

THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA

FIRST SESSION

1973-1976

MINUTES of the Proceedings of the 102nd Sitting of the National Assembly held in the Parliament Chamber at the Public Buildings, Georgetown, Demerara,

AT 2.00 P.M.

ON

24TH NOVEMBER, 1976.

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly  
Members of the Government - People's National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C., M.P., Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid, M.P., Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development

Senior Ministers (9)

- Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P., Minister of Economic Development
- \* Cde. H. Green, M.P., Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation
  - \* Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P., Minister of Energy and Natural Resources
  - \* Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P., Minister of Finance
  - \* Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P., Minister of Works and Housing
  - \* Cde. G.A. King, M.P., Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
  - \* Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H., M.P., Minister of Agriculture
  - \* Cde. C.L. Baird, M.P., Minister of Education and Social Development
  - \* Cde. F.R. Wills, S.C., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice

Ministers (5)

- Cde. W.G. Carrington, M.P., Minister of Labour
- Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley, M.P., Minister of Information and Culture
- Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P., Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House
- \* Cde. O.M.R. Harper, M.P., Minister of Health
  - \* Cde. C.V. Mingo, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

Ministers of State (9)

- Cde. M. Kasim, A.A., M.P., Minister of State for Agriculture
- Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P., Minister of State - Regional (East Berbice/Corentyne)
- Cde. P. Duncan, J.P., M.P., Minister of State - Regional (Rupununi) (Absent)
- Cde. C.A. Nascimento, M.P., Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister
- Cde. K.B. Bancroft, M.P., Minister of State - Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro)

\* Non elected Minister

- Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, M.P., Minister of State - Regional  
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)
- \* Cde. W. Haynes, M.P., Minister of State for Consumer Protection(Absent)
- \* Cde. A. Salim, M.P., Minister of State - Regional (East Demerara/  
West Coast Berbice)
- \* Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael, M.P., Minister of State - Regional (North West)

### Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

- Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of  
National Development
- Cde. M.M. Ackman, C.C.H., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Office of  
the Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip(Absent - on leave)
- Cde. E.L. Ambrose, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. S. Prashad, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Co-operatives  
and National Mobilisation
- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education  
and Social Development (Absent)
- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and  
Housing

### Other Members (19)

- Cde. L.M. Branco, M.P.
- Cde. E.M. Bynoo, M.P.
- Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
- Cde. J. Gill, M.P.
- Cde. W. Hussain, M.P.
- Cde. S. Jaisorisingh, M.P.
- Cde. K.M.E. Jonas, M.P.
- Cde. M. Nissar, M.P.
- Cde. L.E. Ramsahoye, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. J.G. Ramson, M.P.
- Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
- Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P., M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P., M.P.
- Cde. C. Sukul, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. H.A. Taylor, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, M.P.
- Cde. L.E. Willems, M.P.
- Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. M. Zaheruddin, J.P., M.P.

### Members of the Opposition (16)

#### (1) People's Progressive Party (14)

#### Leader of the Opposition (1)

- Cde. C. Jagan, M.P., Leader of the Opposition

#### Deputy Speaker (1)

- Cde. Ram Karran, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

#### Other Members (12)

- Cde. J. Jagan, M.P.
- Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P., Opposition Chief Whip
- Cde. N. Persaud, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. C. Collymore, M.P.
- Cde. S.F. Mchamed, M.P.
- Cde. L. Lalbahadur, M.P.
- Cde. B. James, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.
- Cde. R. Ally, M.P.
- Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. Dindayal, M.P.
- Cde. H. Nakta, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

(2) Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, M.P.  
Mrs. E. Da Silva, M.P.

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly (F.A. Narain)  
Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (A. Knight)

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER(i) Thanks to Deputy Speaker

As that was the first sitting of the Assembly since the return to Guyana of the Parliamentary Delegation which attended the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference in Mauritius, the Speaker took the opportunity of expressing his sincere thanks to Cde. Ram Karran, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, for performing the duties of Speaker during his absence, and especially for presiding at the sitting which was held during that time.

(ii) Leave

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to -

- (i) the Regional Minister for East Berbice/ Corentyne, Cde. Oscar Clarke, for that sitting,
- (ii) the Regional Minister for Essequibo Coast/ West Demerara, Cde. Chowritmootoo for that sitting,
- (iii) the Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister and Government Chief Whip, Cde. Margaret M. Ackman, up to 9th December, 1976, and
- (iv) Cde. Nokta for that sitting.

