

# DEBATES

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VOLUME 1]

## PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE FIRST PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA.

1st Sitting

Thursday, 26th May, 1966

(INDEPENDENCE DAY)

### NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

*The Assembly met at 11 a.m.*

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

*Present:*

**His Honour the Speaker, Mr. A. P. Alleyne**

*Members of the Government*

#### *Ministers*

<b>The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.</b>	- <i>Prime Minister</i>
<b>Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid</b>	- <i>Minister of Home Affairs</i>
<b>The Honourable P. S. d'Aguiar</b>	- <i>Minister of Finance</i>
<b>The Honourable N. J. Bissember</b>	- <i>Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)</i>
<b>The Honourable R. E. Cheeks</b>	- <i>Minister of Local Government</i>
<b>The Honourable E. F. Correia</b>	- <i>Minister of Communications</i>
<b>The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin</b>	- <i>Minister of Education and Race Relations</i>
<b>The Honourable L. John</b>	- <i>Minister of Agriculture</i>
<b>The Honourable R. J. Jordan</b>	- <i>Minister of Forests, Lands and Mines</i>
<b>The Honourable M. Kasim</b>	- <i>Minister of Works and Hydraulics</i>
<b>The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C.B.E.</b>	- <i>Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation</i>
<b>The Honourable D. Mahraj</b>	- <i>Minister of Health</i>
<b>The Honourable C. A. Merriman</b>	- <i>Minister of Labour</i>
<b>The Honourable J. H. Thomas</b>	- <i>Minister of Economic Development</i>
<b>The Honourable S. S. Pamphal, Q.C.</b>	- <i>Attorney-General and Minister of State</i>

*Parliamentary Secretaries*

Mr. D. B. deGroot

Mr. O. E. Clarke

Mr. J. G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.

Mr. C. V. Too-Chung

- *Parliamentary Secretary,  
Prime Minister's Office*
- Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Education  
and Race Relations*
- *Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Works and  
Hydraulics*
- *Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Finance*

*Other Members*

Mr. W. A. Blair

Mr. J. Budboo

Mr. C. F. Chan-A-Sue

Mr. P. Duncan

Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley

Mr. H. Prashad

Dr. J. K. M. Richmond

Mr. T. A. Samcho

Mr. R. Tello, Deputy Speaker

Rev. A. B. Trotman

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

*Members of the Opposition*

. C. B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition

. A. Chace

. B. H. Benn

. Ram Karan

Mr. R. Chandisingh

Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard

Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.

Dr. F. H. W. Ramsaboye

Mr. M. Hasid, J.P.

Mr. J. R. S. Luck

Mr. D. C. Jagan

Mr. H. Lall

Mr. M. Khan, J.P.

Mr. Y. Ally

Mr. L. Linde

Mr. R. D. Persaud

Mr. M. Poonai

Dr. S. A. Ramjohn

Mr. E. M. Stoby

Mr. S. M. Saffee

Mr. M. Bhagwan

Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)

- Mr. E. V. Viapree

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)

- Mr. F. A. Narain.

*Absent:*

Mr. C. V. Nunes - on leave

Mr. E. M. G. Wilson

Mr. G. Bowman.

**PROCLAMATION APPOINTING THE PLACE AT WHICH THE SESSION OF  
PARLIAMENT SHALL BE HELD AND THE TIME WHEN IT SHALL BEGIN**

**PROCLAMATION NO. 7 OF 1966**

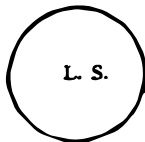
*The Acting Clerk of the National Assembly (Mr. E. V. Viapree)  
read the following:*

"No. 7 of 1966

BRITISH GUIANA

**PROCLAMATION**

By His Excellency Sir RICHARD EDMONDS LUYT,  
Knight Commander of the Most Distinguished  
Order of Saint Michael and Saint George,  
Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian  
Order, upon whom has been conferred the  
Distinguished Conduct Medal, Governor and  
Commander-in-Chief in and over the Colony of  
British Guiana, Vice-Admiral of the same,  
etc., etc., etc.



