

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT
[VOLUME 3]

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

2nd Sitting

2 p.m.

14th February, 1969

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. R.B. Gajraj, C.B.E., J.P.

Members of the Government

People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

The Honourable L.F.S. Burnham, Q.C.,
Prime Minister

The Honourable P.A. Reid,
Minister of Finance

The Honourable R.J. Jordon,
Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources

The Honourable M. Kasim,
Minister of Communications

The Honourable H.D. Hoyte,
Minister of Home Affairs

The Honourable N.J. Bissember,
Minister of Trade and Parliamentary Affairs.

The Honourable C.M.L. John,
Minister of Local Government.

The Honourable W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security.

The Honourable S.M. Patterson,
Minister of Education.

The Honourable B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction.

The Honourable S.S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.,
Attorney General and Minister of State.

The Honourable M.W. Carter,
Minister of Information.

The Honourable H. Green,
Minister of Works and Hydraulics.

The Honourable H.O. Jack,
Minister without a Portfolio.

Dr. the Honourable S.E. Talbot,
Minister of Health.

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. P.Duncan,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Minister of Local Government

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Finance

Mr. W. Haynes,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Hydraulics

Mr. A. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Office of the Prime Minister.

Other Members

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Miss. M.M. Ackman
Mr. K. Bancroft
Mr. J. Budhoo, J.P.
Mr. L.I. Chan-A-Sue
Mr. O.E. Clarke, Deputy Speaker
Mr. E.F. Correia
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Mrs. P.A. Limerick
Mr. S.M. Safee
Mr. D.A. Singh
Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman
Mr. C.E. Wrights
Mr. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr. C.B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson
Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. D.C. Jagan
Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. R.D. Persaud, J.P.
Mr. E.M. Stoby
Mr. G.H. Lall
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P.
Mr. I. Remington, J.P.
Mr. Bholu Persaud
Mr. V. Teekah
Mrs. R.P. Sahoye
Mr. R. Ally

Mr. E. L. Ambrose
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mrs. L.M. Branco
Mr. M.F. Singh

Officers

Clerk of the National Assembly - Mr. F.A. Narain
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly - Mr. M.B. Henry

Absent

Mr. M. Corrica - on leave
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye
Mr. R.E. Cheeks
Mr. P.S. d'Aguiar
Mr. C.V. Too-Chung

The National Assembly met at 2.00 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair.]

Prayers

OATHS

The oaths of allegiance and the oaths of office were made and subscribed by:

Mr. H.O. Jack,
Minister without Portfolio

Dr. the Honourable S.E. Talbot,
Minister of Health

Dr. C.B. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition

Mr. E.M. Stoby

Sitting suspended at 2.10 p.m.

2.35 p.m.

On resumption --

Their Excellencies the Governor General, Sir David Rose, G.C.M.G., C.V.O., M.B.E. and Lady Rose entered the Chamber and took their places on the Dias.

The Prime Minister presented the Address to His Excellency the Governor General.

His Excellency the Governor General: Mr. Speaker, hon. Members, as this First Session of the Second Parliament of Guyana commences, may I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, and all members on your election to this House and wish you every success in your efforts to ensure the good government and progress of our nation.

My Government faces this year and the future with humility but confident determination. It is pledged to establishing a just society where the small man becomes a real man; where injustice is eradicated, where the social and economic power of the masses mirrors their political power and all Guyanese live in peace as one people.

But a country is as good as its institutions. And its institutions are as good as its people. This is not the occasion to essay a detailed analysis of our social and economic past. But it is important to note that there are certain institutionalised obstacles which stand in the way of our progress to a better life and which have to be overcome and removed.

Among the greatest of these institutionalised obstacles is the one which prevents some of us from seeing Guyana as it really is – our homeland. There are still too many Guyanese who are foreigners in Guyana looking upon it as a stop in a journey elsewhere or a country they want remoulded in the image of some other far off land.

I believe, however, that the majority of us Guyanese share my Government's conviction that we can with our efforts make of our country a place in which life for all is worth living.

