

THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 7]

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

5th Sitting

2 pm

Tuesday, 7th August, 1973

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government — People's National Congress (49)

Prime Minister (1)

The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent — on leave)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid,
*Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and
Agriculture*

Senior Ministers (7)

The Honourable H. D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Works and Communications

* The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice

(Absent)

* The Honourable H. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

* The Honourable H. O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

* Non-elected Minister

- *The Honourable F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance
- *Dr. the Honourable K. F. S. King,
Minister of Economic Development
- *The Honourable S. S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Housing

Ministers (5)

The Honourable W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

The Honourable Miss S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture

The Honourable B. Ramsaroop, *(Absent – on leave)*
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House

*The Honourable Miss C. L. Baird,
Minister of Education

*Dr. the Honourable O. M. R. Harper,
Minister of Health

Ministers of State (9)

The Honourable M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

The Honourable O. E. Clarke,
Minister of State - Regional (East Berbice / Corentyne)

The Honourable P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State - Regional (Rupununi)

The Honourable C. A. Nascimento,
Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister

The Honourable M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,
Minister of State - Regional (Essequibo Coast / West Demerara)

*The Honourable C. V. Mingo,
Minister of State for Home Affairs *(Absent)*

*The Honourable W. Haynes,
Minister of State - Regional (Mazaruni / Potaro) *(Absent)*

*The Honourable A. Salim, *(Absent)*
Minister of State - Regional (East Demerara / West Coast Berbice)

* Non-elected Minister

*The Honourable F. U. A. Carmichael,
Minister of State - Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (8)

Mr. J. R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing

Mr. C. E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Communications

Miss M. M. Ackman,
*Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, and Government
Chief Whip*

Mr. E. L. Ambrose,
*Parliamentary Secretary, (Agriculture), Ministry of National
Development and Agriculture*

Mr. K. B. Bancroft,
*Parliamentary Secretary, (Hinterland), Ministry of National
Development and Agriculture*

Mr. S. Prashad,
*Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Co-operatives and
National Mobilisation*

Mr. J. P. Chowritnootoo,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education

Mr. R. H. O. Corbin,
*Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Co-operatives and
National Mobilisation*

Other Members (18)

Mr. J. N. Aaron

Mrs. L. M. Branco

Mr. M. Corrica

Mr. E. H. A. Fowler

Miss J. Gill

Mr. W. Hussain

Miss S. Jaiserrisingh

Mr. K. M. E. Jonas

Mr. M. Nissar

Dr. L. E. Ramsahoye

Mr. J. G. Ramson

Mrs. P. A. Rayman

Mr. E. M. Stoby, J.P.

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

Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.
Mr. H. A. Taylor
Mr. R. C. Van Sluytman
Mrs. L. E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

Liberator Party (2)

Dr. G. Kumar
Mr. M. F. Singh, (*Deputy Speaker*)

(*Absent*)

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly—Mr. F. A. Narain
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly—Mr. M. B. Henry, AMBIM.

2.05 p.m.

[Prayers]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS — FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

National Security (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Modification) Bill 1973, [The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture.]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

Suspension of Standing Order

Be it resolved that paragraphs (2) and (3) of Standing Order No. 46 be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed, at its sitting on the 7th of August, 1973, with the Second Reading and the remaining stages of the National Security (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Modification) Bill 1973 - Bill No. 17/1973. [The Minister of Information and Culture.]

The Minister of Information and Culture (Miss Field-Ridley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Motion standing in my name. I beg to state that this seeks to suspend the relevant Standing Order to enable the Bill to be proceeded with in all its stages.

The Bill to which I refer is the one just laid in this honourable House by the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and perhaps I should say to Members that this is necessary because by its very nature, the Government having decided that the provisions of this Bill should be available to it, it follows quite logically that these powers ought to be available immediately. This is why it has been necessary for me to move the Motion standing in my name as I now do.

Question proposed, put, and agreed.

Motion carried.

BILL — SECOND READING

National Security (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Modification) Bill

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to make provision for certain matters touching on national security.” [The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture.]

The Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture (Dr. Reid): Mr. Speaker, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill we regret that circumstances have come to a stage where it is necessary and vital that we re-introduce the Part that has lapsed in the National Security (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Modification) Act, that is, Part II.

As we are aware, this is of national importance and this is as it should be because it has to do with the security of the entire nation.

The Bill itself gives to the public that Government must be aware and must be certain that the security and safety at all times of all the citizens are ensured under all circumstances.