RICHARD E. LUYT,  
GOVERNOR.

WHEREAS it is provided by section 4(1) of the Guyana Independence Order 1966 (hereinafter referred to as "the Order") that where the Governor-General has power by or under the Order to do anything for the purposes thereof, such power may be exercised by the Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Colony of British Guiana at any time after the making of the Order to such extent as may, in his opinion, be necessary or expedient to enable the Constitution of Guyana set out in Schedule 2 to the Order (hereinafter referred to as "the Constitution") to function as from the 26th May, 1966;

AND WHEREAS the Governor-General has power under article 81(1) of the Constitution to appoint by proclamation the place within Guyana at which each session of the Parliament of Guyana shall be held and the time when it shall begin:

NOW THEREFORE, in pursuance of section 4 of the Order in Council under article 81(1) of the Constitution, and by virtue and in exercise of all powers thereunto enabling me, I do hereby proclaim that the session of the Parliament of Guyana shall be held in the Parliament Chamber at the Public Buildings, Georgetown, Guyana, and shall begin at 11 o'clock in the forenoon on Thursday the 26th May, 1966.

Given under my Hand and the Public Seal  
of the Colony at Government House, British  
Guiana, this 17th day of May, 1966, and  
the fifteenth year of Her Majesty's Reign.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.

By His Excellency's Command,

(Sgd.) R. A. Cheong,  
Secretary to the Office of the Governor.

**Prayers**

*The Clerk read the following:*

"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." - [Psalms 127: Verse 1.]

"O come let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation.

Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also.

The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land.

O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today if ye will hear his voice;

Harden not your heart, as in the day of provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:" [Psalms 95: Verse 1 - 8.]

"Almighty and Eternal God we humbly beseech thy blessings as we meet to celebrate the attainment of Independence of this green land of Guyana, especially do we

thank Thee that Thou didst inspire the minds of our Leaders to call into consultation those Representatives who by their wisdom and by Thy guidance were responsible for the grant of Independence to this country.

Bless our Most Gracious Sovereign Lady Elizabeth II, Queen of Guyana, and all those who are set in authority in this land. Grant to those who have been called to serve in this place, wisdom and understanding, that they may ever in their deliberations, keep constantly in mind, the well being of the peoples of this land and that all they do may be to the honour and glory of Thy Holy Name.

Grant that in this place truth and justice, liberty and righteousness may ever flourish and abound, and that, as we seek to know Thy will, we may have strength and power to fulfil it to the glory of Thy Holy Name and the good of all mankind."

*"By all:*

"Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen."

### OATHS

The oath of allegiance and the oath of office were made and subscribed by the Honourable Shridath Surendranath Ramphal, Q.C., Attorney-General and Minister of State and by Dr. Julius Kenrick Makepeace Richmond.

### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 11.10 a.m. the sitting was suspended.

11.25 a.m.

*On resumption -*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, be seated.

[*The Equerry knocked three times on the north-western door of the Chamber, which was opened by the Serjeant-at-Arms. The Equerry informed the Serjeant-at-Arms that the Queen's Representative sought admission. The Serjeant-at-Arms closed the door.*]

**The Serjeant-at-Arms:** Your Honour, His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, the Representative of Her Majesty Elizabeth II, Queen of Guyana, and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent, seek admission.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is the will of the honourable National Assembly that they be admitted. Let the door be opened. [*The door was opened by the Serjeant-at-Arms.*]

**Mr. Speaker:** The Clerk Assistant will conduct *Their Royal Highnesses* into this Honourable Chamber.

[*The Equerry and the Assistant Clerk proceeded to the Committee Room. The Speaker and the Clerk preceded by the Serjeant-at-Arms (with Mace) proceeded to the Bar (all persons standing).*]

