

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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43rd Sitting July 1987

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION (1987) OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

43rd Sitting

14:00 hrs Wednesday, 1987-07-01

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (74)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (2)

Ministers in the Cabinet (10)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. H. Green, M.P., (Absent)
Prime Minister

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

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

Other Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

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

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

Other Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. W.A.L.H. Farris, C.C.H., M.P.,
Deputy Prime Minister, Planning and (Absent - on leave)
Development

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
Deputy Prime Minister, Public Utilities

Senior Ministers (4)

Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent - on leave)

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

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

*Cde. W.S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P.,
Minister of Trade and Tourism (Absent - on leave)

Other Ministers (1.)

Senior Ministers (7)

Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Regional Development (Absent - on leave)

Cde. Dr. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,
Minister of Medical Education, Environment and (Absent)
Food Policy

Cde. Yvonne V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Information and the Public Service

*Non-elected Member

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

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

*Cde. J.R. Kranenburg, M.P.,
Minister of Communications and Works

*Cde. Dr. N.E. Blackman, M.P.,
Minister in the Ministry of Health

Ministers (5)

Cde. Urmia E.H. Johnson, M.P.

Minister within the Ministry of National Mobilisation (Absent)

Cde. C.G. Sharma, A.A., J.P., M.P.,
Minister within the Office of the President (Absent)

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

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

Cde. J.T. Kissoon, M.P.,
Minister in the Ministry of Medical
Education, Environment and Food Policy (Absent - on leave)

Ministers of State (2)

*Cde. Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P.,
Minister of State within the Ministry of (Absent - on leave)
Planning and Development

Cde. Stella Odie-Ali, M.P.,
Minister of State in the Ministry of
Home Affairs

Parliamentary Secretaries (2)

*Cde. Jean M.G. Persico, A.A., M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Education

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

Government Chief Whip (1)

Cde. Jennifer A. Ferreira, M.P.,
Government Chief Whip

Other Members (23)

Cde. Agnes W. Bend-Kirton, M.P.

Cde. A.K. Habibulla, M.P.

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

Cde. Joyce Gill-Mingo, M.P.

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.

Cde. Elaine B. Davidson, M.P.

Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.

Cde. Joyce M. Munroe, J.P., M.P. (Absent - on leave)

Cde. Edwina Melville, M.P.

Cde. Anna Ally, M.P.

Cde. L. Arthur, M.P.

Cde. J.R.L. Bovell-Drakes, M.P.

Cde. N. Calistro, M.P.

Cde. F.M. Cumberbatch, M.P. (Absent)

Cde. M.I. Deen, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

*Non-elected Member

Cde. Cyrilda A. DeJesus, M.P.
Cde. Edith Deygo, M.P.
Cde. Clarice A. Edwards, M.P.
Cde. C.L. Geddes, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
Cde. G. Marshall, M.P.
Cde. B. Persaud, M.F.
Cde. E.W. Trotman, M.P.
Cde. K. Sankar, M.S., M.P.

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

Cde. Rose I. Semple, M.P.

(One Vacancy)

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. Nellie R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni) (Absent - on leave)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Cde. Y. Khan, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)

Cde. Enid E. Abrahams, M.S., J.P., M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo
Islands/West Demerara)

Cde. I. Ally, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)

Cde. B.L. Domingo, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)

Cde. S.I. McGarrell, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni) (Absent)

Cde. M. Stephens, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo) (Absent)

Cde. Joycelyn Thom-Lindie, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice) (Absent)

(One Vacancy) (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (11)

(i) People's Progressive Party (8)

Minority Leader (1)

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

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (6)

Cde. Janet Jagan, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

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

Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P. (Absent)
Minority Chief Whip

Cde. H. Nokta, M.P.

Cde. I. Basir, M.P.

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

(ii) United Force (2)

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

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

(iii) Working People's Alliance (1)

Mr. E. Kwayana, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

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

1987-07-01

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:00 - 14:10 hrs

14:00 hrs

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Resignation of Cde. Bhagmatee Latchminarayan

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Member, I received from Cde. Bhagmatee Latchminarayan a letter dated 24th June, 1987, tendering her resignation as a Member of the National Assembly with effect from 30th June, 1987.

Following the General and Regional Elections on 9th December, 1985, Cde. Latchminarayan was, on 24th December, 1985, declared by the Elections Commission to be an elected Member of the Regional Democratic Council for Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice.

On 7th January, 1986, Cde. Latchminarayan was elected by that Regional Democratic Council and was declared to be an elected Member of the National Assembly.

With her resignation, a seat in the National Assembly has become vacant.

The vacancy in the National Assembly has been reported with a view of having it filled.

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cdes. Shahabuddeen, Chandisingh, Thomas, Kissoon, Harding, Munroe, Nellie Charles and Janet Jagan for today; to Cde. Parris up to 5th July, Cde. Jackson up to 7th July and Cdes Geddes and Deen up to 15th July.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC

The following papers were laid:

- (1) Minimum Wages (Watchmen) (Amendment) Order 1987 (No. 32), made under section 9A of the Labour Act, Chapter 98:01, on 23rd June, 1987, and published in the Gazette on 27th June, 1987.
/The Minister of Labour/
- (2) Annual Report of the Ministry of Agriculture for the year 1986.
/Senior Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture/
- (3) Annual Report of the Ministry of Works for the year 1986.
/The Minister of Communications and Works./

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

Conditions at Georgetown Hospital

Whereas conditions in the Public Hospital, Georgetown, are deplorable with shortages of the most elementary requirements for carrying out medical care;

And Whereas this has been substantiated by a public statement by doctors of the Hospital who have registered their dissatisfaction at the critical state of the institution which has for long been suffering from inadequate staff, supplies and equipment;

Be it resolved that this National Assembly recommends to the Government the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry into the Public Hospital, Georgetown, and that such a Commission be broad-based and representative of the Guyanese people."

[Cde. Janet Jagan]

Motion, by leave, deferred.

