

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 1]

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

5th Sitting

Wednesday, 27th July, 1966

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Present:

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

Members of the Government

Ministers

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

Parliamentary Secretaries

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

*Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and
Hydraulics*

Mr. C. V. Too-Chung

*Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Finance*

Other Members

Mr. W. A. Blair

Dr. J. K. M. Richmond

Mr. J. Budhoo

Mr. T. A. Sancho

Mr. W. G. Carrington

Mr. R. Tello, Deputy Speaker

Mr. P. Duncan

Rev. A. B. Trotman

Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley

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

Mr. H. Prashad

Members of the Opposition

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

Mr. H. Lall

Mr. B. H. Benn

Mr. Y. Ally

Mr. Ram Karran

Mr. R. D. Persaud

Mr. R. Chandisingh

Mr. M. Poonai

Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye

Mr. M. Bhagwan

Mr. E. M. G. Wilson

Mr. G. Bowman

Mr. J. R. S. Luck

Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)

- Mr. E. V. Viapree

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)

- Mr. F. A. Narain.

Absent:

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

Mr. D. B. de Groot, Parliamentary Secretary,
Prime Minister's Office - on leave

Mr. O. E. Clarke, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry
of Education and Race Relations

Mr. A. Chase

Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard - on leave

Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.

Mr C. V. Nunes - on leave

Mr. M. Hamid, J.P. - on leave

Mr. D. C. Jagan

Mr. M. Khan, J.P. - on leave

Mr. L. Linde

Dr. S. A. Ramjohn

Mr. E. M. Stoby

Mr. S. M. Saffee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

Mr. Speaker: I have to announce that a memorandum has been received from the Secretary to the Office of the Governor-General stating that the Resolution passed by the National Assembly expressing appreciation and thanks to His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, G.C.V.O., for the Speech from the Throne on the occasion of the State Opening of the first Parliament of Guyana was laid before the Duke of Kent who greatly appreciated the wording of the Resolution.

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

Leave of absence has been granted to the hon. Prime Minister from the 1st July to the 15th August, 1966; Mr. deGroot for seven weeks from the 1st July, 1966; Mr. Hubbard for one month from today; and to Mr. Mooneer Khan from today's sitting.

OATHS

The oath of allegiance and the oath of office were made and subscribed by Mr. Winslow George Carrington.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Papers were laid:

Customs Duties (Amendment) (No. 5) Order, 1966 (No. 3), made under section 8 of the Customs Ordinance,

Chapter 309, on 14th June, 1966, and published in the Gazette on 25th June, 1966. [The Minister of Communications for the Minister of Finance.]

2.10 p.m.

Air Mail Postage Rates (Amendment) Order, 1966 (No. 7), made under section 16 (2) of the Post and Telegraph Ordinance, Chapter 132, by the Governor-General on the 1st of July, 1966, and published in the Gazette on the 9th July, 1966. - [The Minister of Communications.]

Account of the Administration of the Patoir Trust Fund for the years 1964 and 1965. - [The Attorney-General and Minister of State.]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

Death of Mr. Chan-A-Sue, M.P.

The Acting Prime Minister (Dr. Reid): We meet on this occasion with a great measure of sadness because of the passing of one of our Members. The Motion in my name reads as follows:

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly place on record its deep regret at the death of Mr. Charles Chan-A-Sue, Member of the Parliament of Guyana, and direct that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his sorrowing widow, children and relatives."

[DR. REID]

All of us, I am sure, were shocked at the news of the death of our brother, Charlie Chan-A-Sue. The news reached me in unusual circumstances and this greatly added to the shock. I was on my way from the East Bank when a police vehicle stopped me and I spoke on the police radio-telephone. It was then that I heard the very sad news.

The late Charlie Chan-A-Sue was a friend of all. I became acquainted with him for the first time a few years ago when he came into my surgery with a dog of one of the not too common breeds and seven pups. I was impressed with the business-like attitude of this new client.

Charlie Chan-A-Sue was relatively a young man. It is hard to bear the loss of one who is removed from this world at any age, but if a man is reasonably young the death blow is more difficult to bear. Charlie Chan-A-Sue was not in very good health recently but all had hoped that he would soon have returned to better health. His loss, therefore, is not only a loss for his family, his wife and children, but also a loss to this Parliament and a loss to the entire country. This has been exemplified by the funeral which we witnessed a few days ago.

Charlie could have been considered a good husband and a good father, for if one notes the progress his five children have made over the years under his fatherly

direction, one cannot help but come to the conclusion that he must have been a good father and a good husband.

