this afternoon, one really wonders. As we have heard, the financial administration and management have been criticized both by the I.M.F. and the I.D.B.

who were here earlier this year, and one wonders whether it is not in keeping with the criticisms that the move is today made to transfer the administration and control of the N.I.S. under the umbrella of C.O.F.A.

One may also ask, with all the failure in the management and the feasibility of most of the Corporations under Guystac, and since the N.I.S. does not have to bother as to production, as to whether it will reach its target or not since it is having on-going increases year after year because of the burdens being placed on the backs of the workers due to the increased contributions that they have to pay, and since large sums of money, large surpluses are involved within this Corporation, whether that is not also one of the primary reasons why this is being moved from there. I wish to remind comrades in this House, however, that when the National Insurance and Social Security Bill 1969 introducing this scheme came into effect what the P.P.P.'s position then was. Surely, those of us who were here then would recall that in principle the P.P.P. supported the scheme. The scheme then, as far as we understood it, was intended primarily to be a sickness scheme, a worker's scheme, a benefit scheme, all for the sole interest of the workers of this country, be they self-employed or whether they were employees of employers. In so doing I wish to refer to parts of the Explanatory Memorandum of that original Bill which said that the system would be administered by a National Insurance Board consisting of not more than twelve persons.

The Cde. Minister has this afternoon not informed us, however, whether that administration under the National Insurance Board under Guystac was satisfactory or not. Or it is just because it is a financial institution or a financial arrangement that they want to bring it under this umbrella? The Explanatory Memorandum went on to say that the scheme envisages a National Insurance Fund comprising contributions payable by employers and employees and which will be applied for the payment of benefits as well as expenses of administration. It goes on to give the various types of benefits.

I would wish this afternoon, in removing the supervision of this scheme, in removing the control of this scheme, to examine this explanatory note as far as this which I have said is concerned.

I went to re-emphasise “. Fund comprising contributions payable by employers and employees and which will be applied for the payment of benefits as well as expenses of administration.” This is the primary thing here as far as the contributions payable by employees and employers are concerned. When we examine the records, however, we ask ourselves how effective was that supervision. When we examine the records and we go back to this explanatory note of the Bill No.15/1969, the figures are very revealing and the present day realities are not really reflected in the words of this Bill.

First of all, we have moved away from that and the N.I.S. now has shares in the Guyana Printers Limited.

We come to the contribution to the workers, the primary objective of this Bill. The Government of Guyana debentures at 31st December, 1978, as reported in this latest Report, is \$146 million. My God!

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud, please read the explanatory note again for my benefit.

Cde. N. Persaud: It states:

“The scheme envisages a National Insurance Fund comprising Contributions payable by employers and employees and which will be applied for the payment of benefits as well as expenses of administration.”

It goes on to name the benefits. I do not know if you want me to read the whole thing.

The Speaker: Yes.

Cde. N. Persaud: It continues:

“These benefits will in the first place be old age benefit, invalidity benefit, survivor’s benefit, sickness benefit, maternity benefit and funeral benefit. The scheme further envisages that not less than two months after its initiation, benefits under a system of insurance against injury or death caused by accident arising out of and in the course of employment or resulting from disease due to the nature of employment will be payable in lieu of the benefits presently payable to workmen under the workmen’s Compensation Ordinance.

Cde. N. Persaud: It continues

Power is conferred on the Minister to make regulations for the purpose of giving effect to the system. All such regulations must be laid before the National Assembly.”

The Speaker: Thank you.

Cde. N. Persaud: Yes, Cde. Speaker, as I was saying, I am making these points primarily having in view the two words “control and supervision.” As I said, \$146 million at the end of 1978 in Government debentures and overseas debentures.

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Cde. N. Persaud: continues

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Workers “catching tail” in this country, payment inadequate, but N.I.S. has overseas debentures totaling over one million dollars at the end of 1978. Loans to the Guyana Transport Service Limited, I was not able to get the amount of loans, but at the end of 1978 the amount that was owing was \$400, 000. How much it was?

The Speaker: All these loans and debentures are free of interest or is income obtained there from?