PUBLIC HOUSING FACILITIES

"Whereas persons in the lower income group have been experiencing severe hardship in obtaining housing facilities commensurate with their income;

And Whereas no effort should be spared in seeking to put an end to overcrowding and in solving this grave social problem;

And Whereas the 1986 budget provision for public housing was very inadequate:

Be it resolved that this National Assembly recommends to the Government the adoption of a positive programme of public housing and the provision of adequate funds to finance it."

[Cde. Janet Jagan]

Motion, by leave, deferred.

Distribution of Goods, Supplies and Commodities

"Whereas consumers have been experiencing hardships in obtaining essential food items and other supplies, including building materials and cement;

Be it resolved that this National Assembly calls upon the Government to establish a Permanent Committee with Representatives of all Political Parties represented in Parliament, to ensure the equitable distribution of all goods, supplies and commodities."

[Cde. Respu Daman Persaud]

Motion, by leave, deferred.

Unemployment Relief

"Be it resolved that in view of the high unemployment in Guyana, this National Assembly recommends that the Government introduce a system of unemployment relief."

[Cde. Belgrave]

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Member, as Motions 1, 2 and 3 will not be taken today, this will be Cde. Belgrave's day. Cde. Belgrave.

Cde. Belgrave: Thank you, Cde. Speaker. The announcement that this will be my day in Parliament is an honour bestowed on me.

The Speaker: It is unprecedented.

1987-07-01

-6-

14:00 - 14:10 hrs

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Speaker, Motion No. 4, which stands in my name, indicates a measure which over a number of years has been agitated by the trade union movement in one way or another. I can remember that in my tender years, when I was involved in the trade union movement, some agitation was announced by the union which I then represented, or sought to represent, as well as by its founder member. That made me address my mind to some important facts relating to the cause of workers, which ought to be fought in order to ensure that our human resources are treated in the right way.

This Motion seeks to correct some of the economic and social problems that affect some of our working class people, those who are working, those who have worked and, because of no fault of theirs, have either been retrenched or dismissed and cannot find a job and those who over a number of years are expected to come on the unemployment market because of their inability to pursue further education because of their social background or maybe because of the problems faced by their parents.

TAKE

14:10 – 14:30

MISSING

Cde. Belgrave continues

1987-07-01

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:30 - 14:40 hrs

14:30 hrs

It is a type of assurance to the worker that in the gap created between being dismissed, retrenched or unemployed and re-employed there is a little bit of relief for himself and his family.

It was asked, when this Motion was shaped: "From what source will the money come?" I know the circles on this side will shape the answer in their heads but I would not hesitate to reply: "Of course, from National Insurance." In 1969 the National Insurance Scheme was put into operation and by law every worker who is employed is committed to contribute to N.I.S. Every employer is equally committed to pay sum on the worker's behalf. Failing to do so is a violation of the law and there is a penalty. To date the national insurance Scheme has amassed a total of nearly \$750 million. I am not talking only about expenditure. I am not talking about all the collections. I am talking about the N.I.S. reserves. From 1969 to date, within that period of time, the N.I.S. has been making contributions to various agencies. It has been investing, and investing heavily, in many areas. The face-lift for Victory Valley - N.I.S. gave \$22,000. That is a social service. We have no quarrel with that. All we are saying is that the N.I.S., to which workers contribute, can make a payment from its reserves.

On the 20th June 1986 the Guyana Chronicle carried a headline "N.I.S. increases Float Money for Post Office Corporation". Apparently the corporation fell short. The N.I.S. does not contribute; it increases the float. In other words, to my mind, it had made a contribution previously. The N.I.S., to which workers have been making contributions, in some cases with a little snout in their noses because the small salaries or wages that they earn are a bit inadequate for their families, is giving further assistance to the Post Office Corporation.

The Speaker: What page are you referring to?

Cde. Belgrave: I am referring to page 4 of the Guyana Chronicle of 20.6.86.

The Speaker: You are not quoting from the Report?

Cde. Belgrave: I am not quoting. I am referring to it.

The Speaker: You are referring to the Guyana Chronicle. I am asking you about the N.I.S. Report.

Cde. Belgrave: The Guyana Chronicle said - and I have no doubt that the Chronicle is correct. The Minister sits there. This is not the Mirror; it is the Chronicle and the Chronicle will be correct. The vote is increased.

The Speaker: Are you suggesting that the Mirror is incorrect?

Cde. Belgrave: I am not quoting from the Mirror. I am quoting from the Chronicle. It is always said in this National Assembly that the Mirror is incorrect. I am quoting from the Guyana Chronicle which, according to the views of Parliament, is correct. The P.N.C. news is in the Chronicle. We know that the Mirror is a mirror: it reflects the truth.

I am saying: Here is a scheme to which workers have contributed over a number of years and yet the N.I.S. can find ways and means to invest in areas other than in areas which would be in the interest of workers. We are saying that there ought to be an investment in our human resources, in our labour resources, an investment which I am positive will bear fruit.

Only a few days ago I spoke to a man who used to work in a section of the Post Office Corporation. He was retrenched because they said his post had become redundant. He went to look for a job and the area in which he was offered work was the National Guard Service. He used to be a clerk in the Post Office Corporation and, because he needs a job badly, he was sent to do watchman's work. [Interruption.] There is nothing wrong with watchman's work but I wonder which one of the Members on the other side would work as a watchman. Watchman's work is not bad for those who can do it, but I cannot see a technical person, who went into ^{the} scholastic field of learning and who could be an asset to the society in that specific field, ^{because of his need,} being offered a job which he would consider demeaning to his status and which everyone of you would likewise consider. So the man pushes a snow cone cart and makes a dollar. We have lost - - I will not call the name. If the Speaker asks me I would call it in his Chamber. If I call it the man may not even push a cart afterwards. There might be a raw material shortage and he would not be able to obtain sugar wherever he went. He might not be able to make a livelihood with snow cones any more. That man was tipped to be one of the chaps ascending to the post of Assistant Postmaster General some time in the future. He is pushing a snow cone cart. [Interruption.] The Minister of Education says it is good. We educate people to push snow cone carts. This is the impression I get of our society.

I am saying that the National Insurance Scheme, with its millions, ought to set up the mechanism by which sums of money would not float only for state corporations, which are in a bad way, but would protect those workers and their families who, over a number of years, have been contributing to the said fund. The mechanism for this can be worked out.

