

T H E
P A R L I A M E N T A R Y D E B A T E S
O F F I C I A L R E P O R T S

VOLUME 10

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD SESSION (1983) OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

35th Sitting 14:00 hrs
Friday, 1984-11-02

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (74)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (61)

Prime Minister (1)

- Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P., **(Absent - on leave)**
 Prime Minister

Other Vice-President and First Deputy Prime Minister (1)

- Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
 Vice President, Social Infrastructure and
 First Deputy Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

- * Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
 Vice President, Deputy Prime Minister and
 Attorney General
- Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,
 Vice President, National Development **(Absent - on leave)**
 and Deputy Prime Minister

Other Deputy Prime Minister (1)

- * Cde. W.A.L.H. Parris, C.C.H., M.P.,
 Deputy Prime Minister, Planning

Senior Ministers (8)

- * Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,
 Minister of Foreign Affairs
- * Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
 Minister of Home Affairs
- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
 Minister of National Mobilisation
- Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
 Minister of Energy and Mines
- * Cde. C.B. Greenidge, M.P.,
 Minister of Finance

- * Non-elected Member

Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister of Forestry

Cde. Dr. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,
Minister of Health and Public Welfare (Absent - on leave)

* Cde. M.L. Parris, M.P.,
Minister of Education

Ministers (6)

Cde. Urmia Johnson, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of National Development (Absent - on leave)

Cde. Yvonne V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Education

* Cde. K.W.E. Denny, M.P.,
Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives

Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of Youth and Sport within the
Ministry of Education

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,
Minister of Transport within the Vice-Presidency
of Social Infrastructure

* Cde. Dr. S.P. DaSilva, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture (Absent)

Ministers of State (2)

Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State within the Ministry of
Internal Trade and Consumer Protection

Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.S., M.P.,
Minister of State within the Ministry of
Regional Development

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

Cde. Agnes W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Housing, within the
Ministry of Health and Public Welfare

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Youth

Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, National Development

Government Chief Whip (1)

Cde. Bidiawattie Tiwari, M.P.,
Government Chief Whip

Other Members (24)

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.
Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.
Cde. Philomena A. Rayman
Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. Joyce Gill-Mingo, M.P.
Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
Cde. M. Armogan, M.S., J.P., M.P.

* Non-elected Member

Cde. Bissoondai Beniprashad, M.P.
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
Cde. Elaine B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
Cde. Patricia Fredericks, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. Joyce M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.
Cde. Edwina Melville, M.P.
Cde. Y. Khan, M.P.
(One seat vacant)

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P.
Cde. Bhagmatee Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. Dianne Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni) (Absent)
Cde. W. Bipat, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)
Cde. Nellie R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)
Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)
Cde. Cora A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
(Vacant) (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

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

Deputy Speaker (1)

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

Other Members (8)

Cde. Janet Jagan, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P., (Absent)
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. H. Nokta, 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. (Absent)

OFFICERS

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

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

PRAYERS

14:05 hrs

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKERLeave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cdes. Hoyte, Chandisingh and Van West-Charles and the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh for today's Sitting. Cde. Johnson has been granted leave until 25th November and Cde. Chin until 30th November, 1984.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Papers were laid:

- (i) Conventions and Recommendations adopted at the 67th Session of the International Labour Conference held in Geneva in June 1981.
- (ii) Conventions and Recommendations adopted at the 68th Session of the International Labour Conference held in Geneva in June 1982. The Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Greenidge): Cde. Speaker, I would like to make a statement in connection with the acquisition of the assets of the Royal Bank of Canada. Following an approach by the Royal Bank of Canada, the Government of Guyana and the management of the Royal Bank of Canada have agreed to acquire the Royal Bank operations in Guyana. It is the intention of the Government to form a new entity as quickly as possible shortly thereafter.