The goal set is formidable; high indeed. Many, from East and West will seek to prescribe, distract and divert. But the solution to our problems and the vehicles for achievement, as in the case of other new and developing nations, have to be found here; in our own country and be relevant to Guyana. We may learn from the experience of others but being slavish copyist will ensure nothing but failure.

We must recognise the limitations of our circumstances and seek to remove them. We must blend optimism with realism. We must remember that though we make mistakes, we can be better for them and that though friends may assist, we shall have to rely upon ourselves if we are to make a fair and prosperous land of Guyana. There is no easy way; shibboleths and borrowed slogans can never match determination and deeds.

Budget

Since the Budget will be presented within a few weeks, it is not necessary at this stage to outline my Government's fiscal and economic policies that will be contained therein, as well as the capital allocations in various sectors.

It would be opposite, however, to forecast that during this year and for many years to come there will be a major thrust in the field of agriculture and fields allied thereto. The goal will be to bring under economic use the large areas of Guyana which now lie idle, wresting from them such produce as will feed us, and provide a surplus which can be exported especially into the other Carifta countries, taking full advantage of the Agricultural Marketing Protocol.

Education

The Government's White Paper on Education was introduced as promised in the last Session of the last Parliament and the Government's Education Policy was debated and approved. During this Session, my Government intends to proceed with the announced programme of reform with all possible despatch. As Honourable Members will be aware, we shall be in receipt of substantial assistance (\$11.6 M.) from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association but at the same time we must be prepared to utilise to the extent that our overall priorities will allow, our own resources, budgetary and human. In this context my Government is particularly mindful of the contribution which has been and can be made to the construction aspect of the programme through the instrument of community self-help.

Labour and Social Security

The proposed Trades Disputes Bill will be brought before this House during this Session. If, as is the professed and ardent desire of every member of this House, we are to raise the

standard of living of the people through the expansion and strengthening of our economy, we can no longer afford the wastage which results from ineffective machinery for the settling of industrial disputes, and from the inconclusive determination of such disputes which so often follows, to the detriment of worker, consumer and industry alike.

Also for consideration by Parliament early in this Session is the National Insurance Bill aimed at providing benefits to most categories of workers as well as a form of domestic savings. This Bill will seek to introduce a fundamental social reform which should ensure a tremendous upliftment in the social security of great numbers of our people.

In the public sector, plans will be implemented for worker participation in management policy decisions and such legislative measures as may be necessary, will be presented to make possible a similar practice in the private sector.

My Government has decided that the time is long overdue for there to be fair employment practices in all sectors and sections and hopes that persuasion and example will ensure this in private industry. If, however, persuasion does not prove effective, the necessary legislation will be introduced in Parliament.

Law Revision and Reform

Through the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme the laws of Guyana are now being revised and the opportunity will be taken not merely to have a consolidation of existing laws, but also to repeal irrelevant and obsolete enactments and to amend those which have to be adapted to our country's new status and the fact of ministerial responsibility.

In addition, it is contemplated to submit to this Assembly, legislative proposals dealing with hire-purchase, the removal of certain disabilities which illegitimacy attracts, land tenure,

landlord and tenant relationships and other matters which influence the rapid social and economic development which all Guyanese would like to see.

Local Government

My Government regrets that the complicated nature of the legislation involved and the priorities which had to be accorded to equally urgent legislation engaging the attention of the House, made it impracticable for the draft Local Authorities (Elections) Bill, Municipal and District Councils Bill and other necessary Local Government reforms to be introduced as envisaged in the last Session of the previous Parliament.

During this Session, however, there will be introduced legislative proposals for Local Government reform at the village district and municipal levels. We can no longer postpone the modernising and expansion of our local government system, the granting of greater autonomy and responsibility to its agencies, and the introduction of universal adult suffrage aimed at making it truly representative of the areas and people it serves.