The Speaker: Cde. Belgrave, let us try and proceed. We have quite a number of your Motions here, on the Order Paper.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Speaker, they are my Motions. There is no problem

The Speaker: There are a number of people to speak.

Cde. Belgrave: Today is my day, Cde. Speaker. [Laughter] I don't think it is a very big problem. There is nobody else but Belgrave today. The floor is mine and I ought to be given the opportunity to utilise this, as you mentioned earlier.

The Speaker: You have four more Motions to utilise it.

Cde. Belgrave: If today is not my day I cannot utilise it, but today is my day. We are saying that we have found an area through which we can channel unemployment relief. There are ways in which it can be done. It is a question of setting up the mechanisms. Think about it! We are not saying that a man who does not want to work should have unemployment relief. This party would condemn such a system.

TAKE

14:40 – 15:00

MISSING

15:00 hrs

The City Council alone has 1,287 vacancies. In addition, in the GUYSTAC Group of Companies, there are currently as at 12:00 noon today, vacancies as follows:

Guyana Airways Corporation - 28 - from Finance Manager to Labourer
Guyana Telecommunication Corporation - 120 - from Engineers to Cleaner
Guyana Transport Services Limited - 217 - from Accountants to Security Guards
Guyana Electricity Corporation - 79 - from Clerical Staff to Labourers
Guyana Post Office Corporation - 105 - from Managers to Confidential Secretary
Transport and Harbours Department - 20 - from Deputy General Manager to Mates
Guyana Fisheries Limited - 24 - from Accountant to Industrial Nurse
Demerara Woods Limited - 76 - from Clerical Staff to Electricians
Guyana Rice Milling and Marketing Authority - 14 - from Accountant to Draughtsman
Guyana Rice Export Board - 2 - Marketing Manager and Assistant Personnel Officer
National Padi and Rice Grading Centre - 4 - from Grading Officers to Technicians
National Edible Oil Company Limited - 158 - from Field Supervisor to Labourers
Quality Foods Limited - 9 - from General Manager to Clerks
Livestock Development Company - 18 - from Company Secretary to Porters
Guyana Stores Limited - 76 - from Manager to Cashier
Guyana Oil Company Limited - 16 - from Mechanical Engineer to Personnel Assistant
Demerara Sugar Terminals - 6 - from Assistant Accountant to Industrial Electricians
Guyana National Shipping Corporation - 19 - from Secretary/Chief Accountant to Porters
Guyana National Printers Limited - 31 - from Clerks to Handyman
Guyana National Trading Corporation - 43 - from Executive Director to Security Guards
Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation - 40 - from Optical Technicians to Office Assistants
Guyana Stockfeeds Limited - 37 - from Assistant Accountant to Labourers
National Paints (Guyana) Limited - 5 - from General Helpers to Driver
Guyana National Engineering Corporation - 40 - from Engineers to Metallurgist
Sanata Textile Limited - 89 - from Deputy General Manager to Printer

[Cde. Dr. Jagan: "How many in all? How many coming out of school every year?"]

Hence it cannot be disputed that a number of vacancies exist. Rather, it is difficult to get candidates to fill these vacancies. [Interruption.]

The Speaker: If you all do not listen you will not be able to hear.

Cde. Prashad: Further, the labour force comprises persons who are both willing to work and available for work. If persons in the labour force are prepared to accept employment, work would be available to satisfy the market. Hence, it is a fallacy

to speak of high unemployment.

I would wish to remind the Assembly first, that in proof of Government's continuing concern for the welfare of the people, it has put in place and in motion, a policy based on the development of agriculture and agro-based industries, which in itself offers vast avenues for employment.

In addition, there are a number of self-employed persons engaged in such occupations as motor mechanics, furniture makers, etc., whose employment is not necessarily reflected in the employment statistics. Secondly, thanks again to Government's policies, the national economy is being revitalised so that the climate is now conducive to investment. This truism augurs well for the employment situation.

Thirdly, the new thrust of the training institutions towards training and retraining is calculated to produce "refined" skills which will further enhance our people's, especially our youth's, ability to be meaningfully employed. Currently, these institutions such as the Government Technical Institute, Georgetown, the New Amsterdam Technical Institute and the Critchlow Labour College, are offering several courses to persons interested in self-development. These are as follows:

At the Government Technical Institute - those persons being trained to become competent Motor Mechanics totalled 278, Agricultural Mechanics 136, Electrical Engineering Trades 592, Welding 139 and Surveyors 25.

At the New Amsterdam Technical Institute - 16 in the Licensed Drivers' Course and 25 for training in Civil Engineering Technology.

At the Critchlow Labour College - 103 persons are currently being trained in Industrial Relations, 33 in Clerical Office Practice, 36 in Communications and Effective Speaking, 33 in Accounts and Budgeting, 17 in Supervisory Training and 157 in Industrial and Social Studies.

Let me say also that the concept of unemployment relief is inherently defeatist of the letter and spirit of production and productivity, of self-reliance and self-sufficiency, and negates the principles of appraisal of, and reward for, performance. Moreover, unemployment relief does not arise because employment is and will be available.

Finally, one must face the harsh realities of the economic situation. We have not reached that level of sophistication of the developed countries, to afford the expenditure and implications, in addition to the enormous Wages Bill, of the system of unemployment relief. We just do not have the financial capabilities.

We do have a system in force to help the infirm and the destitute. Through a decision of the Ministry of Labour we will give public assistance to over 9,000 people in the year 1987.

Cde. Speaker, in the light of what I have outlined, I have to say that Government cannot accept the Motion and I have to recommend to the Assembly that the Motion should be rejected. [Applause.]

Cde. Belgrave (replying): Cde. Speaker, in spite of all the thumping of hands I know that gloom has passed over this Parliament Chamber. I am positive that the Minister has not recognised the significance of what he has said. It may be that he has a prepared document and from it he speaks. He told us that 1200 vacancies exist. In the list of 1200 vacancies he gave us all the technical and labouring staff. He did not in any way state the percentages. I appreciate the fact that many managers and technical people have left this country and vacancies have been created. Skilled personnel have gone. But the labour market is infested with unskilled personnel and we would have been very glad to have a breakdown from the Minister. He lumped them all together.

