

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.

23rd Sitting

2 .p.m.

Wednesday, 11th November, 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., - (Absent – on leave)
Prime Minister

Other Vice – Presidents (4)

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

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

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

Cde. O.E. Clark, 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 - (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 – on leave)
*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs	
*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., Minister of Education	– (Absent – on leave)

*Non-elected Member

Ministers (12)

Cde. J.P. Chowrimootoo, J.P, M.P., Minister, Environment and Water Supply, in the Ministry of Public Welfare	
Cde. U.E. Johnson, M.P., Minister of Co-operatives	– (Absent – on leave)
Cde. J.N. Maitland – Singh, M.P., Minister, Consumer Protection, in the Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection	
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. F.U.A. Campbell, M.P., Minister of Information	– (Absent – on leave)
*Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael, M.P., Minister, Forestry, in the Ministry Agriculture	
*Cde. Y.V. Harewood – Benn, M.P., Minister of Public Service	
*Cde. H. Rashid, M.P., Minister, Office of the President	
*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

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

Cde. A.W. Bend – Kirton – Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Women’s Affairs and
Housing

Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

*Cde. E.M. Bynoe, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

– (Absent)

*Non-elected Member

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.

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

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

Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.

– (Absent)

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

Cde. J. Gill – Mingo, M.P.

Cde. A. McRae, M.P.

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

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

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

– (Absent)

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.

– (Absent)

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. – (Absent – on leave)
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 – Pomerom/Supenaam) – (Absent)
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) – (Absent – on leave)
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)
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 – (Absent)

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. – (Absent)
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P. – (Absent)
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P. – (Absent)
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.
Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P. – (Absent)

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, J.P., M.P. – (Absent)
Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P. – (Absent)

OFFICERS

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

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Resignation of Cde. C. Nascimento

The Speaker: Comrades, I have to inform you that Cde. C. Nascimento, who was Minister of Mechanical Equipment in the Ministry of Works and Transport, resigned as a Minister with effect from November 1, 1981. As Cde. Nascimento was not an elected Member of the National Assembly while he was a Minister, he ceased, with his resignation as a Minister, to be a Member of the National Assembly.

Leave to Members

Leave has been granted to Cde. Prime Minister, to Cde. Shahabuddeen, to Cde. Johnson, and Cde. Campbell for today, to Cde. Tyndall from 7th to 27th November, 1981 and to Cde. Bishop from 2nd to 16th, 1981.

Extension of Sympathy to the Prime Minister

Since last we met, we have, with regret to record the death of the Prime Minister's mother-in-law. I am sure Members would wish me to extend to him our sympathy and condolences.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Papers were laid:

1. (a) Financial Paper No. 4/1981 – Schedule of Supplementary Provisions on the Current and Capital Estimates – Advances Made from the Contingencies Fund for the period ended October 31, 1981 – totaling \$20,164,851.

In terms of Standing Order No. 68 (1), the Vice – President, Economic Planning and Finance named Friday, November 13, 1981 as the day for consideration of the Financial Paper in the Committee of Supply.

- (b) Eleventh Annual Report and Accounts of the Guyana National Co-operative Bank for 1980.
- (c) Reports and Accounts of the Guyana Co-operative Insurance Service for 1980.
- (d) Constitutional Offices (Remuneration of Holders Order 1981 (no. 72), made under section 5 of the Constitutional Offices (Remuneration of Holders) Act, Chapter 27:11, on 10th September, 1981, and published in the Gazette on October 3, 1981.

- (e) Ministers, Members of the National Assembly and Special Offices (Emoluments) (No. 2) Order 1981 (No. 72), made under section 8 Of the Ministers, Members of the National Assembly and Special Offices (Emoluments) Act, Chapter 1:07, on 10th September, 1981 And published in the Gazette on October 3, 1981. /Vice – President Economic Planning and Finance/

- 2. (a) Annual Report of the Guyana Police Force for 1977.
- (b) Annual Report of the Guyana Prison Service. /The Minister Of Home Affairs/

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PUBLIC BUSINESS

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud rose.

