

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME 1]

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

26th Sitting

2.p.m.

Wednesday, 23rd January, 1974

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Naraine, J.P.

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1) and Deputy Prime Minister (2)

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,

Prime Minister

(Absent)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Dr. the Hon. P.S. Reid,

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development and Agriculture

Senior Ministers (7)

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,

Minister of Works and Communications

*The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice

(Absent)

*The Hon. H. Green,

Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

***Non-elected Ministers**

The Hon. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

*The Hon. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance

*Dr. the Hon. K.F.S. King,
Minister of Economic Development

*The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Housing

Ministers (6)

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

(Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House

*The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education

(Absent)

*Dr. the Hon. O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health

(Absent)

*The Hon. G.A. King,
Minister of Trade

Ministers of State (9)

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.
Minister of State for Agriculture

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Barbice/Corentyne)

***Non-elected Ministers**

The Hon. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

The Hon. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister

The Hon. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)

*The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of State – Regional

*The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State – Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro)

*The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)

*The Hon. F.U.A. Carmichael,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (8)

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Communications

Miss M.N. Ackman,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the
Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip

(Absent – on leave)

Mr. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary, (Agriculture),
Ministry of National Development and Agriculture

Mr. K.B. Bancroft,
Parliamentary Secretary (Hinterland),
Ministry of National Development and Agriculture

***Non-elected Ministers**

Mr. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Mr. J.P. Chowritmootoo,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education

Mr. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Other Members (18)

Mr. J.N. Aaron

Mrs. L.N. Branco

Mr. M. Corrica

(Absent)

Mr. E.H.A. Fowler

Miss J. Gill

Mr. W. Hussain

Miss S. Jaiserrisingh

Mr. K.M.E. Jones

Mr. M. Nissar

Dr. L.E. Ramsahoye

Mr. J.G. Ramson

Mrs. P.A. Rayman

Mr. P.A. Raymon

MR. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

Mr. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.,

Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.

Mr. H.A. Taylor

(Absent)

Mr. R.C. Vansluytman

Mrs. L.E. Williems

Members of the Opposition

Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, Deputy Speaker

Mrs. E. DaSilva

Officers

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F.A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M.B. Henry, AMBIM.

PRAYERS**ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER****Leave to Members**

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Minister of Labour and to the hon. Member Miss Ackman for today's sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

The following Papers were laid:

- (a) Customs (Exemption from Duties) (No. 3) Order 1973 (No. 165).
[The Minister of Finance]
- (b) Customs Duties (Imposition) Order 1973 (No. 166).
[The Minister of Finance]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read the First time.

- (1) Miscellaneous (Enactments) (Amendment) Bill 1974.
[The Minister of Finance]
- (2) Rent Control (Special Provisions) Bill 1974.
[The Minister of Finance]

- (3) Guarantee of Loans (Public Corporations and Companies) (Amendment)
Bill 1974.

[The Minister of Finance]

PUBLIC BUSINESS
BILL – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance
Company Ordinance.”

[Mrs. Willems]

The Speaker: Hon. Member Mrs. Willems.

Mrs. Willems: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company (Amendment) Bill No. 50 of 1973 be read a Second time.

The Bill seeks to amend certain sections in the Guyana and Trinidad Mutual Fire Insurance Company’s Ordinance Chapter 210.

An underwriters of insurance in several Caribbean territories through branches and agencies in Guyana, the company considers that it would be beneficial to its interest that it should establish subsidiaries in the territories wherein it underwrites insurance having regard to the varying law applicable in such places.

These amendments have been proposed by the company with the approval of the company’s Legal Advisers.

Clause 2 of the Bill seeks to amend section 4 of the Principle Ordinance to make as one of the objects of the company the power to establish or promote in or outside of Guyana any company with similar objects which may seem beneficial to the company.

Clause 3 of the Bill seeks to provide for the office of a Director of the company to become vacant if he is absent from Guyana for more than 17 consecutive days or if he overstays any leave granted to him by the company.

Clause 4 of the Bill seeks to amend section 67 of the Principle Ordinance to facilitate the execution of documents on behalf of the company.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, we are happy to support this proposed legislation. The Guyana and Trinidad Fire Insurance Company is one of the very important members of the private sector particularly in the context of development of Guyana.

Apart from other activities, we are all aware that it lends money to the public to build and improve homes, thereby contributing to the Government's programme to house the nation. We all know also that it make a significant contribution to the Government coffers in terms of income tax and corporation tax and its deposits.