We in this country have the experience of certain years that sometimes we do not wish to remember or to be reminded of. I speak of the years 1962 to 1964. After those years, the Government came into office late 1964 and had to take this constitutional measure so that the citizens of Guyana could be protected, could be safe.

This Bill, therefore, is in keeping with the Constitution of Guyana. I would like to note article 5 of the Constitution of Guyana which deals with the protection of right to personal liberty, and article 5 (1) of the Constitution states:

“No person shall be deprived of his personal liberty save as may be authorised by law in any of the following cases . . .”

and I want to refer specially to paragraph (e)

“Upon reasonable suspicion of his having committed, or being about to commit, a criminal offence under the law of Guyana;”

Hence the Bill now before the House is in keeping with that article of the Constitution.

This Government has the responsibility, rather an obligation, to this nation, regardless of the situation, regardless of partisan politics, regardless of all sorts of circumstances and conditions, to keep the obligation to the people of Guyana.

If this obligation is not kept to maintain the freedom of all the people of Guyana then we would be allowing other people to use what they describe as their freedom, to destroy the freedom of others, and at this point this Government draws a very rigid line.

I wish to say this afternoon that any man has a right to his personal freedom so long as he does not use this personal freedom to destroy the personal freedom of other persons. That very moment he uses his personal freedom to destroy the freedom of other people then he in turn forfeits his own personal freedom. I want to quote the example that I quoted many years ago, way back in 1966, when I said that a man is free to use his feet but if he uses his feet to kick someone else then he is doing something in contravention of the law. He is free to use his hand but if he hits somebody else, he does something against the personal freedom of another person.

2.15 p.m.

As a matter of fact, he has eyes, but if he uses those eyes to do the business of a “Peeping Tom”, then he is in trouble again. This is just to illustrate that we must not use our freedom to destroy the freedom of other people because freedom itself carries obligations and responsibilities and the greater the freedom the

greater are these obligations and responsibilities. When you cannot carry these obligations and responsibilities then you are not enjoying freedom any more, you want to enjoy what can be described as licence.

Therefore this Government is not prepared to allow anyone, as I said before, regardless of his political persuasion, regardless of his status in the community, to have licence in the place of true freedom in this country. We have had the experience of 1962, as I mentioned a while ago, where the Government of that time allowed people to have licence in the place of freedom. It allowed people that measure of freedom without the adequate responsibilities and obligations; and we experienced sad days. We sometimes forget.

This afternoon in moving the Second Reading of the Bill I wish to remind this House and the nation of a few of the things that happened in 1962. In the record of the security forces, especially the police record, we have the following recorded: in 1962, one policeman was killed, four civilians were killed, 41 civilians were injured, 39 policemen were injured and 224 persons were convicted of offences against the security of the State, against the freedom of other people. That was way back in 1962. I believe, as I said in 1966, that if the Government of that day had taken the necessary steps there would have been an end of that beginning. But the Government of that day did nothing to prevent this trend.

Therefore, in 1963 there was a continuation of the uprisings and upheavals and the sad story went on: 1,647 persons were charged for security offences; 730 persons were injured; 42 persons were shot by the Police, 4 persons were shot by soldiers; 11 persons were murdered plus the destruction of property, yet the Government of that day did nothing. As a matter of fact, instead of doing its duty to this country, the Government of that day showed a madness that cannot be described.

So we entered the year 1964, and we find a repetition of the events: 176 persons were killed, 920 persons injured, 1,756 persons charged for offences against the security of the State, and even when the appeal went out for the Government of that day to do something, to declare an emergency, to collect the arms and ammunition, the Government of that day did absolutely nothing.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we of this day with that experience, would be trebly condemned if we allowed the present trend to continue without doing something positive. We have had all sorts of statements by those who opposed this Government before elections, during elections, and after elections. Even though the recent exercise, known as civil resistance, has for all practical purposes flopped we still believe that prevention is better than cure.

As a matter of fact, when you are dealing with some people and they find out that their plan does not succeed then they become more and more desperate. We want to prevent them in their desperation and save this country from a repetition of the years 1962 to 1964. We know during the civil resistance the amount of fear that was engendered in the several communities, how the personal freedom of

people was destroyed, how they were served with threats, how their homes were damaged. The farms of some were destroyed because they were not prepared to participate in any civil resistance for which they saw no reason whatsoever. If they are to repeat this exercise then one can only imagine, since they are not going to proceed along constitutional lines, they are not going to have debates of any kind, they will take extra-parliamentary processes. Then one can only expect that these incidents will multiply and before long we will return to the dark days of 1962 to 1964.

