

THE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[ VOLUME 11 ]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION (1986) OF THE NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY OF THE FIFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF  
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

9<sup>th</sup> Sitting

14:00 hrs Monday, 1986-03-17

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (73)

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 (61)

Ministers in the Cabinet (10)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,  
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  
and Attorney General

Other Vice-Presidents and Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,  
Vice-President, National Mobilisation,  
and Deputy Prime Minister

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

Other Deputy Prime Ministers (2)

Cde. W.A.L.H. Parris, C.C.H., M.P.,  
Deputy Prime Minister, Planning and  
Development

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,  
Deputy Prime Minister, Agriculture (Absent - on leave)

Senior Ministers (4)

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

\*Cde. C.B. Greenidge, M.P.,  
Minister of Finance

Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,  
Minister of Transport

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

Other Ministers (11)

Senior Ministers (3)

Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., (Absent - on leave)  
Minister of Manpower, Housing and Environment

\*Non-elected Member

Cde. Dr. R.A. Van West-Charles,  
Minister of Health

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

Ministers (4)

Cde. Urmia E.H. Johnson, M.P.,  
Minister within the Ministry of National  
Mobilisation

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

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

\*Cde. D.M.A. Bernard, M.P.,  
Minister within the Ministry of Education (Absent)

Ministers of State (4)

\*Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of  
Manpower, Housing and Environment

Cde. J.T. Kisson, M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of  
Agriculture

Cde. D. Sawh, M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of  
Forestry

\*Cde. Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P.,  
Minister of State within the Ministry of  
Planning and Development

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

Cde. A.K. Habibulla, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the  
President

Cde. Stella Odie-Ali, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Home Affairs

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

Government Chief Whip (1)

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

Other Members (24)

Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.

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

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P. (Absent)

Cde. Joyce Gill-Mingo, M.P.

Cde. M. Ally, M.P. (Absent)

Cde. Bissoondai Beniprashad-Rayman, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

Cde. Elaine B. Davidson, M.P.

Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.

Cde. Joyce M. Munroe, J.E., M.P.

Cde. Edwina Melville, M.P.

Cde. Anna Ally, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

Cde. L. Arthur, M.P.

Cde. J.A.L. Bovell-Drakes, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

Cde. N. Calistro, M.P.

Cde. G.W. Chin, J.P., M.P.

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

Cde. M.I. Deen, M.P.

Cde. Cyrilda A. DeJesus, M.P.  
Cde. Edith Deygoo, M.P.  
Cde. Clarice A. Edwards, M.P.  
Cde. C.L. Geddes, M.P.  
Cde. G. Marshall, M.P.  
Cde. B. Persaud, M.P.  
Cde. E.W. Trotman, M.P.

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

Cde. E. Mohamed, M.P.  
Cde. Rose I. Semple, M.P.

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. Bhagmatee Latchminarayan, M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)  
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. Patricia A. Daniel, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/  
Berbice)  
Cde. B.L. Domingo, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini) (Absent)  
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 - on leave)

Members of the Minority (11)

(i) People's Progressive Party (8)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P., (Absent - on leave)  
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.  
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P. (Absent)  
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.,  
Minority Chief Whip  
Cde. H. Nokta, M.P. (Absent - on leave)  
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.  
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P. (Absent)

(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 - on leave)

(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

14:00 hrsANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKERLeave

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Corbin for today's sitting, Cde. Murray from 13th to 21st March, 1986, Cde. Thomas from today to 28th March, 1986, Cde. Beniprashad-Rayman for two months from 13th March 1986, Cde. Charles from 17th to 21st March, 1986 and Mr. M.F. Singh for today's sitting.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND MOVEDBY A MINISTERSuspension of Standing Orders Nos. 46(3) and 23(3)

The Minister of Information and the Public Service (Cde. Y. Harewood-Benn): Cde. Speaker, I would like to seek your leave under Standing Order No. 83 to move the Suspension of two Standing Orders to enable us to proceed properly with two items. The first concerns the Appropriation Bill. In accordance with paragraph 3 of Standing Order No. 46 the second reading of a Bill shall not be proceeded with until seven days from the time of the publication of the Bill. The Appropriation Bill Cde. Speaker, which was prepared following the passing of the estimates last Monday was published in Saturday's Gazette. It is therefore necessary for Standing Order No. 46(3) to be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed with the Bill at this sitting.