The company has requested these changes in its Constitution and it is clear that the intention is to expand and to stimulate and streamline the operations of the company. We therefore have very great pleasure in supporting this Bill.

Question put, and agree to.

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Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved

Assembly resumed.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry I did not see this before, but this is just a typographical error that I want to point out. In the eight line of paragraph (a) of the proviso to the new subsection (i) the word “or” should be substituted for the word “of” so that it reads: “in each case the Resolution or a copy” instead of “of a copy.”

The Speaker: Thank you hon. Member. The correction is noted.

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

SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE (CONTROL) BILL

“A Bill Intituled:

An Act providing for the Control of the slaughter of cattle.”

**[The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development and Agriculture]**

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture
(Dr. Reid): Mr. Speaker, I would wish to give my friend on the Opposition a little more time to

study the Amendments if you have no objection and ask that we take it on Tuesday next when the House meets again.

Bill, by leave, deferred.

The Speaker: I understand that the third item on the Order paper, with the agreement of the Opposition, will be taken last. So would you kindly proceed with your Motion, hon. Minister of Finance.

MOTIONS

CONFIRMATION OF THE CUSTOMS (EXEMPTION FROM DUTIES) (No. 2) ORDER 1973 (No. 149)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, (now Customs Act, Chapter 82:01), confirm the Customs (Exemption from Duties) (No. 2) Order 1973 (No. 149), which was made on the 23rd of November, 1973, and published in the Gazette on the 8th of December, 1973.”

[The Minister of Finance]

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hope): Your Honour, the Motion that is now before the House seeks confirmation of the Customs (Exemption from Duties) (No. 2) Order 1973. This Order was made on 22nd November, 1973 and was published in the Gazette on 8th December, 1973.

The Order is, in fact, a very simple one. There are certain manufacturers of costume jewellery in the country who are relatively small manufacturers, and in the pursuit of the manufacturer of these goods they have to import certain small components. At the same time we know that costume jewellery can be imported from the rest of the CARICOM region where the

establishments which produce these costume jewellery do so under certain concessions, one of which, at least, is duty-free importation of components.

We have therefore sought to put the manufacturer of costume jewellery in Guyana on an equal footing with his competitors in the CARICOM area by removing the import duties on these components where they are of a metallic nature.

In doing that we had also put a consumption tax to recoup the duty lost from the importation of these components. The Order before the House is seeking confirmation of the Customs Order by virtue of which the duty was removed from the components for costume jewellery.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, let me compliment the hon. Minister and say these are the measures we like to see before Parliament to promote local industry, to promote industries generally so that our children can have jobs. It is clear from what the hon. Minister said, that the dropping of duty for the importation of the raw materials will be recovered through the consumption tax in respect of sales locally of the finished articles, but that if they are exported then they would be free of duty. But it is a measure designed to help local industry. It is a measure designed to provide employment, and, as such, we heartily support the legislation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

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CONFIRMATION OF THE CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT)

(NO.4) ORDER 1973 (NO. 158)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309 (now Customs Act, Chapter 82:01), confirm the Customs Duties (Amendment) (No.) Order 1973 (No. 158), which was made on the 12th of December, 1973, and published in the Gazette on the 14th of December, 1973.”

[The Minister of Finance]

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: Sir, the Motion before the House again seeks confirmation of the Customs Duty Amendment No. 4 Order, 1973. This Order was made on the 12th December, 1973 and was published in the Gazette on the 14th December, 1973.

Parliament will remember that following the proposals in the Budget, the Excise Duty on locally produced beer was increased from \$1.90 per gallon to \$3.16 per gallon. We also have an agreement with the CARICOM countries that beer, which qualified for Duty Free entry coming from CARICOM countries, will be admitted on the basis of duty equivalent to the excise duty chargeable on Beer and similar alcoholic beverages produced in Guyana.

The situation is that although the alcoholic beverage could qualify for duty free entry, the arrangement with CARICOM countries is that where a particular alcoholic beverage pays an excise duty in Guyana similar alcoholic beverage coming from a CARICOM country will pay import duty equivalent to the excise duty chargeable on locally produced alcohol. This, of course, includes beer.