*Their Royal Highnesses, Their Excellencies, and the Retinue entered the Chamber and were received by the Speaker, (His Royal Highness uncovered). The procession moved forward and the Speaker moved forward to his position.*

*His Royal Highness, His Excellency, and the Private Secretary passed by the left of the Table and proceeded to their places on the Dais.*

*Her Royal Highness, Her Excellency and the Lady-in-Waiting passed by the right of the Table and proceeded to their places on the Dais.*

*The Equerry, the A.D.C., the Clerk and the Assistant Clerk took their places.*

*The Serjeant-at-Arms placed the Mace on the Table and took his place.*

*His Royal Highness bowed to the right and to the left.*]

**His Royal Highness** Pray be seated.

[*All persons sat.*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Your Royal Highness, on behalf of the Members of this honourable National Assembly, whose servant I am in this place, I extend to you and your Duchess a cordial welcome to this Parliament Chamber, the highest tribunal in this sovereign and green land of Guyana. I am happy to do so on this great and historic day, a day on which each of us in this territory can say in the words of Sir Walter Scott, "This is my own, my native land".

Here, sir, seated before you are those who, by the suffrages of their fellow citizens, have been chosen to express the Popular Will, that supreme element in a parliamentary democracy. On my right sit the hon. Ministers and Members of the Coalition Government led by that great Guyanese the Prime Minister, the Honourable Forbes Burnham, Queen's Counsel.

Opposite, sit the Members of the Official Opposition, led by an equally great Guyanese, the Honourable Dr. Cheddi Jagan, Dental Surgeon. These are the people who engage, in this place, in the sacred and soul-absorbing business of law-making, and of shaping the destinies of the thousands of Guyanese entrusted to their care.

You and your Duchess are reportedly well travelled, but I venture the hope that the experiences you both gain in this land of Creek water and Labba may, in the words of your fellow Englishman, John Keats, like

"Music, when soft voices die", vibrate in the memory. Once again to you and your Duchess I say welcome to this Chamber.

#### LETTERS PATENT

*The Clerk read the following:*

"E L I Z A B E T H T H E  
S E C O N D by the Grace of  
God of the United Kingdom of  
Great Britain and Northern  
Ireland and of Our other  
Realms and Territories Queen  
Head of the Commonwealth De-  
fender of the Faith To Our  
trusty and well beloved  
Sir Richard Edmonds Luyt  
Knight Commander of Our Most  
Distinguished Order of Saint  
Michael and Saint George  
Knight Commander of Our Royal  
Victorian Order upon whom has  
been conferred the Disting-  
uished Conduct Medal Gov-  
ernor-General of Guyana Our  
trusty and well beloved  
Aubrey Percival Alleyne  
Esquire Speaker of the Na-  
tional Assembly of Our  
Parliament of Guyana and Our  
People of Guyana Greeting:  
Whereas by the Guyana Inde-  
pendence Act 1966 provision  
is made for the attainment by  
Guyana of fully responsible  
status within the Common-  
wealth And Whereas in pur-  
suance of the provisions of  
the Constitution set out in  
the Guyana Independence Order  
1966 Our Parliament of Guyana  
has been summoned to meet for  
certain arduous and urgent  
affairs concerning the gov-  
ernment thereof And Whereas  
We are desirous of marking

the importance of the opening of the first meeting of the said Parliament and of showing Our special interest in the welfare of Our Loyal Subjects in Guyana and for as much as for certain causes We cannot conveniently be present thereat in Our Royal Person Now Know Ye that We trusting in the discretion fidelity and care of Our most dear and entirely beloved Cousin Edward George Nicholas Paul Patrick Duke of Kent Knight Grand Cross of Our Royal Victorian Order do give and grant by the tenor of these Presents unto him full power in Our name to hold Our Parliament of Guyana and to open and declare and cause to be opened and declared the causes of holding the same and to do everything which for Us and by Us shall be therein done Willing that he shall hereby convey to Our said Parliament and People Our Royal message of goodwill and Our assurance of Our earnest prayer for the blessing of Almighty God on the new Constitution of Guyana and for the continued prosperity and happiness of all Our Loyal Subjects in Guyana Commanding also by the tenor of these Presents as well all and every the said Governor-General the said Speaker of the National Assembly as all others whom it concerns to meet in Our said Parliament that to the same Duke of Kent they diligently intend in the