Shares in the proposed new company will be offered to the citizens of Guyana including the staff of the Bank. It is also intended to invite the National Insurance Scheme, the Insurance Companies, Trade Unions and other Guyanese entities to participate as shareholders in this new enterprise. In

In accordance with the agreement, the Royal Bank will continue to provide the quantum of services that it currently provides to its subsidiary. The new company will offer existing employees employment on terms no less favourable as a whole than those they currently enjoy. This transfer will be effective November 30, 1984

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS - FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Rice (Regulation of Manufacturing and Marketing) Bill 1984 - Bill No. 17/1984 The Minister of Finance and Economic Planning on behalf of the Prime Minister.

PUBLIC BUSINESSMOTIONSUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 23

The Minister of Home Affairs (Cde. Thomas): Cde. Speaker, I seek your leave under Standing Order No. 83 to move the suspension of Standing Order No. 23 to enable a Motion of Sympathy on the death of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India to be moved at this Sitting by the Cde. Vice President and First Deputy Prime Minister.

The Speaker: Leave is granted.

Cde. Thomas: Thank you, Cde. Speaker. I now move the suspension of the Standing Order for the purpose for which I have just indicated.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

The Speaker: Cde. Vice President and first Deputy Prime Minister.

SYMPATHY ON DEATH OF PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death, under tragic circumstances, of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India, and directs that an expression of its condolences be conveyed to her sorrowing relatives and to the Government and People of the Republic of India." /The Vice President Social Infrastructure and First Deputy Prime Minister./

The Vice President, Social Infrastructure and First Deputy Prime Minister

(Cde. Green): Cde. Speaker, 50 minutes before midnight on Wednesday, 31st October this year and at 9.20 a.m. New Delhi, a hail of bullets downed a heroine, 90 minutes later, inspite of the best medical efforts, she died. The world, in particular we of the Third World and the 714 odd million citizens of India, had lost a distinguished leader, a great fighter, a patriot and the outstanding woman of her generation. Early Wednesday morning here in Guyana the Guyana News Agency confirmed that Mrs. Indira Nehru Gandhi was assassinated - 20 days before she was due to celebrate her birthday.

Leaves have their season to fall. The paddy in our rice fields have a time to ripen, the sun has a time to set, but death, it appears, has neither time, place nor season. Cde. Speaker, I believe that like so many of us you must have pondered on such things as we try to recover from the initial shock of this horrible and outrageous act.

On behalf of the Cde. President, the Government and the people of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, it is with deep feeling and grief that I reflect upon the great loss suffered by India, the Commonwealth, the Third World and indeed all mankind. To her sorrowing relatives and particularly to the people of India to whom our hearts go out, we extend our sympathy.

But perhaps as we mourn we can seek some consolation, if that is at all possible, in the words of Tyrone Edwards, when he observed that this world is a land of the dying. The next world where she has gone is the land of the living. Mrs. Gandhi as we know was a personal friend of our own Cde. President. She was a loyal and understanding supporter of our cause. India and Guyana share many common objectives and on international issues often found common ground and together share a proud and respected place as members of the Commonwealth and Non-Aligned Movement. In addition to our policies and positions being similar in many areas, as part of our heritage, we trace the origin of the majority of our citizens to the subcontinent of Asia where during the 19th and 20th centuries, that period of European colonisation, many people were up-rooted from India and brought to toil in Guyana.

14:15 hrs

(Cde. Green continues)

a painful time of the desecration of our cultures when the system sought to bring to nought our dignity and almost robbed us of our self confidence.

Somewhere it is said that out of evil cometh good - today their descendants form an integral and important ^{part} /of our society and the struggle. Indeed, we need only to look around this Parliament Chamber and see how we are indebted to India. That beautiful chair Cde. Speaker used by you is a gift from the people of India to the people of Guyana. The prayer which we use to invoke guidance and which we recited a few moments ago, the prayer which we use to help us start every session of this Parliament is from the Indian Philosopher and teacher Rabindranath Tagore.