This Government, being responsible, is moving this Second Reading. We hope that this Bill will become an Act and will be as a notice to this nation that freedom must be maintained. It will be as a notice to those few people who are determined to act as terrorists in this country that the day of reckoning is near. Because with the re-implementation of Part II of the National Security Act, the security forces will have greater authority to arrest and to detain as the circumstances warrant, so that those diseased persons would be removed peacefully from the community.

2.25 p.m.

We do it in circumstances of health. If you have a contagious disease, you are not allowed to stay even in your own home. You are removed to a place where you can be attended to properly. And so, if you have a social disease, anti-social trends, then the Government of the day must use the Constitution to ensure that such persons are peacefully removed, where they will have an opportunity to meditate, and to return to sanity. I know the majority of people in this country would wish the harmony in this country to get better and better, and not in any way to be bruised and fractured so that we return to those days of 1962 to 1964.

Not very long ago I indicated at our Sixteenth Annual Delegates' Conference of the People's National Congress, that the P.P.P. had a conspiracy for violence and racial hate. I said then that any time we proceed to have violence in this country, because of our circumstances, violence is soon followed by a racial confrontation. Sometimes I wonder if people do not really realise what it would mean in this country if we have racial confrontation. We denounce it in other countries. We have an opportunity here to live together, to help one another instead of destroying one another, to live in peace instead of war, and still, certain persons, because they believe they would benefit from racial disturbances, would wish to see us confronting one another racially.

There can be nothing worse than that in this world, to attack a man because he is of a different race group from you, because circumstances in your country have forced this kind of behaviour upon you. It is something that we would not want to see repeated. We do not even want to think about it, but then we must be realistic that we have persons in this country who are promoting just that

Development cannot take place in upheaval. Development cannot take place in conflict. We on this side of the House have always set forth very clearly that

our business is the development of this country and the people of this country. We make no apology that we have laboured hard to set this country on the road to development, to give people dignity and self-reliance, and we would hate to see anything happening to set us back. Thus, I repeat, as a preventive measure, this Bill is now before this House.

I said at that Congress that certain persons were making certain statements, all leading to violence and racial upheavals. For example, Collymore at Lichfield, Britannia, Kingelly, Hopetown, Bush Lot, in 1972, just over a year ago, said: "Racially, Mr. Burnham and Kwayana are inseparable. The P.N.C. is a hard-core racist party, and only using some people of other ethnic groups to cover this up. Nobody could say that racial clashes will not come again."

Mr. Speaker, surely you see where they are directing the energies and attention of people. We can name several others like Maccie Hamid, who said at Ithaca, Blairmont and No. 11 Village, that we "talk of racialism in Rhodesia and Portugal but not of Uganda, where those chaps want plenty wives. The same thing is happening in Guyana. The Government is ruling in the interest of one section of the community only." All these are statements to stir up racial hatred.

Bhola Persaud, at No. 64 Village, No. 57 Village, No. 55 Village, No. 47 Village, and at Crabwood Creek, said: "The Prime Minister is a racist, and you who are closely associated with him must watch out as there is no place for you." These are the statements they have been making all over the country, even before election. As a matter of fact, the leader of the P.P.P., the General Secretary, at L.B.I., East Coast, said: "The P.N.C. intends to kill you, and therefore, you must fight back to crush it." All these were said before elections.

One would have thought then that such statements were made in the usual way of trying to campaign to win the majority of the electorate, but the elections gave proof that the people of Guyana look now more to deeds than to words and, because of the performance of the People's National Congress, they did go to the polls, they did vote, and they returned the People's National Congress with that overwhelming majority.

If I were in the place of the P.P.P., I would have taken the people's act to mean that it was time for me to do what one of our friends suggested to the General Secretary of the P.P.P., namely, that he has outlived his usefulness and it would be a good thing for him to retire gracefully. But it seems as if he is bringing forth his last spurt of energy to create disturbance in this country. We on this side of the House can have none of that whatsoever.

They went into the elections, and the people of this country spoke, and they have lost. The P.N.C. in Government — whether you voted for the P.N.C. or you voted against the P.N.C. — has managed the affairs of this country in the interest of all, and that is why we have tangible evidence in every part of this country of our performance, without discriminating against any community. If we go to the various areas, the evidence is there for all to see. You do not need to enumerate

them in this House. Just visit the rural areas and you will see the outstanding evidence as proof of the work of the People's National Congress in Government.