premises in the form aforesaid AND We do further direct and enjoin that these our Letters shall be read and proclaimed at such place or places as Our said Governor-General shall think fit within Guyana In Witness whereof We have caused these Our Letters to be made Patent Witness Ourselves at Westminster the eighteenth day of May in the fifteenth year of Our Reign.

BY THE QUEEN  
HERSELF SIGNED  
WITH HER OWN  
HAND

COLDSTREAM

I, Sir George Phillips Coldstream, K.C.B., Q.C., Clerk of the Crown in Chancery, do hereby Certify that the above is a true copy of Her Majesty's Letters Patent under the Great Seal bearing date the eighteenth day of May, 1966.

(Sgd.) Coldstream."

#### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**His Royal Highness:** I have it in Command from The Queen to read the following Speech on Her Majesty's behalf:

*His Royal Highness covered, and seated, read the following*

"Mr. Speaker, Honourable members of the National Assembly. My Government of Guyana, as a result of the Guyana Independence Act to



which I gave my assent on the 12th day of May, 1966, is now the Government of an independent Sovereign State with full and absolute responsibility not only for internal affairs but also external affairs, Commonwealth relations and defence. My Government in the United Kingdom after more than one hundred and fifty years has now laid down its responsibilities and ceases to have any authority in and over Guyana.

In assuming their new responsibility, my Ministers propose to be guided at all times by the spirit of the Guyana Constitution, the provisions of which were carefully worked out at the Independence Conference of 1965, and subsequently approved by this Legislature of what was then British Guiana on 4th May, 1966 - a constitution which is based on consultative democracy.

In its approach to external affairs my Guyana Government will have regard for the principles upon which stands the Charter of the United Nations and it will be its desire and intention to pursue a truly independent policy while establishing, maintaining and strengthening good relations with those nations which themselves support those principles. In keeping with this intention it is proposed to make application for the admission of Guyana as a member of the United Nations.

My Government is grateful to the Prime Ministers of the other Member countries of the Commonwealth for agreeing to the acceptance of Guyana as a Member of the Commonwealth of Nations and has as one of its objectives the development of the closest and most harmonious relations possible with other members of the Commonwealth; for thus it feels it can make a contribution to the universal acceptance of the dignity and equality of man, and the cause of world peace.

Meanwhile, my Government is particularly anxious to further the cause of regional co-operation as between Guyana, its neighbours and the nations of the Caribbean and regards the Caribbean Free Trade Area Agreement which was signed at Dickenson Bay, Antigua, on 15th December, 1965, by Antigua, Barbados and Guyana, as an important step in this direction.

At home, a seven year development programme has been drafted, and approved by the Legislature. This programme which promises the expenditure in the public sector alone of approximately \$300 million is aimed at increasing rapidly and significantly the gross national product and national income per capita and laying the foundations of a strong and economically sound Guyana where want, poverty and un-

[H.R.H. THE DUKE OF KENT]

employment will be abolished. The productivity of our nation will have to be increased considerably and the fruits of this productivity fairly divided. There will be place neither for exploitation nor sloth.

The successful execution of this programme is dependent upon the enthusiastic and intelligent co-operation of all sections of the nation and community.

It is proposed by my Government to re-organise the entire system of local government basing it on universal adult suffrage, an electoral system of proportional representation, similar to that which obtains at the centre, and to confer on the various municipalities and district councils wider responsibilities for social services.