Cde. Narbada Persaud: The point I want to make is that the scheme was not to derive income from the workers money but to get benefits for the workers. Cde. Speaker, I think that they should be given more. I am not saying that we will have \$30 or \$40 million lying idle, but what I am coming to is the proportion to the workers as against that going for investment. Cde. Speaker, in 1978 \$37 million was operating surplus. During that year \$44 million, the \$37 million and some from interest on debentures that was payable, went into government debentures. The amount of debentures at the end of 1980 according to the Bank of Guyana Report is \$240 million. What would have been interesting to note if the figures were available as against this \$240 million invested in government debentures up to the end of 1980, the total amount of millions that were really given in benefits to the workers. For example, the income for 1978 was \$48 million, administrative expenses \$4 million, benefits only \$7 million, and as I said \$44 million was invested in debentures. This is the point that I really want to make. I am not against investing, because obviously investment will bring interest and will increase the money, but moving away from the objective of the bill, this is where the whole supervision and the control lies (sank). Cde. Speaker, if we were to take 1980, one will see that from 1978 when income was \$48 million, it jumped to \$84 million in 1980. Out of \$84 million in 1980 only \$14 million which included administrative expenses and benefits were paid out. Where is the proportion? One can very well understand in investing, that our country is in a economic crisis and the government will need money, but at the same time the workers interest must come first. With your permission Cde. Speaker, I wish to make a very relevant point. I wish to quote Cde. Carrington who introduced this bill in the House in 1969 on the 17th day of July. Cde. Carrington said, “today it is history in the field of social security, to my mind nothing more spectacular than the introduction of this measure has happened over the years in this field.”

As I said earlier, the P.P.P.'s position was to support the scheme and we still do support the scheme. There are lots of spectacular things that things contrary to things what Cde. Carrington spoke about but the only spectacular thing and one is that millions of dollars are being accrued from workers strength and workers are not really getting back the benefits from them. Cde. Carrington went on to say "you can see the psychological effect in the workers of such a bill, he can work without fear under these conditions and so he will produce more." One of the primary facts why production and productivity is going down in this country is because the workers are not satisfied, not only with their wages, but with the benefits that they are getting under the scheme and therefore I say the supervision of this scheme and the control of this scheme were not to the expectation of the workers. Cde. Carrington said that because the workers will be satisfied with the scheme they will produce more. What is the reality today as far as those words are concerned? Are the workers satisfied with this scheme. The answer is obviously no. I want to call on the Cde. Minister when this supervision and control would have been transferred after today that they should ensure that the workers are satisfied so that they can produce more. Production and productivity in this country can go up – so much to take us out of the economic crisis in which we have found ourselves.

Cde. Speaker, I want to quote what a former colleague of mine said when he sat on this side of the House, he is no other than Ranji Chandisingh. He said "I should like to draw the government's attention that they would be more just if the rates of benefits were adjusted so that the lower income workers would have a higher rate of benefit than the higher income employees", speaking on the 18th day of July, 1969 on this very bill that was having its second reading. I wonder if Cde. Chandisingh sitting on that side of the House now will share the same view here and advocate among the government benches for this which he had recommended when he sat over here.

Today his position is different of course. Cde. Speaker, I would like to ask the Cde. Minister whether the transfer and supervision and control will stop the long delay in payment presently experienced by a number of people? I am presently involved in enquiring for sickness benefit for one of the employees associated with the Company where I work who had red eye since the early days of June. Up to now and after I personally have made five calls, he is being told that there is no telephone connection with benefits section, benefits section is removed and is now at Camp and Bent Streets. No telephone and no one is permitted to go there to make

enquires for sickness benefits, three months has already elapsed. Cde. Speaker, is this control that we have been asked to pass this afternoon to this financial institution, going to put an end to these long delays and frustrations for workers? I had to be involved in collecting funeral benefits for a person who died within our organisation. After three months, and after my personal involvement that pittance of one hundred dollars was paid. Cde. Speaker, this is the type of thing we are having? We have invested \$240 million in government securities and workers have to jump from place to place and told all sorts of things to get a hundred dollars.