Charlie Chan-A-Sue had very wide experience, the type of experience that this country needs. He was a man with a balanced outlook, the type of man we need at this stage, because quite often many of us do not demonstrate a balanced attitude and without balance nothing can be steered correctly. A ship without balance will sink. A car without balance cannot negotiate the roads properly.

Charlie Chan-A-Sue was a man who gave his time without question, not only in full-time employment but in voluntary efforts. He started his career in 1934 as a chemist and druggist trainee and moved upward to a salesman, manager and subsequently, senior salesman. At his death he was manager at the Wholesale and Provision Department of Wieting and Richter Limited.

Apart from his paid employment, Mr. Chan-A-Sue was engaged in several voluntary activities. A man's selfless service can be well measured not so much from his paid activities but from his voluntary assignments. We note that the deceased was a member of the Guyana Cricket Club, was President of the Georgetown Lions Club, was a member of the Georgetown Football Club, a member of the Guyana Amateur Athletic Association, a member of the Guyana Boxing Board of Control,

and a member of the Guyana Cycling and Athletic Association.

Apart from these activities he was also a member of the Fire Prevention Board, Chairman of the Discharged Prisoners Committee and a Director of the Guyana Rice Development Company. Even in his hobbies he saw to it that he was engaged in activities that would be of some use to the community. His hobbies included boxing, wrestling, cricket, football, reading, gardening, bird-rearing and even dog-breeding.

Added to this, he travelled widely, covering the British and French West Indies, Surinam, Puerto Rico and Europe. Travelling, it is said, is an education in itself, so that the removal of Charlie Chan-A-Sue by death has removed a Member of Parliament who had accumulated over the years a very wide, useful and productive experience. None will deny that he was a patriot and a selfless one at that.

2.20 p.m.

Even though he was not in the best of health, it is significant that when the call of duty came for him to visit the East, he gave of himself. He readily accepted the opportunity to serve this country, even though at the time when he was invited to go to the East, he was still receiving medical attention, not having fully recovered from a very severe illness. He returned still not in the best of health, but somewhat improved, and everyone had hoped that the day was

not far distant when he would have fully recovered.

Mr. Chan-A-Sue can be described as a patriot and he can be an example to all of us, because he lived each day as if it were his last, and he worked as if he would never die. We see in Charlie one who believes in one race, the human race, and so he shares a place with famous scientists as regards the origin of all men from a common ancestral stock. He had faith in his country, not only in the coastland but even in the far-off interior.

It is with a great measure of sadness that I bring this Motion before the House. I want hon. Members to know that the Prime Minister has asked that his special condolence be recorded upon the death of this great Member. As a party politician he gave services of his best. He was a man of this country, and though he has passed away, he will still live because his works will remain.

I said before that he has been an example to us all, and now that he has gone, I hope that in his public relations an example has been set and that we will follow on in his selfless task and take courage because he has seen us over the difficult period of moving this country from a colonial status into an independent territory. Soon after he has died, hence we will be failing this good Member if we did not make sure that Independence for Guyana would help to destroy poverty and want. These are some

[DR. REID].

of the diseases that Charlie fought against and tried to remove from this country.

I am sure that we will take courage from the way in which he carried on so that, in the future, we will all be satisfied that we did not let him down. Once again, Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name and I hope that the House will support it unanimously.

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan): I rise to second this Motion on this rather tragic occasion in this House. The death of any person is an occasion for sadness, but when such a person is a Member of this Parliament, then it becomes an occasion for double sadness.

We on this side of the House do not know too much of the deceased in terms of his political work, and the Government side, of which he was a member, is obviously more knowledgeable on this score. But we are all very knowledgeable of the many activities in which he was engaged. A moment ago the acting Prime Minister indicated some of these, and, certainly, the list was indeed a very long one. It seems that in life those who have to undertake many duties find themselves undertaking still more, doing more than their share. I would say that Mr. Chan-A-Sue did, perhaps, much more than his share. No doubt, this was perhaps responsible for some of the

strains and the illnesses from which he suffered.

However, his family can be proud of the fact that he has served well. The community can be satisfied about the fact that he has given of his time and of his energy for the welfare of the country. It is, however, a loss to this House that he has passed away at such a youthful age. However, he has been succeeded, in this House, by one who has been for some time associated with the working-class movement in this country and I have no doubt that this will be a good contribution to the working of this Parliament.

I should like to join with the acting Prime Minister, on behalf of my colleagues on this side of the House, to express our sympathy and to ask that our sentiments also be conveyed to the widow, children and relatives of Mr. Chan-A-Sue. Indeed, we should like to express our deep sense of loss at his passing at this very important time in the history of this country.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar): I should like to associate myself with this Motion which has been moved by the acting Prime Minister on behalf of the Government, and which has been seconded by the Leader of the Opposition on behalf of the Opposition. I should like, in particular, to associate myself and the members of my party, the United Force, with this Motion of sympathy to the widow and family of Mr. Chan-A-Sue.