The Government will embark immediately on implementing the policy of doing everything to further the interests of Amerindians and to bring them into the stream of full citizenship and progress. In particular the Amerindian Lands Commission will be appointed and given every facility to carry out its task of ensuring and protecting the Amerindians' rights to their lands.

In pursuance of its intention to bind up the

wounds which have been inflicted by recent difficulties in our society, the Government will pursue urgently the rehabilitation of displaced persons and others who have suffered so that all of them may be better able to contribute to the harmonious progress of Guyana.

My Government will pursue with determination a policy aimed at the preservation of law, the establishment of true equality and the enshrinement of justice."

[His Royal Highness handed the Speech to the Speaker.

The Speech was laid on the Table by the Speaker.

His Royal Highness uncovered.]

#### PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

[The Private Secretary handed to His Royal Highness a Personal Message from Her Majesty the Queen.

All stood.]

His Royal Highness read the following:

"I have entrusted to my cousin, the Duke of Kent, the duty of acting as my representative at the celebrations of the independence of your country.

My husband and I recall with pleasure the kindness and the warmth of the welcome we received from the people of Guyana during our visit to you earlier this year. The memory of that happy experience enables us to picture the enthusiasm with which you will now be celebrating your country's independence.

It is with especial pleasure that I welcome you to the Commonwealth of Nations.

My thoughts are with you today. I send you my good wishes and I pray that God may bless and guide you throughout the coming years.

(Sgd.) Elizabeth R.

26th May, 1966."

[All sat.]

#### CONSTITUTIONAL INSTRUMENTS

[The Private Secretary handed the Constitutional Instruments to His Royal Highness.]

**His Royal Highness:** It is now my solemn duty and privilege to hand you, Mr. Prime Minister, as a representative of the people of Guyana, the Constitutional Instruments embodying an Independent Guyana.

[The Prime Minister received the Constitutional Instruments, laid them on the Table and resumed his seat.]

11.45 a.m.

#### ADDRESS OF THANKS

**The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham):** Your Royal Highnesses, Mr. Speaker, may I, on behalf of the Parliament of Independent Guyana, and the people of this new nation, express gratitude, first of all, for Your Royal Highness's undertaking the duty, we hope with pleasure, of representing Her Gracious Majesty the Queen of Guyana, on the opening of this first and significant session of the National Assembly of Guyana.

Today is historic primarily because we are indulging in an exercise, the first of its kind by the Parliament of Guyana. But there is another significance about today's date, for in the Year of Our Lord 1789 on the 26th of May, there was established a Constitution by the Dutch, much more liberal than the Constitution which was substituted for it in 1928, and I have a feeling that today we are redressing the events of 1928 by opening our Parliament on the same date on which a relatively liberal Constitution, subsequently suspended, was established.

We have come to the end of the road of colonial rule, and not without significance to our minds is the fact that Her Gracious Majesty, Queen of the United Kingdom is Queen of Guyana. [Applause.] Our association with the Crown, our membership of the Commonwealth, are matters of free and untrammelled choice by the representatives of the people of Guyana.

[THE PRIME MINISTER]

After 150 odd years of British rule, and in some cases misrule, we are now independent. But we harbour no bitterness. Bitterness, we feel, is for children and the intellectually underdeveloped. It is difficult, nay impossible, to change the facts of past history, and in the circumstances, though we welcome with enthusiasm our new status, we are prepared not to spend the time ahead of us abusing those who once dictated to us, but rather to seek means of co-operating with them to our mutual advantage - shall I say self-interest.

I desire on this occasion, to request you, Your Royal Highness, to convey to Her Gracious Majesty the Queen, the kind feelings which we hold towards her as Head of the Commonwealth, and as a person whom we have met, seen, admired, and in some cases, loved. I shall ask Your Royal Highness to convey to the Queen of Guyana, the loyalty of the people of the independent nation of Guyana, who are happy to have her as their Queen. The days ahead are going to be difficult, and in the circumstances, we are heartened and encouraged by Her Majesty's kind wishes, and also by the asseverations of friendship and willingness to assist coming from other Governments in the Commonwealth, more particularly in the present circumstances, from the Government of the United Kingdom.