2.35 p.m.

The Prime Minister himself has visited even the isolated areas in this country, not only talking to people but indicating projects that should be done so as to bring them economic relief, and we have not left out even the home village of the General Secretary of the P.P.P., for if you go to Port Mourant we can show evidence of work that the P.N.C. in Government has done, work which the General Secretary of the P.P.P. himself, when he was in Government, could not find time even to hear about and I speak of Port Mourant Follow-up Co-op, I speak of No. 43 Land Co-op.

So satisfied were the co-operators in No. 43 Co-op that when we installed a new sluice for them and brought under cultivation some two thousand acres of land they suggested we name that sluice "Togetherness", and if you visit that part of the country you would see that name written by them in their own hand — "Togetherness" — because they too were suspicious. They were not certain that the P.N.C. in Government would have gone that distance, would have walked literally some fifteen miles to visit them and to give them that facility. So they too have experienced the usefulness of the People's National Congress in Government.

And as for Port Mourant Follow-up Co-op, the largest land co-operative society in the Caribbean, they boast of some nine thousand acres now under cultivation due to the work the People's National Congress has done.

So when the question arises about discrimination, about racialism, we have the evidence in those areas of non-partisan activity because the development of this country can be done only if all the people are considered. You cannot have half rich and half poor; half with food and half with no food at all, half with clothes and half going swaddled; half with homes and half with no homes at all. If Guyana is to be developed all the people in the country must be developed together.

And so it is wicked, it is dangerous for any organisation to foster racial strife — and yet some other organisations, other than the political organisations, take part in this exercise very quietly doing their damndest to bring racial strife once again into this country because they believe they will benefit.

But I repeat, you cannot have half the people of this country developed and half not developed. It just would not work under our present circumstances and so I advise not only those instigators but the people who would wish to join them, that it is better for us to live in peace and help one another than to live at war and try to destroy one another because every act has a reaction and I am certain that people are beginning to realise that if they act in one particular way then

there would be a reaction to that, and if their acts bring on adverse reaction then they must blame themselves because the people would need certain facilities; the people would need certain goods and if certain people, because of darkness, because of lack of vision, cannot see for themselves — sometimes it takes us a long time to use our own eyes to see for ourselves — then other things might happen, for other people to provide their own facilities, their own goods and services. Then there will be another cry.

I hope that from what is happening now they will open their eyes and see for themselves and think for themselves that if we are to progress we have to work together. Some people may have probably better skills in one direction than other people. Other people may have better skills in one direction than others but when we pool our resources together we can move on in the business of development.

I said a while ago that the Civil Resistance, the call for people to stay away from all jobs, did not work. Indeed, it has flopped. I am certain the P.P.P. has recognised this because the incidents were few and apart.

Some of them would want to say that this measure has come before this House because of the exercises on the 3rd and 4th, but we are bringing this Bill because we do not want upheavals in this country. We are going to use it as a preventive measure.

Some people might not be fully aware of all the implications of this Bill. I would wish, from the Ordinances and Acts for the year 1966, to remind the people of Guyana, the instigators of violence and upheavals, of some of the authority that we hope would be given to our security forces and the Government of Guyana in keeping with the Constitution. I read from the section "Preventive Detention and Restriction of Movement", which is Part II of the National Security (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1966, Clause 5.

"(1) Any person in respect of whom a detention order is in force may be arrested without warrant by any policeman and may be detained in such place and under such conditions as the Minister may from time to time direct, and shall while so detained be deemed to be in lawful custody; . . .

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the powers conferred on the Minister by subsection (1) of this section, the Minister may give directions

- (a) as to the internal management of and otherwise in connection with any such place as mentioned in that subsection,
- (b) as to the maintenance of detainees and in writing for regulating the discipline and punishment for breaches of discipline of detainees."

I hope that that gives enough indication to the instigators and to the country at large that this Government is firm when it comes to the maintaining of law, to the keeping of order in this country, so that the management of the affairs of Guyana can proceed.

We have set out our Development Plan which has a great future and we hope that when this Bill, which is before the House, is passed, our entire population

will have less fear, that some of the tension will be removed. I personally hope that there will be no one to be taken into detention.

2.45 p.m.