Indira Gandhi became Prime Minister on 19th January, 1966 when the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri died suddenly and apart from a brief period between March 1977 and January 1980 she effectively piloted the ship of State and the second most heavily populated country in the world.

Mrs. Gandhi was born on the 19th November, 1917 in Allahabad, India, the offspring of the well known Jawaharlal Nehru. In her early childhood she showed leadership potential and founded Bal Charkha Sangh, and in 1930 "Vanar Sena" of children to help Congress Party during the Non-Co-operation Movement.

On 26th March, 1942, she married Shri Feroze Gandhi, six months after that She was imprisoned by the British.

She became associated with a large number of Organisations and Agencies and was recognised by many international institutions. Indeed she held several honorary doctoral degrees conferred by Universities in both the East and the West.

So interesting and charming was Mrs. Gandhi that for two consecutive years a poll by the french institute of Public Opinion identified her as the woman most admired by the french and in 1971 was the most admired person in the world according to a special/poll Survey conducted in the USA. Gallup

However, she must be remembered by us for her consistent effort to bring peace to this world and her deep concern about the future of mankind. In 1982 she was elected Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement and was a tower of strength and influence in maintaining the true spirit and purpose of Non-alignment.

Cde. Speaker, I am sure that like so many of us we recall in October of 1968 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited with us here in Guyana. She addressed the nation on three occasions and this beautiful woman won the hearts of every Guyanese man, woman and child. While in Guyana she spoke about the historical bonds between the two countries, the tapestry of our racial heritage, our joint pursuit of development which she then described as slow, hard and painful. She appealed then for tolerance. Of particular importance she noted our common pursuit of peace, peace internally and externally and our commitment for social justice. It was a privilege and pleasure of many of us in this Parliament to have met this lady.

Mrs. Gandhi gave selfless and sterling service to her country and indeed to all mankind. Our Cde. President aptly described her as "his friend and a devoted and indefatigable fighter for peace and economic justice who worked tirelessly for her country and for harmonious relations amongst states."

Thirty six years and nine months ago another great Indian Leader was assassinated - Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the Mahatma or Great Soul. As we recall this and other tragic events let us hope that not only India but the rest of the world would be spared the agony of similar tragedies.

Today many are asking that the perpetrators of this wicked deed be brought to justice. This perhaps is the norm; others have sought to find their

own solutions and responses, but for us and the Government our concern is that the wounds inflicted on this country will soon be healed. The shots fired were villainous, the act was horrible, the event tragic and unfortunate, but we must now pray for peace and a continuation of the progress which the late Prime Minister Gandhi worked so hard to achieve. Let us hope that her spirit and the love she had for her country will guide even the evil doers to turn away and use their hands for the building and the creation of a better life for all the people of India.

Her last words we are told at the rally the day before she died - those words are powerful and prophetic - "If I die today, every drop of my blood will invigorate the nation". Cde. Speaker, we hope and pray that her blood will not only invigorate India but help to make our world a fairer and a better place.

May her soul rest in peace and may her life inspire the people of India, Guyana and indeed the world to pursue peace not conflict, by promoting people's participation. Tomorrow, her ashes will ascend to glory forever. It is my duty Cde. Speaker, to ask that this honourable House accept this motion that this National Assembly records its deep regret at the death or the tragic circumstances of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of the Republic of India and direct that an expression of its condolences be conveyed to her sorrowing relatives and the Government and the people of the Republic of India.

14:25 hrs

Minority (Cde. Dr. C. Jagan): I wish to join, on behalf of the Members on this side of the House, Government Benches on this Motion of condolence and expression of sympathy on the occasion of this great tragic loss of a great fighter who has fallen at the hands of assassins' bullets. Her loss is not only a loss to India. Indeed, it is not only a loss to the Third World but to the whole world. She was, above all, an indomitable fighter for peace, disarmament and for a New World Order.

She comes from a long and illustrious family of fighters. Her grandfather, Motilall Nehru, was one of the early fighters for India's independence and then, of course, there was her more famous father, Jawaharlal Nehru.