(iii) Office of Deputy Clerk

The Speaker announced that the Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly, Cde. Maurice B. Henry, had been granted leave from 5th October, 1976, to attend the University of Guyana on a full time basis, and that during his absence Cde. Aubrey W.B. Knight, would continue to act as Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.(1) By the Prime Minister:

- (a) Seventh Annual Report and Accounts of the National Insurance Board for the year 1975.

- (b) Fifteenth Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Guyana Electricity Corporation for the year 1975.

(GSC: 5/404/2)(Circulated)

- (c) Annual Report and Accounts of the Guyana Forest Industries Corporation for the year 1975.

(GSC: 22/404/2)(Circulated)

- (d) Public Corporation (Post Office) Order 1976 (No. 109), made under section 4 of the Public Corporations Act, Chapter 19:05, on the 15th of November, 1976, and published in the Gazette on the 20th of November, 1976.

(C: 17/1/1/1)(Circulated)

(2) By the Minister of Economic Development:

Annual Report of the National Science Research Council for the year 1975.

(EcD: 25/4/1/16)(Circulated)

(3) By the Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation:

Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College for the year ended 31st December, 1975.

(CNM: 5/1/4)(Circulated)

(4) By the Minister of Finance:

- (a) State Pensions (Amendment) (Increase in Rates) Order 1976 (No. 75), made under section 4 of the State Pensions Act, Chapter 27:04, on the 18th of August, 1976, and published in the Gazette on the 4th of September, 1976.

(F. 5/1) (Circulated)

- (b) State Pension (LESLIE CHARLTON DAVIS) Order 1976 (No. 80) made under section 4 of the State Pensions Act, Chapter 27:04 on the 1st of September, 1976, and published in the Gazette on the 11th of September, 1976.

(F. 5/1)(Circulated)

- (c) Customs Duties (Amendment) (No. 3) Order 1976 (No. 83), made under section 8 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, on the 20th of September, 1976, and published in the Gazette on the 20th of September, 1976.

(CEX.22<sup>11</sup>)(Circulated)

- (d) Consumption Tax (Exemption) Order 1976 (No. 84), made under section 4 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, on the 20th of September, 1976, and published in the Gazette on the 20th of September, 1976.

(CEX.22<sup>11</sup>)(Circulated)

- (a) State Pension (Claude Allister Robinson) Order 1976 (No. 104), made under section 4 of the State Pensions Act, Chapter 27:04 on the 27th of October, 1976, and published in the Gazette on the 6th of November, 1976.

(F.5./1)(Circulated)

- (f) Financial Paper No. 5/1976 - Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 15th November, 1976, totalling \$52,904,470.

(2/5<sup>XII</sup>)(Circulated)

In terms of Standing Order No. 68(1) the Minister of Finance named Monday, 29th November, 1976, as the day for the consideration of the Financial Paper in Committee of Supply.

#### QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

##### Question No. 5

Cde. Ally asked the Minister of Agriculture the following question:

QUESTION: Will the Minister of Agriculture confirm that rice received at the Springlands Bond of the Rice Marketing Board is blended and that shipments made to overseas markets are effected from that point?

If so, will the Minister say why farmers are made to pay freight to Georgetown.

The Minister of Agriculture gave the following reply:

ANSWER: Prior to June 1975 rice received at the Corriverton Bond of the Guyana Rice Board was blended and shipped to Georgetown. Since then, rice received at Corriverton is blended and approximately half is shipped to Georgetown and half exported directly to the Caribbean.

The freight charge paid by farmers from Corriverton to Georgetown was instituted since the early 1960's, the rationale being to offset the cost of transportation from Corriverton to Georgetown. A freight charge is still payable by farmers, but it is subsidised by the Board. Thus, although the actual cost to the Board of transporting a bag of rice is 75 cents, the farmer pays the Board 48 cents per bag only. The difference or subsidy of 27 cents per bag is absorbed by the Board.

Supplementary questions were asked by Cdes. Ally and Reupu Damon Persaud.

Question No. 6

Cde. Ally asked the Minister of Works and Housing the following question:

QUESTION: Will the Minister of Works and Housing say what was the amount voted for the completion of the Crabwood Creek-Orealla Road, how much has been spent, and why work has ceased on the road?