Security

The recent disorders in the Rupununi which were swiftly quelled by our security forces underlines certain grave problems with which Guyana is faced. They emphasise the fact that there is still a section – albeit numerically small - of our citizens which has the mentality of a bygone privileged minority and is unwilling to accept the changed social, political and constitutional facts of Guyana today. Its members despise our Amerindian fellow countrymen and from statements made from the relative safety of neighbouring countries where these cowardly traitors have sought asylum, they express their contempt for us who form the overwhelming majority of the population.

There is not place in our society for people of that mentality and outlook and they have forfeited all right to share in the resources of our nation.

More, these disturbances have brought into sharp focus the threat to our national existence posed by the unrelenting pressure which Venezuela continues to exert of Guyana in an effort to seize the major and richest part of our country.

In the face of this threat, my Government will not flinch from its duty to defend Guyana's sovereignty. Towards this end it proposes to improve the equipment and to strengthen the establishment of our security forces and to undertake the training of volunteers especially amongst the youth who will be willing to defend their country.

The new situation will result in great burdens upon our people – burdens not of our making. We shall have to make real sacrifices, financial and material, to preserve ourselves as a people and a nation. Resources intended for development will have to be diverted. But we must take cognisance of the fact that we must first have a country before we can develop it.

Our thrust into interior and possessing of the hinterland now take on an additional significance. It is not merely a question of exploiting the agricultural and other resources therein, but also of occupying and defending all the territory that God has given us.

A Committee of Interior Development to be transformed into an Interior Development Corporation responsible to the Prime Minister is to be appointed next week. One of its primary tasks will be to plan for the settlement of pioneers who are as much at home with the implements of agriculture as with those of defence.

In this development and defence of our Interior, the Amerindians have a major role to play. They, along with others, will get land and all the assistance and training and encouragement

they need to be good successful farmers and ranchers, and successful citizens in every field. With the rest of our people they will be able to build a Guyana which belongs to all.

Honourable Members will appreciate that the security of the State, public safety and public order are paramount at this time. It is in this context that legislation will be brought before this House during the coming week to control movement, where necessary, out of and within Guyana.

We know not what further act of hostility or subversion Venezuela will embark upon but there can be no doubt that the preservation of our territorial integrity must come first. Energetic action has already been taken and will be pursued on the diplomatic front to gain the practical support of our friends abroad and the moral support of world opinion.

In the past we have faced great challenges and have survived. Let us take strength and courage from the justice of our cause so that with the help of God we shall overcome this threat to the Nation, and go forward as a united people.

His Excellency the Governor-General presented the copy of the Address to His Honour Speaker.

2.50 p.m.

ADDRESS OF THANKS

Mr. Speaker: It is customary at the commencement of every Session of Parliament for a statement to be presented to Parliament through the Head of State, setting out the policy of the Government for the ensuing year and the priorities which the Government feels should be given the things to be done. This has been done this afternoon by His Excellency the Governor-General Sir David Rose, and in the name of all Members of the National Assembly it is my honour, no less than my duty to thank Your Excellency for having come and presented the Government's

policy, in the form of what is commonly known as the Speech from the Throne, to Members of the Assembly.

At the beginning of every Session not only Members of the Assembly but citizens in general show their interest in what the Government proposes to do, but on this occasion I think that interest has been heightened because of the fact that we have a new Government resulting from the elections in December last.

Now that the Address has been read and Your Excellency has been very kind as to hand me a copy, which will be laid in the House after we resume, I would like to tell Your Excellency that the hon. Members will have a full opportunity, I am sure, of expressing their views on the proposals of the Government. This is as it previously was and always will be, and as it should be, because I am sure that no Government would wish to have its views just accepted without members of the Opposition having an opportunity of expressing their points of views.

One last point, Your Excellency. I want you to know that we all realise how much of a sacrifice it must have been to you and Lady Rose to come here today on the eve of the arrival of distinguished visitors from our neighbours in Canada, namely, Their Excellencies the Governor-General of Canada and Mrs. Michener. We know how much you have been involved in planning and in making arrangements for their visit and we of the National Assembly would like to thank you for the work you have done in that respect and we hope and wish that the visit will be an outstanding success and one of which Guyana will be proud.