It was indeed a sad note that was struck yesterday when, on my return to Guyana from quite an extended and important trip abroad, the first news with which I was greeted was the sudden death of Mr. Chan-A-Sue.

2.30 p.m.

I knew he was a very respected member of the business community, and though I did not know him so well in that respect, I knew him as a rather jovial, friendly, easy-going and out-going personality. It seems particularly sad that such a person who would seem to be enjoying life should, so to speak, succumb to the strains and stresses of modern political life. I always enjoyed meeting him and I, personally, certainly feel this loss in this House. I am certain it is a great loss to the party of which he was a member, and to Guyana as a whole.

Mr. Bhagwan: Mr. Speaker, I wish to join the other speakers in expressing my very deep regret on the death of a Member of Parliament. The death of a parliamentarian is a matter not merely for expressions of sympathy from Members of Parliament, but I am certain that it is an occasion when the nation as a whole will be affected by the tragic circumstances of Mr. Chan-A-Sue's death.

While all of us would know for a fact that Mr. Chan-A-Sue may not have been a dominating parliamentarian, his role in political life cannot pass unnoticed. Mr. Chan-A-Sue, from

the excellent account of his life given by the Deputy Prime Minister, has been playing an exceedingly important role in the community as a whole. Notwithstanding his role in this House which was a reflection, not of his ability but the complexity of the constitutional machinery, Mr. Chan-A-Sue made positive contributions to the welfare of the country as a whole.

I am particularly pleased to know that Mr. Chan-A-Sue played a very important role in the field of sports, a field which has been much neglected, and Mr. Chan-A-Sue, by his remarkable endeavours in that respect, has been a boon to sportsmen as a whole. I am delighted that a Member of Parliament took some of his time to concentrate on this most important aspect of the community.

As a person, I think we are all aware of the fact that Mr. Chan-A-Sue had a most buoyant personality. We know that despite the office burdens and personal problems which he faced in life he was able to overcome them and express his profound personality, and in this respect we must recognise the quality of the man. Once again I join with all the others in expressing my deep sorrow over the passing of Mr. Chan-A-Sue. Notwithstanding the peculiar circumstances of his death, I think this National Assembly recognises the fact that it has lost a very noble son of Guyana, and indeed, his contribution to the nation as a whole will be missing.

The Minister of Education and Race Relations (Mrs. Gaskin): I rise to associate myself personally, as a member of the Government and as Chairman of the People's National Congress to which Mr. Chan-A-Sue belonged, with the remarks and the condolences that have been offered on this occasion. I should like to say that in my opinion, and I am sure in the opinion of those of us who have known him and worked with him, in the death of Mr. Chan-A-Sue we have lost a great Guyanese. Mr. Chan-A-Sue was a man of considerable personal charm, he was full of humour, and he was a ready listener to the complaints and to the worries and distresses of all who went to him. He was indeed a friend of the poor. Many a time when things seemed to be going wrong it was from him that one would hear, "Don't worry, things will change". This has been our knowledge of him and it is in this light that we would wish to remember him - as a man of almost irrepressible good humour and a man who was selfless in his service. Mr. Chan-A-Sue has done very much behind the scene because he never looked for remuneration or for personal glory. He was content to serve.

In recording our sense of loss at his death, I think we must also remember that thousands of Guyanese have paid tribute to this man. His father who is here with us, his wife and his children, should take whatever comfort they may from the fact that

these thousands of Guyanese will continue to pay tribute to this man who started from a humble beginning far away from Georgetown in the North West District. One must always think of the family from which a man came because he is, in his life, the representative and the standard-bearer of the parents who gave him birth. Mr. Chan-A-Sue's father can be proud of the son that he has given to Guyana because not only was Mr. Chan-A-Sue a Guyanese, but he was also a Guyanese who, as has been said before, belonged to no particular ethnic origin. The work which he did, he did for everyone.

He was particularly interested in the people in his district and many a time he came to me to discuss what could be done for the people in his area. Only recently he had come forward with a suggestion that we do what we could for a school which his family was providing for this area. Charlie Chan-A-Sue's interests, as you have seen, ranged far and wide. The man gave of himself without thought of remuneration.

Now that he has gone, we will miss him in our councils, and we will miss him in the House also because whatever may be said of his contribution from the back bench it was not without value and I will miss his good-humoured, often witty, heckling if I may describe it that way. I am sure others will miss it also. But we must go on, and life must go on. In recording our deep

sorrow on the passing of Mr. Chan-A-Sue, I hope that all the Members here would feel that sense of loss which the passing of anyone should leave because, if I may quote - not exactly - the words of John Donne, "Any man's death diminishes me" and this death has diminished us all in this Assembly.