The Minister of Works and Housing gave the following reply:

ANSWER:

- (a) Works on the Crabwood Creek/Orealla Road Project commenced in 1973. Expenditure on the project to date is as follows:-

1973	\$	20,128.38
1974	\$	425,746.49
1975	\$	1,637,391.39
1976	\$	901,358.10
	\$	2,984,624.36

- (b) The length of the road is approximately 40 miles. From the Orealla end 12 miles, and from the Crabwood Creek end  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile have been completed to half of base level. Also compounds have been established at both ends. At the Orealla end the road has opened up large areas of agriculture, and forest lands previously inaccessible.
- (c) It is estimated that \$10,000,000 would be required to complete the road.
- (d) Work on the road was discontinued because of more pressing priorities.

A supplementary question was asked by Cde. Ally.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLSPresentation and first Reading

- (1) NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF BAHAI'IS OF GUYANA (INCORPORATION OF TRUSTEES) BILL 1976 - Bill NO. 13/1976 published 16.10.76, 23.10.76 and 30.10.76

Cde. Van Sluytman presented the following Private Bill which was read the first time:

" BILL intituled AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF BAHAI'IS.

- (2) POST AND TELEGRAPH AMENDMENT BILL 1976 - Bill No. 14 1976 published 20.11.76

The Minister of Works and Housing, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT TO AMEND THE POST AND TELEGRAPH ACT IN CONSEQUENCE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE POST OFFICE AS A PUBLIC CORPORATION UNDER THE PUBLIC CORPORATIONS ACT TO CARRY OUT THE FUNCTIONS OF THE POSTAL DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHED BY THE POST AND TELEGRAPH ACT AND TO MAKE CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS TO OTHER WRITTEN LAWS.

- (3) REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS AMENDMENT BILL 1976 - Bill No. 15 1976 published 20 11.76

The Minister of Home Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT TO AMEND THE REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS ACT.

- (4) DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION AMENDMENT BILL 1976 Bill No 16 1976

The Minister of Agriculture, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT TO AMEND THE DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION ACT.

#### PUBLIC BUSINESS

#### MOTIONS

#### Item 1 ESTABLISHMENT OF HOUSING SCHEME AT PLANTATION HOPE

Cde. Janet Jagan moved and Cde. Belgrave seconded the following motion:

WHEREAS conditions at Plantation Hope are deplorable with some 70 family units living under the most primitive conditions without pure water, sanitation or electricity and in houses unfit for human habitation:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly recommends to the Government that immediate steps be taken to establish a proper housing scheme for the inhabitants of Plantation Hope, East Coast, Demerara.

Mrs Da Silva and the Minister of Works and Housing spoke to the motion.

Cde. Janet Jagan replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

Item 2      SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 23 (3)

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 23(3) be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its sitting on Wednesday, 24th November, 1976, with the motion submitted by Cde. J.R. Thomas, notice of which was published on 19th November, 1976, on Notice Paper No. 84.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke to the motion.

The motion was then put and carried.

Item 3      SABOTAGE OF CUBANA FLIGHT NO. 455

Cde. Thomas moved and Cde. Jaiserrisingh seconded the following motion:

WHEREAS the People of Guyana have asserted their permanent sovereignty over their natural resources and have taken effective control of their economy so as to ensure rapid social and economic development;

AND WHEREAS the programme of social and economic reconstruction which is now being implemented has attracted hostility and opposition;

AND WHEREAS the pursuit of an independent foreign policy is the indisputable right of a sovereign nation;

AND WHEREAS acts of terrorism designed to frustrate the will of the people of Guyana and of other sister Caribbean States embarked on similar programmes have been perpetrated;

AND WHEREAS the latest act of terrorism in this campaign to frustrate the processes of self-determination has been the sabotage of Cubana flight No. 455 on Wednesday, October 6th with the consequent loss of seventy-three lives including Cubans, Koreans and Guyanese:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly -

Records its profound abhorrence of the wanton murder of seventy-three innocent persons including eleven of our Guyanese comrades;

Directs that an appropriate expression of its shock and sorrow be conveyed to the relatives of these Guyanese martyrs;

Further directs that similar sentiments be conveyed to the Government of the Republic of Cuba and the Government of the People's Republic of Korea and through them to the relatives of their martyrs;

Condemns these despicable acts of sabotage and terrorism and reaffirms its commitment to work with all States, agencies and institutions to eradicate this regime of terror;



Reaffirms the sovereign right of each State to pursue the paths of development of its choice free from interference of any kind in its internal affairs or in its relations with other States.