Hon. Members, I shall now suspend the sitting for about 20 minutes to allow Their Excellencies to leave. May I also say that after Their Excellencies have left, if any of our visitors would like to leave in order to carry out other commitments, they have leave from the Chair to do so. Those who would like to stay on are welcome, of course, to remain for the rest of the programme we have this afternoon.

14.2.69

National Assembly

2.50 - 2.55 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 2.55 p.m.

3.15 p.m.

On resumption –

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

RETURN OF DEPUTY CLERK

Mr. Speaker: I think hon. Members will be pleased to know that the Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, Mr. Henry, who left towards the end of last year to be attached to the House of Commons at Westminster for three months has served his attachment and has now returned better qualified to assist in his duties as Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly.

3.20 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following papers were laid:

- (1) Address by His Excellency the Governor-General, Sir David Rose, G.C.M.G., C.V.O, M.B.E., on the occasion of the ceremonial opening of the First Session of the Second Parliament of Guyana on Friday, the 14th of February, 1969 – [*The Speaker*]
- (2) Spirits (Amendments) Regulations, 1968 (No. 23), made under section 128 of the Spirits Ordinance, Chapter 319, on the 6th of November, 1968, and published in the Gazette on the 12th of November, 1968 – [*The Minister of Finance*]
- (3) (a) Reports on the Geological Survey Department for years 1964, 1965, 1966 and 1967;

- (b) Annual Report of the Forest Department for the year 1967 – [*The Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources*]
- (4) Sixteenth General Report and Statement of Accounts of the Commonwealth Telecommunications Board of the period 1st April, 1966 to 31st March, 1967 – [*The Minister of Communications*]
- (5) Seventy-seventh Annual Report of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Georgetown for the 1967 – [*The Minister of Trade and Parliamentary Affairs*]
- (6) Annual Report of Commissioner of the Interior for the year 1965 – [*The Minister Local Government*]

INTRODUCTION OF BILL – FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Miscellaneous Enactments (Amendment) Bill – Bill No. 2/1969 to be published 15.2.69 - [*The Minister of Home Affairs*]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

EXPENDITURE RE SERVICES NOT PROVIDED FOR IN 1968

“Be it resolved that the National Assembly authorises expenditure in respect of Services not provided for in 1968 pending the enactment of the Appropriation Act for 1969, totalling \$85,320.00 as follows:

14.2.69

National Assembly

3.20 – 3.30 p.m.

Item No.	Head of Charge	Subhead	Amount \$	Note
1.	12. Ministry of External Affairs	1 – Personal Emoluments	10,320	To provide for an additional post of “Head of Post” with Effect from 1 st January, 1969.
2.	13. Ministry of Economic	22 – Consumer	75,000	To enable an immediate start on the survey on consumer expenditure.
			Total	
			85,320	

Minister of Finance (Dr. Reid): I beg to move the Motion standing in my name.

I accordance with article 80(2) of the Constitution of Guyana, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended that the National Assembly should proceed upon a Motion authorising expenditure totalling \$85,320 in respect to services not provided for in 1968, pending the enactment of the Appropriation Act for 1969.

Mr. Speaker: I have seen the recommendation of the Cabinet; it is in order. The Motion has been moved, hon. Members. Do you wish to debate it?

Dr. Reid: I wish to move an amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Should we not find out whether anyone wishes to speak to the Motion first? Hon. Members, do you wish to speak to the Motion?

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan): I have just come here today and I have not heard from the hon. Minister what this all about. There are just two heads here. The Minister should threat this House with more courtesy and explain what this is all about.

Mr. Lall: I have to agree with the Leader of the Opposition. This Motion is rather ambiguous. At least there are the notes but no explanation whatsoever was given by the hon. Minister of Finance as to how this money was expended, if it has already been expended. From what I have seen here, it seems as though this money has already been expended and the hon. Minister of Finance is now seeking the approval of this House to make this expenditure legal. I think it is only fair for the Opposition to know how this money was spent. What machinery does the Government propose to set up, or has set up, or has set up, as far as the consumer expenditure survey and so forth is concerned? I do not think the Minister should come and hoodwink us and say, "We want \$85,000." Eighty-five thousand dollars is a lot of money and we must have some explanation from the Minister of Finance. This is all we are asking for and we are seeking your guidance in such a matter. We do hope that when the Minister of Finance replies he will explain how this money was expended or how it is going to be expended.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps this is the time when the hon. Minister will tell us about the amendment.