On this sad occasion we tend to see those who are immediately involved, two Sikh bodyguards. What we must not forget are the hands behind those who pulled the triggers. Before this tragedy we had an earlier tragedy, again from the bullets of assassins. I refer to the death of Mahatma Gandhi. That also was seen as coming from the hand of a fanatic Hindu but there, too, we have to see that the British imperialists set the stage very carefully when, on the eve of independence, they partitioned India and set the stage for millions of Hindus and Muslims to be slaughtered in India and finally for the Mahatma to be destroyed because he was fighting for unity, Hindus and Muslims.

I wish to say that, along with the Gandhis, there were the Nehrus side by side fighting. Imperialism has never forgiven the Nehrus for what they did, not just to get independence but to build, after the attainment of political independence. When the cold war was started in 1947, engineered by Winston Churchill, the arch imperialist who had said, when the Atlantic Charter was declared in 1941, that he was not appointed the King's first Minister to preside over the liquidation of the British Empire. He was referring to India's independence. He, along with Truman, in 1946/7 started the cold war and in their

vital interest to keep dependent countries as colonies and to keep as neo-colonies those who had emerged free like India, they wanted to embrace these countries in their so-called security zones, be it Latin America, be it the Middle East, be it the Far East or elsewhere. Jawaharlal Nehru refused to go along with the military blocs which were being set up by imperialism - NATO, BAGHDAD PACT, SEATO, RIO PACT and so on, and for that the Nehrus were never forgiven. Dulles, the then chief cold warrior of the U.S. ruling class, described non-alignment as immoral. "If you are not with us then you are against us. You cannot be non-aligned; you cannot be neutral." That was the edict.

Indira Gandhi came to power in very tragic times, difficult aggravated times when the world was facing crisis. In the Far East with the Vietnam war and aggression against India, difficult times reached Indian shores. In 1971 her brilliance as a political strategist was demonstrated when West Pakistan rulers invaded East Pakistan after Rahaman, the father of Bangladesh, East Pakistan, was arrested and many of the leaders were assassinated and nearly eight million people, to save their lives, flowed across the border of East Pakistan into Northern India. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi went to all the Western capitals asking for help. She said "This is not our responsibility." It was costing India eight million rupees per week to keep those people in food.

I remember visiting that area in 1971 and I saw the terrible conditions under which those people were living in refugee camps. Promises were made but nothing was done in a tangible way. How was the problem to be solved? Brilliantly, she went around, got public opinion on her side knowing that the only way was either to get help or to send back those refugees to their homes. Since the help did not come, the only other way to resolve the question was by military means. Before doing so, knowing that Pakistan was backed by China and the United States of America, she signed a 20-year Agreement with the Soviet Union, a friendship agreement and, of course, that helped when resort was made to military means to drive out the Western Pakistan military forces from East

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14:25 - 14:35 hrs

Pakistan. She was able by that strategy to checkmate the Americans and Chinese from coming to the help of Pakistan. For signing this 20-year Agreement, her friendship agreement with the Soviet Union. she also, like her father before her, was not forgiven.

National Assembly14:35 hrs

(Cde. Dr. Cheddi Jagan continues)