But if, peradventure, any person should qualify, so to speak, to be detained, then this Government is fully prepared to do that task for the benefit of the people of Guyana so that no one, or no group, would be allowed to use licence, which he would call freedom, to destroy the freedom of the people of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I move the Second Reading of the Bill, and I ask that the Bill be supported fully. [*Applause.*]

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, the measure before this House today, the re-introduction of Part II of the National Security (Miscellaneous) Provisions Act, 1966, has all the hallmarks of an illegal Government propping itself into power by enacting repressive legislation to strike fear into the hearts of those who, with feelings of righteous indignation, have expressed objections at the results of the last general elections.

Let us examine the position. The factual position is that in Parliament here the Government factually has a two-thirds majority. They say that two-thirds of the population of Guyana voted for the People's National Congress. If I were the leader of the Government what I would have been doing, and what I am sure is the sensible thing, is to try to win over the remaining one-third of the population. The Government should be listening to the problems of the people, listening to their complaints and doing everything within its powers to win over these people so as to make a reality of our motto: "One People, One Nation, One Destiny". Instead, what is the Government doing? The Government is rushing headlong to re-enact legislation which we all know is legislation which has been vigorously criticised in the past and which can only worsen the situation by arousing feelings of dissatisfaction and feelings of dissension. Is this what we really want? The legislation which we sought to re-enact here is well known.

We have had debate on this legislation in Parliament before. It is legislation which gives wide powers of arbitrary arrest and detention, by-passing the ordinary and normal law. Our Constitution recognises the freedom of the individual as a very sacred right. It is enshrined in the Constitution as a fundamental right. The freedom from arrest without a fair trial, should be replaced only in the most extreme cases by arbitrary detention which we know bypasses the ordinary normal law. The acting hon. Prime Minister quoted very rightly from the Constitution.

Article 5 (e):

"Upon reasonable suspicion of his having committed, or being about to commit, a criminal offence under the law of Guyana;"

Fair enough. But we are not talking about this. This is dealt with under the ordinary law of Guyana. What we are talking about here is article 5 (k):

“subject to the provisions of the next following paragraph, for the purposes of his preventive detention.”

That is what we are talking about—preventive detention. This reasonable suspicion of having committed or being about to commit a criminal offence that is under the aegis of the ordinary law. Preventive detention is what we are dealing with where you are enacting extraordinary provisions, provisions envisaged in extreme outside cases, outside of the normal enshrined constitutional rights of freedom.

I should like the Government to answer these questions, because this is a very worrying state of affairs. The Government has the power, it has the two-thirds majority; it should try to win over the people, not to excite their hatred and resentment. Let me ask these questions. What sign has there been of a threat of violence which could not, cannot, or will not be dealt with by the ordinary security forces — the Police and the Army? What violence has there been? Why should there be need to bypass the courts and the due process of law? This gives rise to a very interesting question, because under this legislation the ordinary law would be bypassed. Is it that the Government is afraid that it would not be able to present cases acceptable to the courts at the present time? This is a very interesting question. I would hope that that is indeed not the case.

Mr. Speaker, to date who has been shot? The *New Nation* newspaper states:

“and the Prime Minister (acting) reiterated this: ‘the boycott has been a failure. Even Dr. Jagan’s family boycott the boycott.’ ”

This is what the *New Nation* says. Obviously they are not afraid that Dr. Jagan’s movement has caused any particular problem or trouble? The civil resistance has failed. We agree it has failed. It is true that communism is committed to revolution in the full sense. That is true. So it is in every part of the world, not only here in Guyana but in all the other countries. But the other countries do not make this an excuse to introduce repressive legislation which can be applied not only to subversive activities, but to all forms of opposition, even opposition which may be generating right now within the ranks of the ruling party. It is true that people have been threatened. My life has been threatened. [*Laughter.*] I have been told that my life will be extinguished because I dared to take my seat in this House. 2.55 p.m.

That is true but, Mr. Speaker, perhaps unlike the Government, I have absolute confidence in the protection which I have sought and which I have received from the police. [Hon. Members: “Hear, hear!”] I have confidence in the police offering this protection, and I believe with that protection it is not necessary to introduce preventive detention to deal with such situations. If you

have got threats, preventive detention is not the answer. The police can deal with it. The army is there to supplement the police.

I knew about this measure only this morning through the kind courtesy of this Government. It has brought this measure to this Parliament and, within one afternoon, it will go through all its stages, and will be passed completely. So, if a dangerous situation arises — and I do not see that there is any dangerous situation in the country at the present time — the Government can bring this measure before the House, as it has done, and pass it within one afternoon. Within one afternoon, they can have all the powers which they are now seeking for themselves. Why the rush? Why the panic to curtail this sacred fundamental right of freedom?