Dr. Reid: I wish to move an amendment to include the Office of the Prime Minister – Miscellaneous Public Works Projects - \$1.42 million – to provide for the completion of the small civil works projects.

In accordance with article 80 (2) of the Constitution of Guyana, I signify that the Cabinet has consented that the Motion, which it had previously recommended that the National Assembly should proceed upon authorising expenditure in respect of services not provided for in 1968, pending the enactment of the Appropriation Act for 1969, should be amended to authorise an additional sum of \$1.42 million. I now wish to speak on it.

According to section 18 (1) of the Financial Administration and Audit Ordinance 1961, no expenditure may be incurred before the coming into operation of the Appropriation Act for the year in respect of any service for which no provision was made in the previous year. Due to

the urgency of these services, it is necessary that the House should approve of the Motion now before the Assembly. All the items are listed in the Motion as amended, the first two are new services. The scheme was provided for in 1968 but due to unusual circumstances – drain and what not – these projects could be not have been completed, and even though there is provision during the new year that a quarter of the expenditure can be used, because of the urgency to let these projects move quickly, the expenditure will be above a quarter, and thus the Motion as amended is before the House.

3.30 p.m.

I will now like to speak briefly on these few items. Item 1, Ministry of External Affairs, Personal Emoluments, \$10,320, to provide for an additional post of “Head of Post” with effect from 1st January, 1969. Mr. Speaker, sir, in order to establish diplomatic contact with additional foreign countries, so as to increase our influence in the world scene, and cement, as it were, and take advantage of existing friendships, we have to extend our diplomatic representations. This requires an additional Head of Post of ambassadorial level in the establishment of the Ministry of External Affairs. At this time in Guyana’s history, few of us will dare to question the need for additional diplomatic service to protect and advance Guyana’s interest. As a matter of fact, every independent country recognises the absolute necessity for a diplomatic service and I would like to forward a review of Britain’s attitude to her diplomatic service. I quote:

“...in 1963, the sad problem of earning our living in the world has become more difficult. It is now a major preoccupation which influences all of our international affairs and attitudes. An alert and efficient diplomacy can exercise an influence disproportionate to its physical strength.”

Guyana’s diplomatic service was establish on very modest lines and expenditure-wise is the smallest of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries. But, Mr. Speaker, what we have lacked in size we have made up for in efficiency and dedication and the impact of our efforts is there for

all to see. We must, however, recognise the need that we must expand even though we do this as cautiously as possible and within the limits of our resources. This must be done. This expansion is urgent if we are to secure the foundations already laid and make maximum impact in the international community.

We have just listened to the Throne Speech and it has been forecast in this Speech that we need to combine every effort to secure our territorial integrity. Consequently, we have to put ourselves in a position at diplomatic level to counter Venezuela's accusations on an international scale. Mr. Speaker, over this period since we have established diplomatic services, in a few cases Guyana has benefited tremendously because the world of today has recognised Guyana, even though a small nation, as a country that is very serious and dedicated to achieving rapid social and economic development. This is one great gain that has come to this country. We have also worked very effectively and we again note with pride, the birth of Caribbean free trade area, the establishment of institutions and other areas of actively designed to accelerate the economic development of the Caribbean region as a whole, as well as individual member territories.

A very important aspect too is that our citizens overseas have got a new sense of involvement in this country of ours for they take a great pride that all our nationals are involved in the welfare of this country. They have all served to advance our trading relationships and we note especially the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement, in which our Head of Mission participated – this Conference that has brought such good results. Also, Mr. Speaker, due to our new relationship, we were able to get more and more technical assistance, so that at this time I do not think there would be any Member in this House who would grudge the small sum of \$10,000 plus to establish another diplomatic mission for the country.