And so in more recent times especially in this very aggravated period when there is an attempt again not only just to resuscitate the cold war, but to roll back socialism, to stop National Liberation Movements, and to destroy revolutionary governments, progressive governments, anti imperialist governments and to set up puppets in various parts of the world, in that part of the world, Pakistan being armed to the teeth with an alliance agreement with imperialism and \$3-1/2 billion in weapons: this was the challenge which was facing India. It was not only to fight against revolutionary Afghanistan, but to destroy India, and particularly because of the role Indira Ghandi played in the Non-Aligned Movement. In 1979, there was a great deal of abuse in the Western camp about Fidel Castro having the chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement. And there was no doubt, hope that when the change took place, that perhaps the changes will also occur within the Non-aligned Movement but that was not to be, for Indira Ghandi carried on in the tradition of those who were firmly anti-imperialism who were committed to the principles of non-alignment which were enunciated in 1947 in Delhi, and later in 1955 at Bandung – that is that states must not join military blocks and they must fight against colonialism, neocolonialism, imperialism, racism, apartheid and later sionism. There were the principles which she stuck to. Imperialism was not able to turn her from the course which her father set in those early days and which militants and revolutionaries like Fidel Castro carried on with. How then to move this great nation? A nation of so many people who can exercise a tremendous political force depending on which side she goes. It was for this reason that imperialism began its intrigues in India. We saw that before in Nigeria when imperialism attempted to break away from Africa, its most profitable state because of its oil wealth. Unfortunately that failed and so we had in India too in recent times, many attempts to break up India to cause trouble here and there so that India will not play the role it is playing especially in the non-aligned movement, and on the world scene in the cause of people and progress. We have already accounts of what happened in Punjab. We read where when those who wanted to make a separate state, they used the religious temple, the Sikh Temple as a refuge to carry on their subversive activities. We saw too when that happened there were suggestions by the Indian Government that Pakistanis disguised as Sikhs and encouraging them were also present. Unfortunately in that skirmish, the religious head of the Sikhs was killed and then there was a threat that Indira Ghandi would be assassinated.

It did not take long before tragedy occurred and thus I related this not because I want to give political lesson here, but for us to understand that when you begin to fight for peace, for progress, you find yourself coming against imperialism and reaction. We have always to keep this in mind. If we are to progress to make the necessary alliances so as to create the necessary unity inside the country and the necessary alliances outside in order to circumvent the wiles and tricks and the stratagem, their reactionary friends who sometimes are very much in our midst in these countries.

Cde. Speaker, let us hope that the Indian Government and the people of India will use good sense and judgement to stop any kind of blood bath because in such a situation there is a lot of emotionalism. I think as the new Prime Minister just said, not all Sikhs are disloyal. The President of the Republic of India is himself a Sikh and we know that the vast majority of Sikhs did not go along with the extremists. They wanted a degree of autonomy, but they wanted to be within the union, the single State of India and not to have a separate State. Therefore, let us hope that the Indian Government along with friends would be able to stop any further bloodshed in this very dangerous situation and at the same time let us hope that the new leadership will be able to hold India together. This was the illustrious role played by Indira Ghandi, because of her stature she was able to do this. Now that she has gone with the divisions and subdivisions which have taken place in the political life in India in the last one and a half decades. Clearly the will or means to resist imperialism has been weakened and therefore, I hope that the new leadership will be able to surmount these divisive influences and all these outside interferences whose aim is to break up India and turn India away from the path of non-alignment, the path of fighting for peace, disarmament and social progress. I join with the Members of the Government in expressing our very deep sympathy and our condolences to the family of Indira Ghandi.

Question put, and agreed to.

Members stood in silence for 1 minute.

Motion carried.

14:45 hrs

BILLS - SECOND AND THIRD READINGSNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF GUYANA BILL 1984

A Bill intituled:

An Act to provide for the establishment of the Agricultural Research Committee, the National Agricultural Research Institute of Guyana and the Agricultural Research Advisory Council, and for matters connected therewith. /The Vice President, Social Infrastructure and First Deputy Prime Minister/

Cde. Green: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of the National Agricultural Research Institute of Guyana Bill 1984 which was first published on the 29th September, 1984.

This Bill is one that engaged the attention of Government and the Ministry of Agriculture for some time now and is a Bill which we can consider important and, so far as the Assembly is concerned, non-contentious. For some time now, no less a person than the Cde. Leader and President, supported by every right-thinking member of our society, has been stressing the importance of agriculture in terms of our national development and the need to promote agricultural development if Guyana is to prosper. There are many difficulties that face societies such as ours as we seek to perfect agriculture and to ensure that we provide the physical and human infrastructure so that agriculture can continue along the road of progress. It has started and we know will continue under the banner of the People's National Congress.