About 15,000 youths come on the labour market every year. Today he gave us a figure of 1,278 vacancies. He believes that there has been training in many areas. He lists over 560 persons being trained, which means that 560 technical people will soon be on the labour market. If 15,000 youths leave school every year and seek employment, if there has been massive retrenchment over a period and retrenched workers are also seeking employment and if technical staff will soon be graduating from many institutions and will be seeking employment, then the vacancies which now exist will not be adequate to accommodate the number of people on the market.

Apparently the Minister did not in any way understand what he was saying. He gave this Parliament reason to believe that there are not enough jobs available in this country for unemployed persons. He said it with his own lips. He pronounced the inability of this Government to find employment for people. It would have been better if he had stayed quiet on this issue. He has exposed a number of problems in this country - 1200 jobs for 16,000 unemployed.

I am of the opinion that this Government has no interest in our workers. The members of the Government constantly pronounce in this Parliament things which sound glorified on paper. The Minister mentions areas where I know personally there is unemployment. He mentioned the Guyana National Trading Corporation. I am working there. He pulled a figure out of a hat. It is not

correct because right now persons are unable to find employment at state entities. People are there carrying out studies all the time. There is a vacancy for an Executive Director in G.N.T.C. because the Executive Director sits in this National Assembly as a Minister. Half of the statistics that come before this Parliament are inaccurate. Parliament is a stranger to things that exist in this society.

I thought for a moment that shame would have come out of the eyes of the members of the Government and that they would have asked for some more time to study this whole problem of unemployment or, if possible, they would have given consideration to the appointment of a Select Committee to examine the problem.

The Speaker: Cde. Belgrave, you made that point in your presentation. You cannot repeat yourself. Reply to the Minister.

Cde. Belgrave: The members of the Government may be able to find ways and means of examining what I have mentioned.

This is a slap to the father of our industrial revolution. If they peep out of the window they may find a change in his statue. It may be twisted from the position in which it stood. I am positive that tears flow from the eyes when in this National Assembly we hear that the conditions which Critchlow mentioned so many years ago and which he fought for over a long period are just "begging charity" as the Government said several years ago.

TAKE

15:20 – 15:30

MISSING

Cde. Belgrave continues

1987-07-01

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:30 - 15:40 hrs

15:30 hrs

There is enough evidence to show that the actuary's report, which has a lot of in-depth value in it and ought to be studied by the T.U.C., is not yet in the hands of the Trades Union Congress. Moreso, some of the recommendations in the report are carried out without the T.U.C.'s blessing. It is a clear indication that there is no respect for the workers' organisation or the workers' umbrella.

This brings me to some other important points which ought to be looked at. To date there is no Commissioner in the National Insurance Scheme to investigate matters brought before it. The last Commissioner was Cde. Cunningham. Unfortunately for the N.I.S. she died. According to a remark made by an old lady before she died, she is smelling jasmine by the root. The department in which Cde. Cunningham functioned seems also to be smelling jasmine by the root because it is inactive. It is not operating. Queries made by individuals cannot be looked at because there is no Commissioner.

The piece worker in the N.I.S. structure is told that if he is injured today he must have worked the day before in order to qualify for a benefit. If the previous day was a public holiday and he did not work he is denied the benefit even if he worked two days before. The N.I.S. has some problems which have been challenged, particularly by G.A.W.U. On several occasions workers have been denied that benefit and there is a large pile of challenges which are not settled so far.

The question of survivors' benefit is still a sore question. I have been reliably informed that if my wife is working and I am working and contributing to N.I.S. and if I die, my wife is entitled to survivors' benefit, but if she is pensionable and the small piece she gets is bigger than my entitlement then she would not get the benefit from my contribution. She would only get her piece because it is greater. It is questionable. I would have been insured and I would have paid my insurance properly before I even received my wages. The insurance is deducted and that is my entitlement. It ought to be given. If I die my wife must get it. Why must they lump the two together and deny my wife the benefit which I had worked for? This is a policy which is challengeable and it ought to be examined by somebody. Many a time these questions are raised by the T.U.C. and many a time by individual trade unions but they slide like water off a duck's back and disappear.

The benefits to pensioners give total dissatisfaction as far as the manner in which pensioners are treated. Only the other day we heard that the computer had broken down. I don't know what happened to it. Apparently the frequent black-outs caused the trouble. I understand the computers are now set up in air-conditioned rooms and when the rooms are not air-conditioned they do not function well. Whenever a computer is malfunctioning, the pensioner is malfunctioning. Pensioners have to wait until that machine is functioning again before they get their benefits.

Paper raises another problem. I understand that because of a shortage of paper pensioners are denied the right to get their pensions promptly. Now we go to the means test. It denies workers a great deal of rights. Even the T.U.C. in its discussions has something to say about it. There is need for the means test, in relation to old age pensions, to be reviewed if not altogether abolished. For this reason this Motion involves the T.U.C.. When I speak, I speak with the backing of the Trades Union Congress so I hope that when the Minister replies he does not see a need to consider my remarks unfounded and to negative this measure.

Then there is the processing of claims. It takes a very long time to process claims. Why should this be? If a man is injured, he needs assistance more than a man who is at work, because in many cases the eminent doctor recommends certain things that the man will have to do to be rehabilitated. Maybe he will have to eat certain foods, maybe he will have to live under certain conditions to be rehabilitated. When the claims take so long to be processed and moneys cannot be handed to the workers early, it means that they are denied the opportunity to get the necessary substance for survival.

While I am on this note, I want to allude to a fact which the Minister is aware of, namely, that medicare also has a problem, the issue of the long drawn-out bottlenecks. You have to walk up three flights of steps and you have to speak to a long line of people. There is red tape and passing the buck, one person passing you to another. Sometimes persons have to go three, four, five or six times, with extra transportation costs, to see if they can get a little bit of assistance through medicare.

When one's spectacles are broken, if, like me, he cannot read fine print - [laughter] They laugh. Sometimes fine print is difficult for a man over 40 and I am well over 40.

The Speaker: Why didn't you say "over 50".