Tomorrow, no doubt, we as Guyanese will indulge in our usual political conflicts and ideological differences, but today to my mind, is above such relatively petty matters, for today Guyana is history. Today we say goodbye to the British as masters, and we shake hands with them as friends and colleagues. [Applause.] It is difficult to say more. A descendant of those who were brought here against their will, one who has known the embarrassment of being a colonial object - I am moved and all I can say now is, "Thank you sincerely Your Royal Highness, and please be good enough to convey to Her Majesty the Queen, our thanks, our gratitude, and our undertaking to make Guyana an outstanding member of the Commonwealth, we hope, surpassing those who have been independent members for years before us. Thank you." [Applause.]

**Dr. Jagan:** Your Royal Highnesses, Mr. Speaker, the severing of the British colonial tie in Guyana, and the attainment of political Independence are welcome features of the struggle of this country and its people for a better life. These features in today's context, do not, however, guarantee the realization of the better life we all seek. They merely represent a further stage, an advancement in the continuing struggle.

I wish to thank their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Kent, as representatives of Her Majesty the Queen, for their presence in this House to hand

over the new Constitutional Instruments. But lest our position at this historic ceremony be misunderstood, it is necessary for me to observe that the people whom my party represents hold considerable reservations. The form of the Constitution being handed down at this time is one which perpetuates divisions in our society, and entrenches minority rule. The Constitution has failed to lay the foundation for national unity. The fundamental rights which the Constitution seeks to safeguard are, in a great measure non-existent, and the Government has provided evidence in great abundance of its intention to render all safeguards nugatory. Detention without trial has plagued the country since July, 1964, when, by a constitutional Amendment, the United Kingdom Government gave to the Governor, acting without advice, powers to detain without trial.

11.55 a.m.

This power was made to appear, by the world press and radio, to have been exercised by the Government, of which I was the head. The powers were, in fact, arbitrarily exercised by the Governor, to the detriment of the members and supporters of the People's Progressive Party. Abuses of these powers, now transferred to the Government, and the extension of such State of Emergency, beyond the date of the attainment of Independence, have generated fear in our land and have frustrated the efforts of many of our people in their struggle for peace and security.

As the Leader of the Opposition, I have accepted invitations to consult with the hon. Prime Minister, on the making of appointments to those important public offices, which form the pillars of Constitutional Government, but I regret to say that on no occasion, has there been any measure of agreement. The result is that those people, whom my party represents, are denied any participation in the governmental process. Consultation has amounted, in practice, to no more than an intimation, on many occasions, of the names of persons whom the inflexible Government wished to prefer to high office in this Government.

Besides, political independence has been attained under the continuation and consolidation of foreign economic control and the maintenance of the Colonial type of economy, based on primary production and extraction. This has already detracted from the living standards of the working people. Debt burdens are already increasing with the resulting pressure on the economy. The annually recurring budgetary deficits will inevitably mean dependence on other Governments for budgetary support. In these circumstances, there is no prospect for real independence in external affairs and the protestations of the Government, of pursuing a neutral policy, are illusory.

The People's Progressive Party has been the victim of repeated constitutional manipulations designed to keep it out of

[DR. JAGAN]

office. We are nonetheless confident that, despite these manipulations, the People's Progressive Party can be triumphant at future elections, if these are fairly held. Parliamentary democracy has an important place in this country, and a heavy onus lies on all of us, but more particularly on the Government, to see that it works. The People's Progressive Party, the vanguard of Guyana's struggle for national liberation, is convinced that liberty is achieved only when it has been struggled for and won. It cannot be a gift of charity. For the people of Guyana, real freedom is still a prize to be won, and win it we will, and as a re-united free people.