The people of this country, under a democracy, have the right to peaceful protest, but when this is met, as it is alleged it was met on the Corentyne recently, by arbitrary, repressive and what some say was ethnically biased action, surely the Government is encouraging the same thing it wants to prevent. When there are measures, retaliation like this, it gives rise to violence, and this is what the Government does not want to happen. This is where I think it should reconsider the situation and take warning.

The Government goes further, to incarcerate those whom the people consider as their leaders. To put them in concentration camps such as Sibley Hall, will this not create the very atmosphere in which violence and subversion would germinate? Take the leaders of the people and put them away. They acknowledge them as their leaders. If you take those leaders, you put them away in this concentration camp, you must arouse their anger, you must make them feel animosity towards the Government. Do you want this to happen?

Thousands of fellow Guyanese will see this as a gun aimed at their heads and no amount of pious platitudinising on the part of the Government will persuade these people that the gun is not loaded, or that the gun is aimed at somebody else. The Government has the police. It has the army. It did a very good job of protecting the ballot boxes at the last election. I feel the Government can continue the good job and protect the Guyanese people. I have confidence that it can do that. The existing powers of the police are wide enough. We have all seen examples of the police using their powers within recent times, people being put in jail, people being denied bail because their being outside was a threat to security. Why are we now attempting to clothe ourselves with these extraordinary powers?

I agree that the State must protect the citizen. I could not agree with that more. I agree that there is a limit to which you must go. I agree that after an election you must try to win the confidence of the people and not antagonise them. I say the existing laws are good enough to deal with the present situation. I say further, if the situation worsens, in less than a day the Government can have all these powers, and that is why I conclude that I see no reason for this present measure before the House. I shall not be supporting it.

The Speaker: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Dr. Reid (replying): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am certain my friend is not living in reality. It is difficult to bring him back to earth, but I will try. I have already indicated to this House the small beginnings in 1962 that ended up in the great upheavals, and I would think those instigators outside would take this as some advanced notice, rather than spring something on them, as my friend is suggesting, when we bring it to the House just when we are ready to detain somebody. I think the people in Guyana have got this word now, and those who are involved can well conduct themselves better than they have done in recent times. It is so easy to destroy that; the normal course cannot always bring the person to justice. Because of the fear created, it is difficult to get the evidence. People would report quietly something but when it comes to going to court and giving evidence against the terrorists, even those persons would draw the line.

I tried to explain what is freedom and what is licence. I want my friend to realise that this is a small country and if we are to use funds, as they do in large countries, just to keep a watch on people, then we would have no time for development. If the security forces are to engage themselves in just looking and carrying on surveillance on these political terrorists, then they will have no time to look after the welfare of the people. I submit they will have no time to give any protection at all to my friend, Mr. Singh, because they will all be engaged in following these terrorists around, keeping an eye on them, and he would be exposed to great danger.

3.05 p.m.

But there is a difference between small countries like ours and large countries especially when the small country is developing, when you need your scarce financial resources to be spent on development, when you need your human resources to be directed towards development.

I want to quote to the hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh, what was written in the *Daily Gleaner* way back in February, 1966, and I think that is all I would wish to say for now.

“Unfettered liberty is a luxury which only the mighty, perhaps, can afford. Large and powerful nations spend undisclosed millions on maintaining intelligence agencies and all the complex array of security commitments so as to preserve them from danger inside and outside.

In the powerful democratic nations, internal enemies are not necessarily locked up. Governments often learn much more by leaving them at large and so keep abreast of their movements. Once a secret enemy is exposed, he is succeeded by someone even much more secret and the game has to start all over again. Hence Governments of powerful nations balance it carefully to decide how much rope to give the subversive citizens whilst watching them.”

Little nations can hardly afford the luxury of this kind of tactic hence it is not sensible or fair to compare liberties in Britain, the United States and Russia with the urgent necessities for security in little places like our Guyana. Where the great nations can apply control and curative measures, ultimately, small nations

do better by a protected and aseptic measure. Prevention is better than cure.

Naturally, no nation admits its security arrangements hence any good citizen, fearful for his country's safety, should beware lest he heed those who preach maximum freedom, as my friend is preaching there. He may in fact be seeking freedom against the interest of the nation. [*Applause.*]

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Friday, 10th August, 1973, at 2 p.m. [*Miss Field-Ridley.*]

Adjourned accordingly at 3.10 p.m.