In ordinary terms one can argue that whether you are a professional or non-professional, that with the availability of knowledge today and the tremendous advances made in the field of science, particularly in so far as soils and other things are concerned, that there ought to be no real barrier of producing to the optimum. However, in many developing countries the fundamental mistake, if not a major mistake, in the field of agriculture and indeed in the field of science generally is that we tend to copy slavishly in some cases from the research information and therefore the technology of the rich developed societies. In so doing we have tended to reshape our own economies and to distort what ought to be the efforts of our own people and, in this case, our farmers. Research is vital at this stage of the war and the struggle to optimise our resources, research that is relevant, research that has to do with what will take place in Guyana. For example, to the average farmer

who requires to plant legume or any other vegetable crop, we still have to rely on seeds produced in other societies and which did not necessarily take account of our weather pattern, the particular conditions under which the seed, once planted, is expected to grow. At the moment there are a number of agencies and institutions that deal with research in one way or another and the purpose of this Bill is to effect optimum co-ordination so that the respective agencies and persons will function under one umbrella, so to speak, and therefore make full use of our meagre resources and facilities. We will, as a result of the meaning and spirit of this Bill, make full use of our skills and the materials and so achieve the national goal of self-sufficiency and to ensure that we use our indigenous materials and skills.

The Bill, Cde. Speaker, is in several parts. The first part deals with the establishment of the National Agricultural Research Committee. This Committee will be headed by a Chairman and will be represented by a number of bodies including the institutions of learning like the University of Guyana. There is the proposal in the Bill also to establish the institute properly, the National Agricultural Research Institute of Guyana, the headquarters which will be identified by the Minister based on the requirements and the particular time. It is proposed to appoint a director and officers and persons with appropriate skills to ensure that this institute executes the mandate given.

Then there is the Agricultural Research Advisory Council and this will consist of a number of persons not exceeding 25, and those persons are expected to be persons who are gifted with the knowledge and experience that will help us in the pursuit of the objectives of this Bill. As you perhaps are aware, Cde. Speaker, the base for this already exist and recently the Cde. President and Prime Minister, respectively, opened the complex at Mon Repos and at Burma. A very serious approach has been taken to the whole question of research and for your information the country has been divided into five, what we term, equal zones. The mistake we tend to make is to see Guyana as one country, not recognising that there are five distinct areas in so far as agriculture is concerned.

There is the Coast and, of course, when you move from the Coast you have the intermediate savannahs which we need to develop, the rain forest, the South-West savannahs, better known to us as the Rupununi, and the mountain areas and up-land

areas. The institute will take account of every one of the equal zones to which I referred.

However, for the very fact that the majority of people at the moment live on the Coast, the first effort is being made to do research on the Coast and the institute at the Mon Repos Complex will be the nucleus around which research would take place. The intermediate savannahs will be headquartered at Ebini and the other areas will be developed as the institute gets on its feet. This research institute will cater not only for what we regard as plant life and trees, but will cater for livestock, fisheries and later forestry.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY14:55 hrs

(Cde. H. Green continues)

Another important area will be the question of seeds that will really grow and make the farmer a more prosperous person and reduce the hazards we have at the moment where sometimes when a seed is planted we pray that something will be produced.

Cde Speaker, I intimated that this is a non-contentious Bill, that the main function of the committee as proposed is to report and advise the Minister on policy matters relating to agricultural research and I repeat that the Council will deal with agricultural research and they will in turn give advice to the relative agency. One may ask what about the IST. IST will be working closely with this new institution and will remain as the sort of umbrella organisation through which science developed in this country will be channelled.

Cde. Speaker, Guyana number of things which can be found in the earth. The establishment of this institute to make further use of the human resources we have is one further step by the Government to ensure that agriculture is given the support and to build our economy and ensure that we attempt to feed not only ourselves but our neighbours in the Caribbean and indeed the millions of people in the world who need the food from the land we have in abundance. Cde. Speaker, I commend this honourable Bill to this House.