[*His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent and Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Kent then withdrew from the Chamber.*]

#### MOTIONS

#### DEATH OF SIR EUSTACE WOOLFORD, O. B. E., Q. C.

"Be it resolved that this Assembly record its deep regret at the recent death of Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C., and pay tribute to the long, distinguished and devoted service which he rendered to Guyana and to Parliament and direct that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his relatives." -  
[The Prime Minister.]

**The Prime Minister:** Fate and history play strange tricks. Today, we are celebrating our country's accession to Independence, and today, it is my painful duty to make reference to the passing last week, of Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, formerly a Member of the Court of Policy, a Member of the Legislative Council, Speaker of the House of Assembly, Speaker of the Legislative Council, and an outstanding member of the legal profession. Perhaps, this Motion, which I am about to move, befits, in some measure, what we are celebrating today. Although, Sir Eustace, in his later years, could hardly have expected to find great sympathy from young radicals like myself, as far as his political views were concerned, it is to be noted and remarked, that in 1928, when the British Government suspended the Constitution of British Guiana, Mr. Woolford, as he was then, was one of the staunchest opponents of that suspension. In his day, he was a radical and progressive. Perhaps in his later days, he was not sufficiently radical for us, but that cannot prevent us from paying tribute to a man, who, in his youth, was undeniably a nationalist of the highest order. As a man, who, as he grew older, was a person of great charm and undoubted distinction, the Leader of the Opposition and myself, no doubt, will recall his great capacity, when he was Speaker in 1953.

12.05 p.m.

And though he irritated us by refusing to entertain a partic-

lar Motion, one could not help recognising the skill of the gentleman who could differentiate between the actual knowledge of the landing of the British troops and the official intimation by the Governor that the troops had landed.

It was my pleasure and honour to have been a junior member of the profession which he adorned. A tribute to him in that capacity has already been paid in the proper place. I am convinced that whatever differences of political persuasion might have existed between myself and the late Sir Eustace, we cannot but accept the fact that he was a distinguished son of Guyana, a brilliant lawyer, a parliamentarian *par excellence*, and one whose name must certainly adorn history when it comes to be written, especially in the context of Independence.

In the circumstances, I beg to move: "That this Assembly record its deep regret at the recent death of Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C., and pay tribute to the long, distinguished and devoted service which he rendered to Guyana and to Parliament and direct that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his relatives," as is the custom.

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan) has intimated that he will second this Motion.

**Dr. Jagan:** I wish to join the hon. Prime Minister and to

associate myself with his remarks on the occasion of the tragic death of Sir Eustace Woolford. I say tragic death because it has occurred just a few days before this ceremony in this Chamber. Sir Eustace was one of those individuals who braved the establishment of the old order. He fought violently, and it is still a pleasure to read the statements made by myself and others who were associated with me in that period when the first suspension of the Constitution took place in our land.

It is true that the passage of time mellows some of us: some of us get grey hair, some of us have falling hair, some of us become more conservative, and others continue in their revolutionary tradition. I support the hon. Prime Minister in regretting the fact that one such as this great freedom fighter became more cautious and defended the establishment of the old order. However, that does not detract from the heroic struggle in which he participated during the first period of the national liberation in modern times. I feel that all of the young nationalists on the political scene, should read and study carefully some of the writings by Sir Eustace, so that they may be better armed to face the future struggles in our country.

I would like to ask, in keeping with our feelings on this occasion, that the House stand for one minute in silence in memory of one of our fallen heroes.

[The Assembly stood in silence for one minute.]

**Mr. Speaker:** Please be seated.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

#### DEATH OF MR. STEPHEN CAMPBELL

"Be it resolved that this Assembly record its deep regret at the recent death of Mr. Stephen Campbell and pay tribute to the devoted service which he rendered to Guyana and to Parliament and direct that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his widow, children and relatives." - [The Prime Minister.]