Cde. Belgrave: You cannot count on getting the refund that is due.

This brings us to the question of appeals, when people make appeals. It is better that you do not appeal when certain decisions are made. When you expect the matter to be dealt with speedily, you will find that you have returned to work and you will be at work for 3, 4, 5 months before finally you receive some information telling you, in 9 cases out of 10, that the matter has been disallowed. I ask the question: Why?

When a person reaches the age for a pension, the age of 60 years, must he wait 3 months before the pension is paid? Workers do not wait 90 days before contributing. You contribute pronto but when the time comes for you to collect your pension, you have to wait 90 days plus an additional month. One good friend of mine has waited 90 days and is now waiting for an additional month before he can collect his pension book so that he can draw his pension benefits.

TAKE

15:40 – 16:00

MISSING

Mr. Kwayana continues

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

16:00 hrs

16:00 hrs

Many of the rules turn out to be a kind of lottery. You just miss it by a few inches. There are people who will spend almost their whole lives contributing. They die from natural causes. There is no invalidity pension and no chance for it and the family is left high and dry with no right whatever to any kind of benefit.

I feel that a committee of the kind requested by the Motion, which includes the T.U.C. and I would say the trade unions and actual rank and file persons who are insured, will shake up the administration and will be able to look at all of these shortcomings and bottle-necks and improve the service received by insured persons. Here and there the committee may perhaps recommend some more realistic benefits as in the case of the funeral benefit which, although it was increased some years ago, still cannot pay for a funeral.

The Speaker: This is a convenient time to take the suspension.

Sitting suspended at 16:00 hrs.

1987-07-01

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

16:23 - 16:30 hrs

16:23 hrs

On Resumption --

The Deputy Prime Minister, Public Utilities (Cde. Corbin): Cde. Speaker, this Motion, coming in the wake of the previous Motion which was discussed before the Assembly this afternoon, is indeed a breath of fresh air though slightly polluted. In the earlier debate this afternoon, the contents of the presentations of the speakers gave the impression that so far as the Government was concerned there was an absolute lack of interest in the welfare of workers and for providing benefits to workers both in and out of employment. This Motion that is now before the Assembly specifically states that

"Whereas the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) was established in 1969, that is to say, 17 years ago;"

This is indeed a manifestation of the existence of an institution organised and established by this Government precisely to provide benefits to workers out of employment after serving the country for some time, to provide benefits to workers who because of circumstances of nature, for example, sickness, maternity, need to be properly taken care of during these periods.

The Motion seeks also to ensure that in the case of death of workers certain death benefits are provided to relieve the burden on the surviving relatives during this difficult period. Perhaps it would have been useful, as a preface, for the mover of the Motion to highlight this fact as in his previous contribution he sought to advance arguments to the contrary.

The reason for the National Insurance Scheme is precisely to ensure that workers are properly protected while in employment and after they have served a useful period of employment in this country. It was conceived within the context and framework of the reality of Guyana's economic situation, that is, it was recognised that Guyana was not a major capitalist country and therefore we should not use that as a comparison to illustrate or to list benefits which we can offer. We are not a socialist country as yet and therefore we should not use a perfect socialist model, as some speakers sought to suggest. This scheme took into account the fact that we were a small developing country, struggling out of the period of colonialism and exploitation and seeking to build a new economy within a world environment which is hostile to us as we pursue an independent path of development within the context of world-wide and local economies.

This scheme provided an opportunity for workers to put aside some of their earnings which would be used by the scheme for proper investment. Out of that

use of their resources, coupled with the resources put in by Government, in times of difficulty workers will be protected. As a result, over the 17 years of existence of the National Insurance Scheme thousands of workers have benefited from its existence and, indeed, I shudder to think what would have happened if we did not have such a scheme in this country.

When the scheme began it was a new venture with limited financial resources and people began to make contributions. Resources were limited and obviously the benefits which were paid out by the National Insurance Scheme had to have a direct relationship with the amount of resources which were in that scheme, so that the scheme would not grind to a halt after a few years but would develop into a massive institution that can provide continuous and continuing benefits for workers of this country for a long, long time.

TAKE

16:30 – 16:50

MISSING

Cde. Corbin continues

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

16:50 - 17:00 hrs

16:50 hrs

When they find employment it will mean 15,000 more contributors to the N.I.S. That is the level of expansion of the Scheme. When one calculates those who are coming out and those who are joining and when one looks at it one can see that the review of the systems which are in place has been on-going. . . Certainly I agree that there will always be need to review the systems in place and there will always be need to look at the administration to cope with the increasing demands. This is not to say generally, however, that the N.I.S. has not been doing a great and tremendous service to this country. In fact, so impressed are others with the type of national insurance scheme that we have in Guyana that even the Leader of the Minority, I think, this afternoon quoted from some paper where people from around the region were coming here to observe and learn what we are doing. [Interruption] Somebody read from a clipping. I apologise. A speaker on the other side mentioned that there are people coming from all over the Caribbean and elsewhere to observe how the scheme is functioning with the hope of copying what we are doing to carry benefits to the workers in this country. That alone should speak well of what the National Insurance Scheme has been doing.

The question of consultation between the Trades Union Congress and Government is a matter which has been constantly raised at this forum. I shall not attempt to move away or detract from this issue at this particular time, but it is sufficient to say at this time, as it relates to the National Insurance Scheme, that there has been no attempt on the part of the Government to exclude representation by and from the Trades Union Congress and suggestions from them on any area of governmental policy and development. I am sure that if Cde. Belgrave, as a citizen of Guyana, as a Member of this honourable Assembly, as a long-serving and dedicated trade unionist, has ideas, whether as a person or as a member of a union, these ideas will be welcomed by the N.I.S. Board, will be welcomed by the Minister responsible for N.I.S., the Minister of Finance, so that we can continue to make the scheme one which can provide greater service to the people of this country.