The second item, the Head of Charge, for Ministry of Economic Development, Subhead, Consumer Expenditure Survey, \$75,000: To enable an immediate start on the survey on consumer expenditure. This survey, for which provision we now seek, will embrace all income groups – adults who work regularly at short intervals – to form the basis of a new price index. Of

course, immediately, we note benefits of the results of such a survey. Mr. Speaker, it is well known to all that the measurement or movement of prices of consumer goods is one of the most important functions of this Government. Some attempt was made to do this in 1942. At that time, the index was called the cost of living index and it was produced by the Department of Labour. This Department then continued to prepare and publish monthly, a cost of living index.

3.40 p.m.

Fourteen years later – 1956 – much more extensive study was done and, on the basis of that study, a Statistical Bureau was established. Then we had the Consumer Price Index. This change in nomenclature gave more meaning to the exercises: it was for the consumer and it was affecting a person's cost-of-living. As you know the present index is out of date – 1956 is a long way from 1969 – and even though attempts have been made to keep the index up to date it needs expansion and a completely new survey.

This is what this House seeks to do when we approve this Motion that is before the House. All the people of Guyana will be involved in this because it will be of use to all of us. For instance, employers, trade unions, businessmen, for all of them we have some better data on which they can argue and present cases whenever negotiations are to take place. [Mr. Ram Karran: "Postpone it to next quarter, boy."] of course, the budget of the working-class household was intimately connected with the last survey. On this occasion, the expenditure will depict the consumption pattern of all income groups in the country and will not be confined to one section as it was in 1956. Moreover, Government itself, in planning, needs this type of information which could be used effectively for major development.

For instance, we need to be able to use the information to make estimates of national consumption, estimates of the number of goods utilised, so that once the survey is completed we will have secured for ourselves adequate and reliable data. I hope that business enterprises in planning their estimates will make use of this. This is so important – and other countries have

recognised the urgency of this – that the Government has been kind enough to make available to us the services of an adviser. As a matter of fact, in India itself, they have tremendous experience in surveys. With this type of assistance we will be able to move forward quickly and effectively.

The last item is small. Public Works projects for which provision was made in October 1968 in the sum of \$3.15 million. Because of our desire to continue these projects and due to the unusual circumstances during the latter part of last year, we were not able to see that as fast as possible. We now wish to have this approved so that we can go on with the projects. It is a long list of projects and in the face of the circumstances; it is not strange that it was not practical to completethem.

This House will remember when I discussed this in October that the question was asked “where will these projects be?” At the time we indicated to the House that it was not possible to name the different areas where these projects would be because these projects were coming from the people. The people who were doing the planning were indicating to Government what they would like to have. Since we have been working on these projects it is now possible to have a complete list – a total of approximately one hundred projects. It is not practicable this afternoon to list them project by project, but it is good to know that the projects are scattered all over Guyana. Briefly, the location might read like this – Essequibo Coast and Essequibo Island; West Coast and West Bank, Demerara; Greater Georgetown; East Coast, Demerara; Berbice. It also includes several airports in different areas in the country.

The implementation of these projects was not confined to any one organisation. We have included several organisations so that the entire country is involved as it were. For instance, implementing agencies are as follows: - Ministry of Health and Housing, Georgetown City Council, Community, Community Development Division, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics, Kitty Local Authority, Transport and Harbours Department, New Amsterdam Town Council, Ministry of Economic Development, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Bush Lot.

I wish, before concluding, to name just a few projects at random. Cemetery Road – I have no special reason for beginning with the Cemetery Road, I just picked this at random – Hog Island – bridges; culverts; river defences at Aurora and at Craig, East Bank, Demerara; poldering of Victoria back lands; poldering of Ann's Grove back lands; roads construction at Sheet Anchor; surfacing road at Esau and Jacob somewhere in the Mahaicony; road construction at Lima, Essequibo; repairs at Rosignol ferry terminal; airfield at Anna Regina, Black Bush Polder and Matthews Ridge; construction of secondary schools in Essequibo; improvement works at Bourda Market, road construction at Bartica, malaria eradication in the Interior, Berbice River areas all over this country are affected.