The second one deals with the matter of the motion placed on the Supplementary Order Paper to be moved by Mr. Kwayana. Under paragraph 3 of the Standing Order No. 23, a private member's motion requires fourteen days notice before it can be placed on the Order Paper. Mr. Kwayana's motion was published on the 10th March, fourteen days have not yet elapsed and since it has been decided to proceed with the motion at this sitting it would be necessary for Standing Order No 23(3) to be also suspended. I therefore Cde. Speaker, seek your leave under Standing Order No 83 to enable me to move the suspension of Standing Orders No. 46(3) and 23(3).

The Speaker: Please proceed.

Cde. Harewood-Benn: Thank you Cde. Speaker, I now move the suspension of the Standing Order.

1986-03-07

National Assembly

14:05 – 14:15 hrs

14:05hrs

Bills

APPROPRIATION BILL

Presentation and First Reading

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to provide for the issue from the Consolidated fund of the sum necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of Guyana for the financial year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1986, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of that sum for specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” [The Minister of Finance]

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Greenidge): Cde. Speaker, I beg to introduce the Appropriation Bill 1986 and ask that it be read a first time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the First time.

Second and Third Readings

Cde. Greenidge: Cde. Speaker, I move that the Bill be read a Second time.

Bill read a Second time.

Bill read the Third time and passed as printed.

INCOME TAX ( AMMENDMENT ) BILL 1986- BILL NO. 3/1986

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Income Tax Act.” [ The Minister of Finance]

Cde Greenidge: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move the second reading of the Income Tax Amendment Bill. Cde. Speaker, this Bill No.3 and also the Taxation Law Amendment Bill, are two bills which is part of the package of measures included in the 1986 Budget. The first of these Bills is intended to exempt pensions and gratuity from the payment of income tax. In the case of Pensions, this Assembly is no doubt aware that the pensions origination overseas are currently exempted from income tax. We are now proposing to extend the same benefit to pensions earned locally. It seems that the intention is to apply a uniform regulation to all pensions where ever they may be earned. This proposal I think would commend itself on two grounds. First of all as stated in the Budget Speech:

**“Pensioner by virtue of the contribution that they have made during their working life should benefit adequately from their employer.”**

Secondly, I think the current level of inflation bears particular onus on fixed incomes and this proposal is intended to provide some measures of relief to this group of the community. In the case of gratuities, contract gratuities are treated in a variety of ways. Some are taxable and some are not taxable, and others attract income tax while others are not taxable. It is now being proposed to extend uniformity to all gratuities. Now apart from the obvious advantage of rationalizing our treatment of gratuities, the proposal is justified on the grounds that gratuities and pensions are linked. They are normally paid in lieu of pensions and so far as the proposal to make pensions taxable it would appear to make sense to apply the same level and rationale to pensions.

**Question proposed.**

**Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud:** Cde. Speaker, we are not opposed to this measure. We welcome the measure. But I wish to observe that this measure will no doubt benefit people who will be receiving a certain amount of gratuity. People, who will be receiving small sum of course, will get no benefit and I thought that it is opportune for a call to be made for a profound consideration into taxation so that the worker, so to speak, would benefit. I want also to ask that the allowance given at the moment which is \$1,200 or \$500 for a child is too low. It has not been looked at for a long time. In fact, I am informed reliably that the allowance in Trinidad and Tobago is \$2,500 and I think this sum should be increased.

**The Speaker:** I think it would be wise for you to have a dialogue with the Minister. Why did you not raise it in the debate?

**Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud:** I had it in my notes, but I did not get to raise it. I think \$2,500 is a good figure. I think the Minister will be disposed to give consideration and respond positively this afternoon to this question, at least to tell us if the Government will be willing to consider that proposal because I think it is long overdue. So that is the positive proposal I want to make on this Bill this afternoon.

14:15 hrs

The Speaker: Cde. Greenidge, other than those irrelevant matters, do you wish to make any reply?

Cde. Greenidge: No, Cde. Speaker.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported to the Assembly, read the Third time and passed.

The Speaker: We will proceed with the Supplementary Order Paper in which Mr. Kwayana is involved.

#### MOTION

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly records its deep grief at the assassination of the late Prime Minister of Sweden, Olaf Palme, and hails him as a tried and tested soldier of Peace, a democratic statesman, friend of the oppressed and campaigner in Europe in defence of the interests of developing countries;

Be it further resolved that this Assembly expresses its deep appreciation at the promise of the new Prime Minister of Sweden to continue the policies of his predecessor in relation to the developing countries;

And be it further resolved that this Assembly requests that the Honourable Speaker convey these expressions to the Swedish Parliament. /Mr. Eusi Kwayana/

Mr. Kwayana: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name referring to the unfortunate assassination of the late statesman, Prime Minister Olaf Palme. I do not intend to detain the Assembly very long, the Motion speaks for itself. I just thought that it was very fitting on an occasion like this when, within the political activist of the advanced countries, someone arises with an outstanding humanism that does not merely include his own nation or his own continent, but extends to the developing countries. Regardless of origin and colour it should be noted in forums of this kind.

Olaf Palme

We all know that within the politics of Europe this man/fought at great odds and at the risk of great misunderstanding against those who are eager to increase the stocks, the armaments of war, and with equal vigour against those who are willing to remain silent at the atrocities in Southern Africa. It is

mainly for these reasons that he is for populations of the developing countries, the so-called Third World, a significant European figure.

Among things I should like to draw special attention to is the fact that he was one of the earliest, along with activists \_\_\_\_\_ the stamp of Martin Luther King, and from a non-sectarian position, that is, from a position of basic human conscience and not from the position of doctrine to stand by the side of the Vietnam representatives when they were struggling to end the war and to win peace.

He is also exemplary in other respects as a political activist because we know that as a democratic statesman he was defeated at an election in 1976. But because of the long standing record of the Social Democratic Party which he led, he was able to recover fortunes in 1982 and to win an election. I think his life and activity are instructive in this regard, that it is possible and it is safe to trust the democratic will of the peoples in our respective countries. I want to say that he was something of a parallel, though not an exact parallel, on a much higher and more vibrant scale, to those abolitionists who sprang up inside Europe and in their own way and from their own perspective campaigned against the inhuman traffic and inhuman slaves \_\_\_\_\_ from the continent of Africa, and later on threw the anti-slavery society against the bondage known as indenture.

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With these few words I wish to/end this Motion to this Assembly with all its recommendations and to say that in moving it we will have discharged a duty because it is necessary to place on record these outstanding exceptions that spring up within the capital of those countries whose general policy is one of open or constructive hostility towards the development of ThirdWorld countries. May his memory be ever green and may his example commend itself to those who follow his profession.

The Speaker: This Motion requires a seconder.

Cde. J. Jagan: Cde. Speaker, I rise to second this Motion and to state that the P.P.P. feels very strongly about the brutal murder of the Prime Minister of Sweden. He was a man of peace and his nation has always been at the forefront of peace. Shortly before his unfortunate death he was involved in a petition by five nations, I think including the Prime Minister of India, on the question

of nuclear armament growth. He and the others who joined in the five-nation protest were seeking the elimination of nuclear armament and of course the possibility of nuclear war. I should like to join the mover and ask that this Assembly expresses its sympathy on the death of the late Prime Minister of Sweden and offer condolences to the people of Sweden and to the widow and family of the deceased.