**The Prime Minister:** Mr. Speaker, death has been unkind to us. It seems as though we can never have joy and pleasure without a substantial admixture of sadness, for just a few days before the assumption of Independence by our country another notable parliamentarian died. I refer to Mr. Stephen Campbell who, at the time of his death, was the Parliamentary Secretary for Amerindian Affairs in the Government which it is my honour to head.

Mr. Campbell came into the Legislature in 1957; he spent nine years in this House. It was never my experience to have been

in the same political party as Mr. Campbell. It was seldom my experience, prior to 1965, to have agreed with him on many major matters of political significance, but it was always my pleasure to sit next to him, to admire his deep humanity, his unusual and distinctive sense of humour, and his great devotion to the cause of the people from amongst whose ranks he sprang - the Amerindians. He was an Amerindian and he never forgot that. His chief concern was always the furthering of the interests of the Amerindians and giving them an opportunity to enjoy those services and facilities which he and I, too, considered should be their just deserts by virtue not only of their being Guyanese citizens, but by virtue of the fact that they were the indigenous inhabitants of this land of Guyana to which country they gave the name "Guïana" the land of many waters.

But, perhaps, Mr. Campbell did die with some feeling of satisfaction - satisfaction that he was the person primarily responsible at the Constitutional Conference of 1965 for those provisions in the Constitution and subsequent legislation which seek to give to the Amerindians their rights to their lands and an opportunity to develop those lands for their economic benefit. No doubt he also must have got some satisfaction from the fact that he was one of the architects of the Independence which, today, we celebrate.



12.15 p.m.

It is my proposal that a fitting memorial be created, whether in the form of a statue or of an endowment to a peculiarly Amerindian project, to the memory of the late Stephen Campbell.

I would desire to move that this Assembly record its deep regret at the recent death of Mr. Stephen Campbell and pay tribute to the devoted service which he rendered to Guyana and to Parliament and direct that an expression of sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing widow, children and relatives.

The unkindness of death in this instance is tempered, I hope, by an appreciation on our part that Mr. Campbell has left behind him a name at which some of us may grow pale, a name to point a moral and adorn a tale.

**Dr. Jagan:** I rise to second the Motion moved by the Prime Minister on this another sad occasion for this House. Like him, I knew Mr. Campbell for several years. While we both shared the same interest in the welfare of the Amerindian people and while we may have differed as to the methods which should be used to bring about the welfare of the Amerindian people, nevertheless I held him in my esteem and respect because of the deep convictions and the almost single-minded purpose and determination with which he pursued

his goal, that is, the elevation and well-being of the Amerindian people.

As the Prime Minister said, on his death-bed he may have been happy at the thought that many of the things which he had been fighting for have been partially achieved. The regret is that he is not with us on this occasion in this House.

Hon. Members on this side of the House who knew him would like to express condolences to his family and those who are left to mourn his loss.

**The Minister of Finance** (Mr. d'Aguiar): I should like to join with the two other leaders of our political parties in paying tribute to a member of my party for whom I had the very highest and deepest respect. I am proud of the fact that it was my party that first took an Amerindian to represent Amerindian affairs at Conferences which were held in London on three occasions, and I am proud of the way in which Mr. Campbell carried out that representation.

Mr. Campbell impressed everybody, as he has impressed both the Prime Minister and Dr. Jagan, by his abiding honesty and simplicity, which were attributes that seemed to be naturally associated with him. Anyone who met him could only feel that here was an honest and sincere man, fighting for what he believed.

It is a great loss to me personally and to our party, and

[MR. D'AGUIAR]

we all join with deep sincerity  
in supporting this Motion.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

**WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

**Mr. Speaker:** I desire to  
extend a welcome to the hon.

Attorney-General and to the hon.  
Member Dr. Richmond, who take  
their seats in this House for the  
first time today.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Resolved,** "That this Assembly  
do now adjourn to a date to be  
fixed." - [Mr. Bissemer.]

*Adjourned accordingly at*  
**12.20 p.m.**