Mr. Speaker, I move the Motion as amended and I trust that the House will accept it.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: Sir, the hon. the Minister of Finance (Dr. Reid) said that there is no special reason for beginning with the cemetery road – we all know of the dead who had to vote. Obviously, the Minister had to open the cemetery road first to get those dead people to vote. But what is more alarming is that at this first business meeting, we are repeating ourselves by doing exactly the same thing we have done during the last session. And that is as we all know, every meeting of this House matters have had to be rushed through, more particularly, the financial side of the business, by the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Today, we have been asked to approve of an amount of \$85,320 and we are rushing through the few items. The hon. Minister has spent quite a long period explaining the legal side of things. We are not interested in the legal side. We all know that the laws of this country are always being concocted in this House.

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid that I cannot allow that remark to go unchallenged because the laws made here are of course subject to adjudication of the Courts. The Judiciary is an

independent arm of any Government. Therefore, it would be wrong for me to accept such a statement. May I ask the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran to withdraw that statement?

Mr. Ram Karran: Sir, before I withdraw...

Mr. Speaker: It must be withdrawn before you proceed any further.

Mr. Ram Karran: I withdraw. We have very often drawn attention to the manner in which things are done and surely I, and other Members of this House, have a right to protest, even though we cannot get beyond protesting. [The Prime Minister: "I am glad you know that."]

Sir, the hon. Minister told us that it is in very unusual circumstances that this measure has been brought to this House. We have listened very carefully to his remarks. I would like to comment firstly on item 1 which states: \$10,320 for the Ministry of External Affairs to provide for an additional post of "Head of Post" with effect from 1st January, 1969. I wish to remind Your Honour and this House, that this is undoubtedly the thin edge of the wedge – having regard to the number of things taking place – for the setting up of other Heads in the External Affairs Ministry. I thought the hon. Minister would have told us where it is going to be. We did not ask him to tell us who is the person which according to the newspaper might be Mrs. Gaskin, Mr. Kendall or a Mr. R.B. Gajraj. Will it be Black Bush? Will it be Ankoko in order to give representations to the people there? Or will it be some other part? We would like to know. Obviously, it would not be a secret for too long. And if Parliament is not told and were treated with all this secrecy then certainly, we have a right to resist the vote as not having enough or the most important information. It is no use keeping it a secret. It has got to come out. One of these days the Guyanese people are going to recognise the real traitors. [**Hon. Members (Government):** They know already."]

It is pointless for the Government to come here and tell us it has the power to continue expenditure on projects started last year up to a quarter. We all know that. It is no use repeating

the rules and laws or us to be reminded. We want facts. We want the hon. Minister to tell us what sort of friendship we are going to create.

The hon. Minister spent a long time telling us about the consumer expenditure survey. He said: “to enable an immediate start on the survey on consumer expenditure”. Why “immediate” when it is going to take as long as the Throne Speech has taken to prepare? The poor Prime Minister was labouring on this speech ever since he returned and this is what has been done. I can see no reason for the railroading of the consumer expenditure unless the budget is going to take a long time before it is presented to this House. The Minister has not said a word to satisfy the House about this great need. What is the use of this immediate start? Civil servants who are the pillars of this Government have been bellyaching for as long I can remember: “We want better wages, we want better conditions.” And the Prime Minister says: “Yes, we will see you at the next quarter.” Are we going to turn the corner and get something at the next quarter or is it that the survey is being conducted to keep us in style? I feel there is really no justification for the inclusion of this item on the Order Paper.

Coming back to the voting of the dead - \$1.4 million which the hon. Minister told us about. I feel that some bit of shame would have entered the hon. Minister’s mind when he thought of bringing this item to this House. One would have thought that even though it might be a bit brutal to expect certain people who are now engaged in certain projects to be retrenched. As a matter of fact, retrenchment is no shame to this Government.

NB: PAGES OF THIS TRANSCRIPT ARE MISSING