Question proposed:

The Speaker: Dr. Jagan.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Cde. Speaker, the Vice President in introducing the Bill said it is not a matter of much controversy. I agree with him, however, I would like to note that it seems rather strange after twenty years of being in the Government, now we have to see the light of day of such a Bill, but that is not the main point. It is not that there was nothing before. For instance, in the explanatory note, it says 'The main functions of the Agricultural Research Committee as proposed, are to advise the Minister on matters of policy relating to agricultural research and to supervise and control the functioning and activities of the National Agricultural Research Institute of Guyana.' He was being advised all these twenty years. All we are doing is changing that organisation for another one in the related committee and what about research? We had under the old colonial regiment in the Sugar Industry one of the best research stations in the world.

A Bookers Official – I forgot his name now, has written papers and all kinds of things about the wonderful research which was found in Guyana particularly with respect to sugar. What happened to that station, it is closed up. There are no more research in rice, we had Indian experts brought here to do research in rice. What is happening now Cde. Speaker, the people are going back to ... because they cannot get fertilisers now and they have to go with grass-knives now because they cannot get combines. What about the agricultural station at Mon Repos – that was supposed to be an external station but it is practically closed Mr. Speaker, I think the North Koreans are now trying to pump some life into it. Now they are setting up a second agricultural committee within the National Research Council, so we are now going to set up this one which is going to work in that one. Why all of this? Tell us why all these and the others which I referred to failed. Cde. Speaker, nobody is against research but when we reach the stage where in the rice industry we are producing less than twenty years ago, despite all the research and the improved facilities and everything, then we must ask ourselves serious questions if we are to achieve the aim which the Vice President spoke about, not only to feed ourselves but to feed the West Indies.

Cde. Speaker, the fundamental question which should be discussed is who is going to ... the American line I have said it over and over again. Let the Board serve the farmers, right now the farmers are being pushed around.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY15:05 hrs

(Cde. Dr. Jagan continues)

Right now the farmers are being pushed between the Board and the others. I was told in Essequibo recently that farmers have to leave their padi for two or three days waiting for it to be taken in. this was at Anna Regina. Go to the West Cost, Demerara, and to Ruimveldt and it is the same thing – two, three days, sometimes a week. Padi is being wet by rain: there is no protection. Not only are the bags ruined but the padi is germinating right there when it is waiting to go to the mill to be milled into rice. After the man has dried the padi, either in the field or on the road, and he takes it there, it gets wet all over again and then they deduct for moisture content. Is that the research that they are talking about here? Go into the fields and see what is happening! What does the farmer do when faced with that calamity? He goes to the millers and I am told that in one case the farmer had to accept \$26 a bag when the price of a bag of padi is around \$36. What else is he to do? Do you think research is going to help him?

There are the facts which the Ministry and the Government must try to look at with haste. Maybe it cannot be done in this way. They are talking. Let us sit around the table, right here in a sub-committee, if you want, and discuss what is going to help agriculture in Guyana, because it is certainly not being helped. All you have to do is to walk out of this building and go right across the river and you will see what is happening.

I would urge the Ministers of the Government, if they are serious about agriculture, to do something. It is no use talking about it. Talking alone is not doing to help. They have first to democratize this industry, not just to dismantle it at the whims of the Americans, and they have to see that the farmers have a big say in the running of this industry, not only in rice, but in other sections of the industry. Go into the Berbice River area where farmers were getting food through the F.A.O. and other agencies. They were getting flour and things to plant. Flour is cut out because the Government says that they cannot eat flour.