I had to call on Mr. Charles on a number of occasions on behalf of people who are seeking medical treatment abroad, medical treatment, that is not available in this country, certificates are being obtained from various doctors and yet when they go and come back they are being told that they cannot be paid. A citizen of this country was granted leave to represent this country in a delegation abroad and while he was abroad he got his foot broken and was treated in a most discourteous manner and is presently not receiving sickness benefit and is suffering from a broken leg.

I would like to ask the Minister whether these things will really be stopped when the supervision and control of this N.I.S. board would have been transferred? What about the discourteous manner in which some of the officers treat people, what about the corruption with which some of these N.I.S. Inspectors particularly in the country are involved in when they go to visit employers, (some I said Cde. Speaker).

(Cde. N. Persaud continues)

1981-10-02

2:30 – 2:40 p.m.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

2.30 p.m.

Is the Cde. Minister going to give an assurance to this Assembly that every effort will be made, when the supervision and control are transferred, to stop these types of things that go on? It is not fair. It is not that they are unaware of these irregularities and the frustration of workers who travel day after day, week after week and cannot have any proper answer. Because of the constant rise in the cost of living the amount of money being given cannot any longer cope with the amount of money that workers have to pay to live.

Since the law says that a Report from the National Insurance Board should be presented to the Minister on the 30th June for the preceding year and that Report should be laid in the National Assembly, I should like to ask the Minister whether, with the transfer, he will give a guarantee to the House that in 1981 we will be getting the 1980 Report and not the 1978 Report. How valuable is this now? How applicable, how relevant is a Report for 1978 in the year 1981?

All we can do at this stage is hope. As I said, we support the National Insurance scheme but there are a lot of shortcomings and I do hope that with the transfer of supervisors and control efforts will be made to stop all these things to which I have referred and many others that I am sure the Cde. Minister is fully aware of. I do hope that more money will be paid to workers in order that they can satisfy themselves, in order that they can produce more so that they can be happy and so that the production and productivity that we have been calling for for years in this House, to take us out of the economic crisis, will be forthcoming from these workers.

The Speaker: Cde. Sallahuddin.

Cde. Sallahuddin (replying): Cde. Speaker, I want to say that I prefer to confine my remarks this afternoon to the essential purpose of the Bill and not to enter the arena which my colleague on the other side of the House has just gone into. I prefer not to debate the Scheme in general terms.

Nevertheless, I want to point out that Cde. Persaud misunderstands and misinterprets what I said about financial administration. He makes the point that the financial administration of the nation as a whole has been inefficient. The point I made is that the Co-operative Financial Institutions Act of 1976 is what we were referring to and not the administration of the finances of the Government, which is a different dimension altogether.

I want to say that while we agree that cases of inefficiencies have been brought to our attention from time to time with respect to the day-to-day treatment of persons – we do not deny that – but we would invite the members of the Minority Party to assist us because we have a joint responsibility in this respect to see whether we can work together, as we have always been doing, to streamline the efficiency and effectiveness of the Scheme.

I want to underline this: that while Cde. Persaud makes the point about the inefficiencies and the low quantum of the benefits discharged, let us understand that no where in the rest of the Caribbean is there a social security scheme that can parallel the one we have. *[Applause.]* Let us understand that today on the books there are in excess of 180,000 Guyanese contributors who benefit under a wide range of benefits and let us understand too that there are today over 8,000 self-employed persons who are registered with the Scheme.

There is another important dimension we must not ever lose sight of. It is this: if you want a social security scheme to survive, to grow and to expand, the levels of the benefits and the scope of the benefits have to be actuarially determined. It is not a case of arithmetic that because we have received, by way of contribution, A plus B dollars we must, by that very fact, pay out in benefits X dollars. It just does not work like that and in every instance, before there have been increases in the benefits discharged, the Government has been careful to engage the services of actuaries.

Let me emphasise that even during the course of this very year, since during the month of August, some new benefits have been added to the Scheme while there are now increased benefits in some of those that were there before. I want to point out to my colleagues in the Minority Party that we have begun to pay the increased funeral grant of \$400 from the effective date. *[Cde. Ram Karran: “What is the effective date? The Prime Minister made a statement two years ago.”]* We also have introduced the medical benefits scheme meaning that workers do not have to suffer industrial injury or illness to qualify under those benefits only but for ordinary illness and hospitalization they will now enjoy refunds on bills.