The Speaker: There is no Public Business.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I wish to rise on a point of privilege. Cde. Speaker, I want to refer you to Standing Order 20. I know you are conversant with the wording of this Standing Order, but purely to record my point of view, it states:

“(1) Public Business shall consist of motions and Bills.

(2) Subject to the provisions of these Standing Orders, Government Business shall have precedence on every day except on Wednesdays when Private Members’ Business shall have precedence.”

I proceed to read the last paragraph which states:

“Government Business shall consist of motions and Bills sponsored by Ministers and shall be set down on the Order Paper in such order as the Government think fit.”

My submission to you is that in so far as the Government business is concerned the Standing Order is clear, that the Government enjoys the express right of putting its business on the Order Paper and also to say in what order that business should come. My interpretation of this provision of the Standing Order is that once this Parliament meets on Wednesday, seeing that there is nothing written into the Standing Order to say that the Government must decide when the Private Members’ Motions and Questions must go on the Order Paper, Private Members’ business should automatically be taken.

I want to link that, Sir, with Standing Order 12 which sets out the order of business of the day. It states:

“Unless the Assembly otherwise direct, the business of each sitting day shall be transacted in the following order.”

While it can be argued that the words “the business . . . shall be transacted in the following order” can be in so far as the order of the business concerned, I want to say that that is not the intention. The intention is that once this Parliament meets the expenditure is fantastic. Are we going to call this Parliament only for two and three minutes and involve the taxpayer’s money when there is business that can be dealt with, business that is of interest to the public?

You are not without information that Private Members have got a number of outstanding Motions and Questions that are qualified under the rules to go on the Order Paper. In the circumstances, I want to Record a very strong and vehement protest on behalf of the Members of this side of the House. Parliament is nothing if it is not deliberative and surely the intention of this Parliament, the intention of

the Constitution and the intention of the Standing order is not that Parliament must only meet when Government has business and it must meet on no other occasion. If we were to traverse the record of this Parliament in the current session, not one Wednesday throughout the year, since we took our oaths, was set aside for Private Members' business to be dealt with. Somebody has to be the custodian and guardian of the privileges of this Assembly and I want very humbly to suggest that that custodian is yourself. I want, on behalf of Members of this side of the Assembly, to ask you to see that Members' rights, the privileges of this Assembly, are protected. My point is that once the Parliament meets on a Wednesday then Private Members' business ought to be put on the Order Paper.

We can play with words. Will Government argue that, "good, you have filed several Motions and Questions, they are qualified under the Standing Order, there is no one to say when those Motions and Questions must be put on the Order Paper? Are we to assume that Private Members' Motions and Questions will never see the light of day and will never be put on the Order Paper for debating in this Assembly? That will be a sad day. That sad day has already dawned. I want to strongly record the protest of Members of this side of the Assembly and to say that today we are wasting taxpayers' money and we are denying Members the right and the privilege of debating Motions and Questions that are qualified and that can come on the Order Paper. It is true that the Standing Order says Private Members' business can take precedence. The argument can be that there is no business on the Order Paper. But how will it reach there? Who will put it? Shall we?

The Speaker: Before Cde. Hoyte speaks, I do not think you have raised a question of privilege.

The Vice – President, Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Hoyte): That is quite true, Cde. Speaker. But I wish to assure my good friend Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud that his interpretation, as is usually the case with his interpretation of all matters legal, is wrong. Private Members' business will take precedence if there is Private Members' business. If there is no Private Members' Business the point raised by my friend really falls to the ground. That is all Cde. Speaker.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: There is business if one provision of the Standing Order is drawn completely out and is not read in conjunction with other provisions of the Standing Orders which say how Motions are tabled when they qualify. When you read all those provisions together then it is clear that what exists at the moment of Private Members' questions and Motions that have not - -

The Speaker: I think you have has a very long say. I ruled that it is not a question of privilege. I have already ruled on this matter on previous occasions and I see no reason why I should change that ruling.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn to Friday, 13th November, 1981 at 2 p.m.
/Vice – President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations./

Adjourned accordingly at 2:14 p.m.