It is on the strength of this agreement that we made the Order and now seek confirmation of that Order for the increase in the customs duty applicable to beer imported from the CARICOM region from \$1.90 per gallon to \$3.16 per gallon similar to the excise duty on locally produced beer.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Sir, this legislation is necessary in that the Beer imported from CARICOM countries should not be on any more favourable conditions than the local beer. We have to protect our local industries and as I understand it, this is in keeping with the CARICOM agreement. In fact, I would have thought that this legislation would have come in contemporaneously with the imposition of the tax on the local beer. We are doing it now: better late than never. We support the legislation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF THE GUYANA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(DISSOLUTION) ORDER 1973 (NO. 162)**

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in terms of section 51 of the Public Corporations Ordinance 1962 (No. 23), approve of the Guyana Development Corporation (Dissolution) Order 1973 (No. 162), which was made on the 13th of December, 1973, and published in the Gazette on the 14th of December, 1973.”

**[The Minister of Economic Development on
behalf of the Prime Minister]**

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Economic Development.

The Minister of Economic Development (Dr. King): Your Honour, on behalf of the hon. Prime Minister, I am pleased to move the Motion standing in his name. This Motion seeks the approval of the National Assembly to abolish the Guyana Development Corporation.

As Members of this House will know, the Guyana Development Corporation was established in order to assist in the development of industry in Guyana. At the time of its establishment there was not in existence the Guyana State Corporation. There was also not in existence the Co-operative Agricultural Development Bank and the Mortgage Finance Company. With the coming into being of the Guyana State Corporation and these two development banks, many of the duties which were formerly performed by the Guyana Development Corporation were no longer required to be performed by this corporation.

In addition, as the house knows, we intend to establish on the 1st February this year, a Small Industries Development Corporation specifically for the purpose of providing financial assistance to private sector and to the co-operative sector where they wish to develop small industries and also to provide management services and accountant services to small scale investors. As a consequence, the Guyana Development Corporation is no longer necessary and Government, in its wish to specialize and to rationalize its development programme, seeks the approval of this House to disband the Development Corporation.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are also happy to see a cutting down of bureaucratic institutions in Guyana and so we, obviously, would support this proposed legislation. Indeed, we remember during the debate on the Estimates in December last

year the hon. Minister had intimated that the Guyana Development Corporation would be dissolved and we had some debate on that and we welcomed the news that the time.

We note from the provisions of this Order that the Small Industries Corporation – thought it had been established already, but the hon. Minister said it is to be established on 1st February, 1973 – will be taking over from the Guyana Development Corporation and, particularly, that it has the power to retain any or all of the staff of the Guyana Development Corporation. On the employment side we would hope that no one will be out of employment or, if it is necessary to cut down on staff, we would welcome pruning of any staff that is not necessary. But considering the grave unemployment situation we hope that efforts will be made to have them settled in other Government organisations; the power is there to absorb all of them. Whether all will be absorbed or not, I do not know. So I suppose, Mr. Speaker, in the final analysis this is a change of name to put the accent on the development of small industries.

Certain functions will be carried out by these Banks enumerated by the hon. Minister and this Small Industries Corporation will, particularly, specialize in servicing small industries. We have need to develop small industries in Guyana. We have reiterated so often on this side of the House that we have need to find employment, particularly, for our young people, thousands of whom are leaving school every year. Therefore, we welcome the disbanding of this institution and we welcome the accent that will be placed on small industries which we hope will create the employment so necessary for our people at the present time.

Dr. King (replying): Your Honour, I welcome the support of the hon. member across the floor. I wish to assure him that no member of the Guyana Development Corporation will lose his job as a result of this exercise as, indeed, will no member of the Guyana Credit Corporation. This does not mean, sir, that all the staff of the G.D.C. and all the staff of the G.C.C. will be absorbed in this new corporation. What we wish to do is to start this new corporation on a sound footing with the best staff available and with the smallest number compatible with efficiency. What we have done, therefore, is to take some of the staff from the

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G.D.C. and re-deploy them in other Corporations and as we have done and will be doing with the staff of the Guyana Credit Corporation. I reassure the hon. Member on the aspects about which he seems concerned. We have already done the things which the hon. Member has advocated. We have re-deployed the staff and we are trying to ensure that the new organisation is started as efficiently as possible.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop):
Your Honour, I have indicated to the hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh, the nature of our business for next Tuesday. Accordingly, I wish to move the Adjournment of this House to that date, Tuesday, 29th January, 1974 at the hour of 2 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 2.30 p.m.