Mrs. Da Silva, Mr. Singh and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice spoke to the motion.

#### SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.10 p.m. the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

#### RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 6.00 p.m. the sitting was resumed.

Assembly resumed the debate on the motion by Cde. Thomas.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke to the motion and moved the following amendment:

The addition of the following at the end of the motion:

"And gives unequivocal support to all the states in the Caribbean which are fighting against colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism, and also to the Cuban Government in its decision to renounce the agreement with the U.S. Government on air and maritime piracy and other crimes."

Cde. Mohamed seconded the amendment.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House moved the following amendment:

The addition of the following at the end of the motion:

"And gives unequivocal support to the Cuban Government and to the people and Governments of other progressive countries of the Caribbean for whatever appropriate action they deem necessary to defend their states from further acts of aggression and terrorism aimed at their sovereignty and independence."

The Minister of Information and Culture seconded the amendment.

The Prime Minister spoke.

The amendment by the Leader of the Opposition was put and negatived on the following division:

#### FOR

Cde. Dindyal  
Cde. Dalchand  
Cde. illy  
Cde. Mohamed

#### AGAINST

Mr. Singh  
Cde. Zaheeruddeen  
Cde. Wrights  
Cde. Willems

Carried  
Forward

4

4.

	FOR	AGAINST
Brought Forward	4	4
Cde. Collymore		Cde. Van Sluytman
Cde. N. Persaud		Cde. Sukul
Cde. J. Jagan		Cde. Sukhu
Cde. C. Jagan		Cde. Rayman
		Cde. Ramson
		Cde. Nissar
		Cde. Jonas
		Cde. Jaiserrisingh
		Cde. Huszain
		Cde. Gill
		Cde. Fowler
		Cde. Bynoe
		Cde. Branco
		Cde. Prashad
		Cde. Ambrose
		Cde. Thomas
		Cde. Chowritmootoo
		Cde. Bancroft
		Cde. Nascimento
		Cde. Clarke
		Cde. Kasim
		Cde. Ramsaroop
		Cde. Field-Ridley
		Cde. Carrington
		Cde. Hoyte
		Cde. Reid
		Cde. Burnham
	8	31

The amendment by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House was put and carried.

The motion as amended was then put and carried.

Item 4      RECONSTITUTION OF SESSIONAL SELECT COMMITTEES

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House moved the following motion which was put and carried:

WHEREAS at the Sitting of the National Assembly held on 26th July, 1973, and 28th March, 1974, the Assembly nominated the following Members to comprise the Committee of Selection for the present Session of Parliament, with the Speaker as Chairman:

From the People's National Congress

Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P.,  
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and  
Leader of the House

Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of National Development

Cde. M.M. Ackman, C.C.H., M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary,  
Office of the Prime Minister, and  
Government Chief Whip

Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh, M.P.

Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, M.P.

Cde. L.E. Willems, M.P.

From the Liberator Party

Mr. M.F. Singh, M.P.

AND WHEREAS Members from the People's Progressive Party List of Candidates took their seats in the Assembly on 24th May, 1976;

AND WHEREAS the balance of Parties in the Assembly is to be reflected in Select Committees of the Assembly;

BE IT RESOLVED:

- (i) That this National Assembly nominate three Members from the People's Progressive Party, to the Committee of Selection, and
- (ii) That the Committee of Selection reconstitute the other Sessional Select Committees to provide for the inclusion therein of Members from the People's Progressive Party.

Item 5 - NOMINATION OF MEMBERS TO THE COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

On a proposal by the Leader of the Opposition, succeeded by Cde. Janet Jagan the assembly nominated the following additional Members to the Committee of Selection:

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud  
Cde. C.C. Belgrave  
Cde. Dalchand

ADJOURNMENT

At 7.50 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House, the assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m. on Monday, 29th November, 1976.

*S. Narain*  
25/11/76  
S. NARAIN  
Speaker