The Speaker: Do I understand that there is an amendment to this Motion? The resolve clause is somewhat different.

Cde. J. Jagan: I think you can leave it as it is. It is just a normal expression.

14:25 hrs

The Vice President, First Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney

General (Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen): Cde. Speaker, on behalf of this side of the House I rise to support unhesitatingly the motion which has been so ably moved by the honourable member Mr. Kwayana. We here view this as a straightforward matter and we take the opportunity to express the sorrow of the Government and the people of this country on what can only be viewed not only as the tragedy for this great and good man, for his family, for his country but also for peace, progress and development in the course of humanity throughout the world.

Our sense and shock Cde. Speaker, was in my submission very ably conveyed shortly after the event by the President of this Republic in a message of condolence which he sent to His Majesty King Usta 16th of Sweden in these words and I should like to take the opportunity to read this telegram into the records of this honourable House.

"It is with profound shock that I learnt of the tragic death of Prime Minister/Palme. Prime Minister Palme will always be remembered for his forthright stand for international peace and security and for a democratic, just and equitable world order. On behalf of the Government and people of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana I extend sincere condolences to the bereaved family and to the Government and people of Sweden".

There ends the message from the Cde. President of this country to his Majesty King Usta of Sweden. Cde. Speaker, if I may add very shortly to that I should like to agree with the mover of this motion that in effect Mr. Palme was something substantially more than a citizen of his own country. He was one of those larger and like individuals who have a real ability to rise both above in dimension of their own particular national interest and to reach out to claim the citizenship who expects them to perform. He was a friend of the oppressed everywhere. His solidarity for the interest of the . . . particularly in the third world to which Mr. Kwayana rightly referred was manifested in his ambiguity. Perhaps<sup>also</sup>/if I may cease on an aspect of Mr. Kwayana's presentation it may well add that in evaluating the two grandeurs of this man personally it is relevant to reflect in fact that he came

from rather prosperous circumstances. I believe he was born into a family of great . . . That nevertheless did not in any way inhibit him from . . . . I believe during his tour to certain parts of North America during his difficult days. I think, that which he then saw may have constituted the turning point because ever since thereafter he has been an articulate spokesman in the west for the cause of people and the third world. His activities in the field of international peace and nuclear and other forms of disarmament and I believe have been already touched upon by the two speakers. I desire merely to add a reference to that, that he together with our own Shridath Ramphal participated in the now famous Grand Commission which took such a keen interest in the affairs of the third world and that he was also a leading figure behind the establishment of the Arms Nuclearisation Commission and he was as Dr. Jagan said one of the heads of the five nations to which he referred, which is India, Argentina, Mexico and Tanzania. His record is one which no one can deny and we here ably support the motion and commend it to the House. He was a man who was driven by the courage of his conviction and the incidents which reflected this are too many to call on this occasion but I should contain myself with these two which I have referred.

Cde. Speaker, Mr. Olaf Palme will be missed by all. Sweden has lost a great leader, the world has lost a great statesman, the third world has lost its source . . . and convincing statesman from the west. The international community can ill afford to lose a man of such vision and stature. We will all be poorer for his passing. The evidence is reflected in the countless messages of sympathy and of tribute which have literally flooded out the people of Sweden from nations and Governments, from organisations and institutions representing all the shades of the ideological spectrum. We here in Guyana respectfully concur with these sentiments and now sadly beg to add our own voice.

Question put and agreed to

Motion carried.

Members stood in silence for one minute.

1986-03-17

14:25 - 14:35 hrs

The Speaker: Comrades, before we take the adjournment, I have circulated a motion to the members of the Assembly, will those members kindly after the adjournment see me in my office.

Cde. Harewood-Benn

ADJOURNMENT

"Resolved,"That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed". [The Minister of Information and the Public Service].

Adjourned accordingly at 14:35 hrs.