As a Member of the House and as the Chairman of the party which he served so well, I wish to join in offering whatever comfort I can to his relatives. I remember the words of the same John Donne who said, "Ask not for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." We are all involved in the death of any man.

2.40 p.m.

Mr. Bowman: Unlike the Chairman of the People's National Congress, I cannot claim to have known Mr. Chan-A-Sue for a very long time. However, for the short time I have been associated with him, I have found him to be a very approachable person; he was always willing to help others, and was always willing to put his experience at the disposal of others. There is one other reason why I admired Mr. Chan-A-Sue; he was one of those persons very deeply involved and interested in the development of the interior of this country, and that, to my mind, is a very good thing. I, therefore, wish to associate myself with this Motion, and to express my deepest sympathy to his family.

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, today we turn aside from political strife to pay tribute to one who has been, from December 1964, a Member of this honourable House. The variety of interests in which the late Honourable Gentleman had been engaged testify to the love of humanity which filled his soul, and it is meet and fit that we pay him tribute today.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition remarked that when a person dies, there is reason for sadness but there is greater reason for sadness when he is also a Member of this House. Those with whom Mr. Chan-A-Sue has been associated in this House will certainly miss him. He was soft-spoken, and he was a man who never seemed to offend anyone. Very few people have enjoyed the popularity which he enjoyed during his lifetime. The manifestation shown at his funeral testified to the esteem in which we was held in the community. I would say no more but to recall a few lines from that beautiful pastoral elegy, *Lycidas*, written by John Milton. I think the lines are appropriate for this occasion:

"There entertain him all the
 saints above
In solemn troops, and sweet
 societies,
That sing, and singing in
 their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever
 from his eyes."

We will now stand and approve this Motion.

[*Hon. Members remained standing for a few seconds.*]

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

CONFIRMATION OF CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT) (No. 5) ORDER, 1966

Equipment for University of Guyana

"Be it resolved that the National Assembly in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirm Customs Duties (Amendment) (No. 5) Order, 1966 (No. 3) which was made on 14th June, 1966, and published in the Gazette on 25th June, 1966." [The Minister of Finance.]

Mr. d'Aguiar: Certain concessions were given to the University College of the West Indies, under Item 66 of Part III of the First Schedule, when there was an Extra-Mural Department in this country. However, under Item 43, equipment such as building materials for schools are exempt from import duty where the schools are approved by the Chief Education Officer. It is, therefore, appropriate that the concession should apply to the University of Guyana.

I am sure that the hon. Members of this Assembly will agree to this Motion. I, therefore, beg to move the Motion as printed on the Order Paper.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

APPOINTMENT OF A COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Mr. Bissember): At the commencement of every Session of Parliament a Committee of Selection is usually appointed. This Committee of Selection should reflect as far as possible the state of the various political parties in the House. There are at present three political parties in this House. I wish to state that a revised draft of the Standing Orders will be handed to the new Standing Orders Committee in due course of time, and consideration will be given afterwards to the enlargement of that Committee after that Committee is formed as a result of the constitution of this Committee. I, therefore, beg to nominate the following Members to constitute the Committee of Selection:

Mr. W.O.R. Kendall, C.B.E.

Mr. L. John

Mr. R. Field-Ridley

Dr. F. Ramsahoye

Mr. D. Jagan

Mr. C.V. Too-Chung.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. Leader of the Opposition have any objection?

Dr. Jagan: No.

Question put, and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Bissenber: I beg to move that this House do now stand adjourned to a date to be fixed.

Mr. Speaker: Before this House is adjourned, I want to extend a welcome to the hon. Mr. Winslow Carrington who has taken the place of the late Mr. Chan-A-Sue. I recall that the late hon. Gentleman was the only Member of the 53 Members in this House who did not make his maiden speech, and I would encourage and urge Mr. Carrington whose name begins with a "C" - we have had the hon. Mr. Campbell and the hon. Mr. Chan-A-Sue - to make his maiden speech as quickly as possible. I wish you a happy stay in this House.

Mr. Carrington: I thank you for your welcome, and I wish to say that I regret the circum-

stances under which I was called to serve in this Parliament.

2.50 p.m.

I suppose that is the reason why arrangements were made for an Approved List of Candidates. Very quickly and easily one can fill the place of a Member who happens to fall under these circumstances.

I promise you, Mr. Speaker, and my colleagues that I shall do my best to uphold the dignity of this Parliament and to serve to the best of my ability. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The Member has made his maiden speech. The Assembly stands adjourned to a date to be fixed.

Adjourned accordingly at
2.51 p.m.