[Cde. N. Persaud: “It is not effective.”] Nevertheless I want to emphasise that the purpose of the Bill here this afternoon is to transfer the administration and control and not necessarily to go into a full-scale debate on what the N.I.S. is. *[Cde. N. Persaud: “Will we have an opportunity to do that at some time?”]*

I simply want to say inclosing my remarks that the investment we have in debentures overseas is with the L.D.C.'s in the Caribbean is not to the extent any longer that Cde. Persaud made reference to. One must recognize that the investment by way of debentures in some of the L.D.C.'s, including Dominica, was more humanitarian than anything else because we have to understand and appreciate that almost every year some of the L.D.C.'s suffer by way of hurricanes, suffer by way of heavy floods and therefore, in the spirit of regional integration, we see nothing wrong with investing some portion of the N.I.S. funds in those L.D.C.'s to help them to restructure whatever they have lost.

These are the remarks we wish to make. We know that although a member of the Minority Party has sought opportunity to raise some questions and queries they stand squarely behind the N.I.S. and we do not differ on that assumption. Thank you, Cde. Speaker.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

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Clause 1 to 4 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed as printed.

BILL – SECOND READING

PREMIUM BONDS BILL 1981

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to authorize the raising of loans by the Government,
By the issue of Premium Bonds, for purposes related to the defence of
Guyana and for other purposes. [The Minister of Finance in the Ministry
of Economic Planning and Finance, on behalf of Vice – President, Economic
Planning and Finance.]

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that the Premium Bonds Bill, 1981, be read a second time, and I wish to draw to your attention that National Assembly cancellation of the Premium Bonds Bill 1981.

The Speaker: Cde. Minister of Finance.

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Speaker, it is now common knowledge not only in this country, not only in this part of the world, but almost in every part of the world that this nation of ours faces a serious threat to its very survival as a nation. We say this, Cde. Speaker, because it is now common knowledge that almost seventy per cent of the territory of this country is under active claim by Venezuela. This National Assembly has been on several occasions apprised of two things. One is what the Venezuelans as the aggressors have been doing and two, what we as a nation have been doing in defence of our very existence.

The Bill intituled Premium Bonds Bill 1981, has been brought to the National Assembly to enable ordinary Guyanese citizens to participate actively in the defence processes, because we expect that our people will rise to the occasion not only by way of peace or acclamation but also by a demonstration by way of tangible means, and one of the means by which we hope that our people will rise to this occasion, is by way of purchasing premium Bonds. Per essentially, Cde. Speaker, the Bill itself explains the various mechanisms and operations of the processes. It is not the first occasion on which almost with a specific purpose in mind that Bills have been issued or are going to be issued, and we know that with the necessary administrative arrangements following immediately upon the passage of the Bill, that every Guyanese will seek opportunity to begin to purchase..

Cde. Speaker, perhaps it is worthy of note that some citizens of this country have already made contributions in the sense that they already have their denominations of 25 dollars in the hands of their supervisors or in the hands of their friends, only awaiting the opening to go to a branch that is authorised to sell these bonds to begin to make their purchase. Cde. Speaker, at this point we simply want to emphasise that proceeds from the bonds in the very first instance will go towards augmenting the defence capability of this nation. One provision of this Bill will also allow the Government to raise revenue for other specified purposes should the need arise.

I know that members of the Minority Party represented in Parliament have spoken in here in this Chamber, on the street corners and even abroad in some instances, in support of the territorial integrity of Guyana. Here is an opportunity, Cde. Speaker, for the very members of the Minority Party to match deeds with words and in making introductory remarks I want to urge them when they get out and to tell the workers that they are with us. Perhaps, Cde. Speaker, we ought to note that there are several mask organisations who stand ready and poised to make their own purchases. And I know for a fact that both the United Force and the P.P.P. are going to have their representatives in the first line on the first day when we put Premium Bonds 1981 on sale.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 17 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Assembly resumed.

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

The Speaker: Comrades, in five minutes from now we will have a meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.”

/The Vice – President of Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations./

Adjourned accordingly at 2.55 p.m.