The Speaker: That is wheaten flour.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Yes, you can eat rice flour. Correction taken. You are right. So those poor farmers went and produced corn and so on, but there is no transportation to bring down the corn. Go and see all the big buildings they put up all over the country. Big million dollar structures, marketing depots. They are all empty. Nothing is running. The marketing division is practically closed. Where are we going? Talk alone cannot help. You are making a lot of noise on the air and everyday there is something in the newspapers. That is not going to help the economy of Guyana and particularly the agriculture sector on which we are depending so much today.

I repeat, we are not against research. The bosses in the old days were only interested in sugar research. Wonderful: We went a step further and we did research in rice. We need research in cassava and plantains and those things but this has to be seen as an integrated question – how you treat the farmers, how you recognise their organisations, whether you recognise them or not and, like everything else, put them in control. You are not going to develop agriculture with bureaucrats sitting in Georgetown in agencies.

We therefore would like to say that we have no objection to this, but I want to say this is only paraphernalia. It is not getting down to the root of the problem, Vice-President and First Deputy Prime Minister. It is not going to get down to the roots at all. Think seriously about this question. Agriculture, as you rightly say, is going to be the backbone of the economic recovery in this country for the near future anyway and, consequently, if you come up with any concrete proposals you can have discussions with our side. We are willing to talk, to do anything to help the farmers and to help the country. We are willing to talk at any time you want. Let us get down to solving the problems by removing all the bottle-necks and then research is going to work. otherwise it will not help.

The Vice-President and First Deputy Prime Minister (Cde. Green): Cde. Speaker, I am very grateful to my good friend Dr. Jagan who supported the Bill. I would just like to comment briefly on some points. First, in terms of the operation of the Institute, all organisations representing various point of view, public sector, will have an opportunity to share in and participate in the deliberations so that my good friend need not fear that there will not be an attempt at the fullest involvement.

I would like to make just one correction that left the impression that we had already done all research. I suspect that Dr. Jagan was referring specifically to rice. It is important to note that whatever research may have taken place, research itself is an on-going process and can never come to an end.

The research we are talking about has to do with agriculture in its totality. I believe that one of the first tasks that this Institute will have is something which the Cde. Leader talked about some years ago. We need to look at our machines so that we can harvest rice and other crops in humid and even under wet conditions. This is the kind of research we are talking about, particularly related to and relevant to our circumstances, so that our young men and women will have the challenge as they now have to make research in a way that will help agriculture. I have no doubt that with the implementation and passage of this Bill you will see another attempt, with all the difficulties we have, to take agriculture to its rightful place of being the bedrock of the economy and of pushing Guyana ever forward – /Applause/

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

The Chairman: Comrades, as there is agreement on this Bill, I propose to merely call the numbers of the clauses. If anyone wishes to have any clause debated, he is free to say so. I will now put the clauses.

National Assembly

15:15 hrs

Assembly in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 39 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Assembly resumed.

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

The Speaker: Cde. Attorney General.

The Attorney General: Cde. Speaker, the State Liability and Proceedings Bill/1984, was published on 23rd June, that is a little over four months ago and it was read for the first time on 27th August. I have deliberately arranged to defer the Second Reading in order to afford opportunity to interested persons, bodies and organisations to consider the Bill and to make any representations. As some time has elapsed, I had hoped to proceed with the remaining stages of the Bill today. However, shortly before the sitting commenced this afternoon, the Cde. Minority Leader was good enough to speak with me on the subject. He indicated that spokesman of his parliamentary party on the subject was intended to be Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud who unfortunately is at this time abroad. In the light of those circumstances the Cde. Minority Leader asked whether I would consider postponing the Second Reading and I am glad to say, Cde. Speaker that in keeping with the spirit of co-operation which should always guide our conduct both inside the Assembly and outside of here, I do accede to the request. Therefore, if it meets with your approval Cde. Speaker, I would propose that the Second Reading be deferred to the next sitting of the Assembly.

The Chairman: The Second reading of the Bill is deferred until we meet again. Cde. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed. [The Minister of Home Affairs]

Adjourned accordingly at 15:20 hrs.