We are concerned about workers. We are concerned for their continuous benefits, we are concerned that they should have increased benefits commensurate with their contributions. I think there is evidence that this Government has been pursuing this policy. In this connection, therefore, when one looks at the Motion which is before this Assembly one can see really that it is a Motion

which perhaps if the date had been 1982, 1983 or 1984, might have been more appropriate, but coming as it does, published on March 4, 1987, it certainly indicates that my good friend, the mover of this Motion, is not jumping before the gun but jumping long after the gun has been fired. Though we are agreed that there are problems with the scheme and we are agreed that there is need for constant review and improvement, I would humbly suggest that there is also evidence - and it is a fact - that these problems which he has raised are not new and are being constantly addressed by the administration, by the Board and by the Minister himself. The Motion provides nothing new which would suggest that there is need for a special committee to investigate what is already taking place. In saying so, therefore, we find it very difficult, because of the points I have raised, to support this Motion. [Applause.]

Cde. Dr. Jagan rose --

The Speaker: Cde. Jagan, I think Cde. Belgrave has the right to reply.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: He will reply. I have a right to speak.

The Speaker: We are not dealing with it any more after this.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: I want to make a few points which are important. I don't know what Mr. Belgrave will say. I want to be very brief in reply to the Deputy Prime Minister. The Minister's point was that because other people are coming to look at the N.I.S --

The Speaker: I made this remark before. You want to say something. You know that under the rules the Government has a right of reply finally after Cde. Belgrave. It was suggested that everybody should try to speak so that the Minister will have an opportunity of replying. You are going to speak and he will reply. If he replies, it goes on like this. One has to have some logical sequence in the debate. When you reply you would like to get an answer to what you say. Who is going to answer? I have raised this point before. Go ahead.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Cde. Speaker, I am not looking for an answer. I am seeking to make a contribution to this debate so that the Minister will take it into consideration even if he does not reply to it. Secondly, if we are to have a proper debate in this Assembly, we must have an opportunity for dialogue, hear what the Minister has to say and have other people speaking. It should not be one man speaking for the Government and ONE for the Opposition. That is no debate. It does not happen like this in any Parliament. While I appreciate that one should speed up things, you must not curtail debate.

The Speaker: Whatever comment you make, I am sure you would like to have a reply.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: He can reply here or some of his colleagues can reply. There are many members on that side. Some of them, unfortunately, do not speak at all. Let him give them a chance to speak.

As regards time, Cde. Speaker, I told you this morning, we have Wednesdays, we have Thursdays, we have Fridays. We can meet more often. Cde. Corbin: "You are not around." I am here all the time. Don't worry about that!

To come back to the point, Cde. Speaker, the Minister was making the point that because other people are coming to see our scheme, therefore we are glorious and everything is going well. Cde. Corbin: "I never said so." The Minister implied that. The fact of the matter is that several things are wrong with our scheme and what is needed is an in-depth enquiry. That is what this Motion is all about. The Minister is saying, "We know there are some things here and there that are wrong", but why are they doing them? For instance, there is a clause in the N.I.S. regulations that in order to qualify for accident benefit, a worker must be at work the day before the accident occurred. Thousands of agricultural workers and forestry workers --

The Speaker: If you were paying attention you would have heard Cde. Belgrave make that point.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: If the Minister does not want an enquiry, then he must tell us what he is doing about that. He did not answer that. Does the Minister want to answer that?

The Speaker: Cde. Minister, let Dr. Jagan speak.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: The Minister made an answer about actuarial examination and so on, but, as I understand it, the last actuarial report is only up to the year 1984. Other countries, like Trinidad, have their reports up to date, up to 1986, and we are lagging behind. Maybe at that time the actuarial investigation disclosed that the thing was going well, but we had devaluation after that. We had other factors which must be taken into consideration.

The other point I would like to make is on the question of the T.U.C. The T.U.C. has one member or two members on the Board. This is the kind of representation we have on many of the Boards. In socialist countries/^{the} trade union movement runs things like the National Insurance Scheme. It is in their hands because the scheme is particularly for the benefit of working people. The T.U.C. is in a better position to understand what are the problems of workers.

Cde. Corbin rose --

The Speaker: Cde. Corbin, you will have a chance to reply and to wind up the debate.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: I am saying that is what this examination is all about, namely, to find out how to make changes all around in terms of representation, who should be involved, There should not be token representation for labour, as happens here under workers' participation, but genuinely meaningful participation of the working people.

Secondly, the administrative costs are far too high in relation to benefits which are given, and the benefits are more now than previously. Cde. Corbin: "What is the percentage?"

The Speaker: Cde. Jagan, you continue. Don't worry with what he says.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: The facts are there. That is what we want to investigate. The Minister is saying, "Give us percentages." The facts are not even known. From what has appeared in the Press - I have a lot of clippings here - the percentages for administrative costs are too high in relation to benefits which are being given. Therefore, an investigation of this whole thing would examine factors like that to determine whether the administration could be more streamlined, whether there are faults there resulting in high costs, because if you have a bureaucracy, then clearly you will have less benefits going to the people.

I mention that because recently it was brought to my attention - I hope it is not true, but I raise it here - how some people cannot get to go abroad to get medical treatment. The Ministry of Health knows about certain cases, persons who cannot get medical care here and cannot go abroad for treatment because Government does not have the money. The big boys are receiving thousands and thousands of dollars for medical treatment. They can get it, but the small man cannot get it. The big boys are going abroad. How are we going to know all these things unless we do a thorough investigation. There is a lot of cover-up in this country, cover-up of inefficiencies, cover-up of corruption and extravagance. We are not questioning whether the scheme is good or bad. We admit that you need an insurance scheme. This idea was mooted long before this party came to office. It was mooted to have a national insurance scheme. Nobody is questioning that. Therefore don't make a case that it is a good thing. We have brought a good thing into being. The question is that a lot of good things are being brought but they are run in a bankrupt way.

TAKE

17:00 – 17:20

MISSING

Cde. Belgrave continues

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:20 - 17:30 hrs

17:20 hrs

Let the Assembly pass this Motion. It is national; it involves the entire Parliament; it involves everyone; it involves the society. If you say the Whereas clause is offensive, you have the power to amend it, but I don't see how you can get away from the importance of the Resolve Clause. I ask that there be reconsideration of this Motion by the Government and I ask the Assembly to support it.

Cde. Corbin: Cde. Speaker, I ask for my right to reply. I am forced to take the floor again because I was a little disappointed in the comprehension of my friend on the other side. Indeed, I do think that if I were to believe him that, in cases where birth certificates cannot be found, the N.I.S. Board decides on a contributor's age by looking at him, then if he had appeared before the Board and they had listened to his presentation, they would not have deemed him to be 58 years. I think they would have recommended him to Cde. Blackman for certain assistance in comprehension.

The Speaker: Cde. Corbin, please withdraw that remark.

Cde. Corbin: I would like to withdraw the remark.

Cde. Speaker, it seems that both the leader of the Minority parties and the mover of this Motion are suffering from a great degree of confusion about what they would really want a committee to do when established. The Motion speaks of a Committee to investigate the administration. I made that very clear in my early presentation. Their presentations are very mixed with what could be called simple administrative matters and matters that border on policy, actuarial matters which are not matters related to day-to-day administration. I have attempted to point out this confusion in my presentation. The Comrade has failed to address those remarks or even to attempt to clarify with us what he would like us to do.

I would suggest that the Comrade withdraw the Motion, carefully reconsider what he would like to see done and then, perhaps, come back to this Parliament with a clear Motion telling us exactly what he wants to do. I have pointed out that the Government is at one with the issues raised by the Comrade under This Motion, that is, that there are things which are wrong. We have pointed out that there are things which are going well and this Government has taken decisive and corrective action on those things which are going wrong, as happens in many other institutions and not only in the National Insurance Scheme. There is evidence of this at the N.I.S. and Government will continue to stamp out inefficiency, corruption and malpractices in any institution. The President has stated this publicly in this

country and our actions have demonstrated this policy in the past. Under these circumstances, the issues raised can and will be addressed in the manner in which I have suggested.

I have made it very clear to the Comrades: if they have any special views as to what should be done, there is always room for presentation of these ideas on what should be done. We have not shut the door to suggestions. On the basis of what the comrades are advancing today, I could successfully use that premise for us to have an investigating committee in every Government Ministry in this country. If you listen to what some of them say about this Parliament then you would need a special committee to investigate this Parliament. The types of arguments which they are advancing would suggest that if problems exist in any institution, the only way of reaching a solution to those problems would be to set up a committee.

Certainly there are times when a committee of enquiry is needed and there are times when other action is required. It is our contention that the issues which have been raised by the Comrade this afternoon as a basis for demanding a committee of enquiry are not issues which necessarily will be solved by a committee. In fact, that might take too long. What we need now to deal with those problems is decisive and quick action. I give the undertaking, on behalf of the Minister of Finance and this Government, that we are prepared to take decisive and corrective action to correct inefficiency and malfunctioning in the M.I.S. and in any other institution of this Government to ensure that progress continues in this country.

~~Motion put and negatived.~~

WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS OF WORKERS

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly calls upon the Government to consult with the T.U.C. before introducing legislation on matters relating to working and living conditions of workers." [Cde. Belgrave]

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Speaker, this is a simple Motion, which calls on the Government to consult the Trades Union Congress before introducing legislation on matters relating to working and living conditions of workers. We had to bring this Motion because there has been a lot of talk over a number of years and a lot of questions have been asked on the manner in which the Government administers its business. In this very Assembly, in 1984, on a particular bit of legislation I raised this same point. Other Members of the Opposition also raised the point because prior to the legislation being introduced in this Assembly the T.U.C. ought to have been informed. When the Bill was read in this Assembly the Minority Leader called the Trades Union Congress to

enquire what was their position and he was told that they had not seen the Bill.

They had heard about it but had not seen a copy of the Bill.

TAKE

17:30 – 17:50

MISSING

Cde. Dr. Jagan continues

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:50 - 18:00 hrs

17:50 hrs

I am sorry. This might appear extraneous but it is not, because, in the end, when the strike was settled, we agreed to withdraw the Bill with the tacit understanding, a clear-cut understanding, that in future any matter brought to this Assembly pertaining to labour would be brought after adequate consultation. The main reason advanced by the T.U.C. then was that there was not adequate consultation. The main reason was that they were using the T.U.C. as an instrument to overthrow the Government but the principle was accepted then by the Government and the Opposition at the time that there must be prior adequate consultation before any matter pertaining to labour is introduced in the Assembly. That is why I referred to convention long before this Constitution was written. The Constitution now explicitly states this. I go on to say that this Government has violated both what it agreed to in 1963 and also what is written in this Constitution.

During the sugar strikes of 1977, when the T.U.C. was negotiating on behalf of G.A.W.U. the Government, without consulting the T.U.C., went ahead and enacted compulsory arbitration law/^{to}which the T.U.C. and G.A.W.U. were opposed. The Government went ahead, without consultation, and railroaded it through the Parliament. We had a similar experience in 1984 when the Labour (Amendment) Bill was passed through this Assembly. Then the Minister of Labour was an executive member of the T.U.C. and Pollydore, the General Secretary of the T.U.C., reported that he could not even get a copy of the Bill, but he got a copy of the Bill by courtesy of the Minority Leader. That is the kind of consultation we get under this Government. The Labour (Amendment) Act clearly, undeniably took away the rights of the people.

The Speaker: Don't let us get into that. They are now deciding that.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Let them decide. I am telling you that we are watching what they are going to do. We are watching what the learned Judges will do, but the fact of the matter is that it was clear that a decision which was made by the/^{ruling of the}Courts was upset by this Parliament without consultation with the T.U.C. That is why I say, whether the law was right or not - but as you say that is being decided. It was done, the Bill was passed, upsetting a Court decision without consultation with the T.U.C. and the T.U.C. has pronounced on this matter both in 1985 at its Annual Conference and in 1986 I was there when the General Secretary in his Report said that this law is bad, this law should not be there.

The Speaker: We cannot go into what Cde. Pollydore said. Everybody has been trying to avoid that. That is being decided.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: The Judges must be aware of all the opinions which were written by Joseph Pollydore and Jagan. We are not telling any secrets. We are not going to upset the learned Judges by making these statements.

I want to reiterate that this Government is violating a convention to which it was a party in 1963 and also violating the Constitution of Guyana and yet it goes around telling everybody that we must uphold the rule of law. The rule of law must be Constitution or convention, or both, and the members of the Government themselves talk about consultative democracy. We do not have it. We have rigged elections; we have stolen majorities making laws, laws which violate the Constitution.

It is in this context that this Motion must be seen. It is specific. It has arisen because of the fact that the Government has violated the Constitution and a convention. In that respect, we hope that on this one occasion the Government will not vote against this Motion because it is in keeping with the position taken by the P.N.C. in 1963 and with the Constitution of Guyana which the P.N.C. itself wrote. There can be no excuse for turning down this Motion. The Motion is also in keeping with the Government's philosophy which it explained some time ago - consultative democracy. I do hope that on this occasion we will see the Government observing the norms of democratic rule.

The Minister of Labour (Cde. Prashad): Cde. Speaker, I would like to confine my reply to the Motion rather than go outside. The P.N.C. Government has always involved the Guyana Trades Union Congress in promoting social and labour legislation. Institutionalised in Guyana is the system of tripartite discussions on labour matters among the Guyana Trades Union Congress, the Government, the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry and other representative groups. This system has been practised as the basis of our collective bargaining and our consensual approach to industrial relations long before the Guyana Government ratified the International Labour Organisation Convention No. 144 of 1978 on tripartite consultation, international labour standards.

Representatives or affiliates of the Guyana Trades Union Congress are involved in wage-fixing exercises at the public sector level and ^{at} the local level in the case of the private sector. Their skill and determination have netted workers positive gains. Representatives of the T.U.C. sit on the Board of the State Planning Commission and on the National Economic and Social Council and are allowed to make contributions on the 13 committees of the National Economic and Social Council on behalf of workers in the macro planning of the economy. Their participation in managing the economy has led to workers' involvement in the decision-making process at the highest level of the government. The T.U.C. has been invited time and again

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17:50 - 18:00 hrs

to name a panel of arbitrators to serve for a two-year period in keeping with the requirement of the Public Utilities Undertakings and Public Health Services Arbitration Act, Chapter 54:01. The practice has been to consult with the T.U.C. before establishing a commission of enquiry to investigate working conditions and before setting up a compulsory arbitration tribunal to resolve a particular dispute.

Cde. Prashad continues

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:20 - 18:30 hrs

18:20 hrs

It is the intention of Government to have this Bill brought before the Assembly as soon as the parties have concluded discussions on it. In the circumstances, as action has already been taken, I have to recommend that the Motion be rejected.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Speaker, where are we heading? Where are we going?

I explained when I got up that my points on holiday with pay have no direct bearing on Chapter 99:02. I have explained it carefully in detail. It has to do with the holidays appointed by the Government and I listed them as far as I could go in order not to bore the Members of the Assembly. I did not mention all. It clearly means that the worker is on holiday in the particular agency. He has to work because of a commitment he has to the agency. He must work. I gave examples. I shall give another example. Let us take the case of a ward maid. She has to work because she must work on that day^{Republic Day,} in the particular agency. It is a holiday. All other workers in all agencies who work on that day are enjoying double time or, in some cases, time and one half. That ward maid in some cases gets nothing at all; it is free time. In my agency we enjoy three times the wage, and in some cases 2½ times. This woman has to do her work with the same wage or salary in spite of the fact that the day is a holiday. I am seeking legislation, through this Motion, to correct that imbalance where one group of workers on that particular holiday enjoy a benefit and another group of workers are working with no benefit.

The Minister went on a very long train. I don't know whether it was the Turtle that he travelled on, but he went on a long annual leave discourse.

Cde. Prashad: "The comrade is wrong." The Motion is clear. The Minister may be given an opportunity, through you Mr. Speaker, to understand what the Motion means. I never alluded to Chapter 99:02. When I got up I disassociated my mind from Chapter 99:02. That Chapter deals with sawmills, bakeries, drug stores and a long list of areas where people are entitled to holidays with pay, which means that if they are at work "X" amount of days in the year, they are entitled to 1, 2, 3, 4 days as rest from work. That is termed "holidays with pay." I never used that as the area of discourse. I tried to engage the Minister's thoughts on the fact that on the Phagwah holiday, on New Year's Day, (Republic Day, because these days are celebrated as holidays and a worker^{if does not} get some extra remuneration, he stays away from work. It creates a problem in that the work

either place loses/the particular expertise of the worker or his valuable service. If there is extra remuneration, that becomes an attraction. A man will see that he is getting time and a half or double pay and will make himself available for work on that day. I made that clear. Maybe the Minister will re-think the matter when voting time comes and will give a different opinion. I would not like the workers in the trade union movement to know that a Motion of this nature came to Parliament and was negatived when they themselves have been pedalling the question of holidays with pay for a number of years. I hope that the Minister and the Members on that side will do some re-thinking and go along with this Motion.

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, to a point of order.

The Speaker: Mr. Kwayana, I am sorry I cannot allow you.

Mr. Kwayana: Is the Minister's Amendment in writing?

The Speaker: The Minister has not proposed an Amendment.

Mr. Kwayana: I thought he had.

Motion put.

Cde. Belgrave: Division!

Assembly divided: Ayes 7, Noes 25 as follows:

<u>Ayes</u>	<u>Noes</u>
Mr. Kwayana	Cde. Domingo
Mr. Abraham	Cde. I. Ally
Mr. Singh	Cde. Abrahams
Cde. Belgrave	Cde. Khan
Cde. Nkta	Cde. Semple
Cde. R.D. Persaud	Cde. Trotman
Cde. Dr. Jagan - 7	Cde. B. Persaud
	Cde. Marshall
	Cde. Edwards
	Cde. Deygoo
	Cde. De Jesus
	Cde. Calistro
	Cde. Bovell-Drakes
	Cde. Arthur
	Cde. A. Ally
	Cde. Melville
	Cde. Doobay
	Cde. Davidson
	Cde. Gill-Mingo
	Cde. Fowler
	Cde. Habibulla
	Cde. Ferreira
	Cde. Odie-Ali
	Cde. Harewood-Benn
	Cde. Prashad - 25

Motion negatived.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The Minister of Information and the Public Service.