

THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA

FIRST SESSION

1973 - 1978

MINUTES of the Proceedings of the 169th Sitting of the National Assembly held in the Parliament Chamber at the Public Buildings, Georgetown, Demerara,

AT 2.00 P.M.

ON

WEDNESDAY, 29TH NOVEMBER, 1978

Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P. - In the Chair

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (62)

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly (Absent)

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (45)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C., M.P., Prime Minister (Absent - on leave)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Ministers (12)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P., Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P., Minister of Works and Transport

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

Cde. C.V. Mingo, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs (Absent - on leave)

* Cde. H. Green, M.P., Minister of Health, Housing and Labour (Absent)

* Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P., Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

* Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P., Minister of Finance

* Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H., M.P., Minister of Agriculture (Absent)

* Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, C.C.H., S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Absent)

* Cde. V.R. Teekah, M.P., Minister of Education, Social Development and Culture (Absent)

* Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent - on leave)

* Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P., Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Absent)

Ministers (2)

Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley, M.P., Minister of Information (Absent)

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P., Minister - Regional (East Berbice/ Corentyne)

* Non elected Minister

Ministers of State (10)

- Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael, M.P., Minister of State - Regional (Rupununi)
- Cde. P. Duncan, J.P., M.P., Minister of State, Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operatives
- Cde. C.A. Nascimento, M.P., Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister (Absent)
- Cde. K.B. Bancroft, J.P., M.P., Minister of State - Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro)
- Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P., Minister of State - Regional (Essequibo Coast/WestDemerara)
- Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P., Minister of State, Ministry of Health, Housing and Labour (Absent - on leave)
- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P., Minister of State, Ministry of National Development (Absent)
- Cde. S. Prashad, M.P., Minister of State - Regional (East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)
- Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, M.P., Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. L.A. Durant, M.P., Minister of State, Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (5)

- Cde. M.M. Ackman, C.C.H., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip
- Cde. E.L. Ambrose, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture (Absent - on leave)
- Cde. E.M. Bynoe, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection
- Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operatives (Absent)

Other Members (14)

- Cde. W.G. Carrington, M.P.
- Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
- Cde. J. Gill, M.P.
- Cde. W. Hussain, M.P.
- Cde. K.M.E. Jonas, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. J.G. Ramson, M.P.
- Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
- Cde. A. Salim, M.P.
- Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
- Cde. C. Sukul, J.P., M.P.
- Cde. H.A. Taylor, M.P.
- Cde. L.E. Willems, M.P. (Absent)
- Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, M.P.

Members of the Opposition (16)(i) People's Progressive Party (14)Leader of the Opposition (1)

- Cde. C. Jagan, M.P., Leader of the Opposition (Absent - on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

- Cde. Ram Karran, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (Absent - on leave)

Other Members (12)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P., Opposition Chief Whip
Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.
Cde. C. Collymore, M.P.
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P. (Absent)
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.
Cde. R. Ally, M.P.
Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.
Cde. Dindayal, M.P.
Cde. H. Nokta, M.P.
Cde. P. Sukhai, M.P. (Absent)

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, J.P., M.P., (Absent - on leave)
Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

ELECTION OF A MEMBER TO PRESIDE AT THE SITTING

The Clerk announced that both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker were unavoidably absent, and invited nominations for a Member to preside the sitting.

Cde. S.H. Sukhu was nominated by Cde. Ramsaroop and seconded by Cde. Ackman.

There being no other nominations, Cde. Sukhu was declared elected.

The sitting of the Assembly was, thereafter, convened with Cde. Sukhu in the Chair.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE PRESIDING MEMBER

Leave

The Presiding Member announced that leave had been granted to -

- (a) Cdes. Burnham, Mingo, Jackson and Thomas for that sitting, and
- (b) Cde. Corrica for the period 26th November to 6th December, 1978.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.(1) By the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development on behalf of the Prime Minister:

Small Industries Corporation (Dissolution)
Order 1978 (No. 122), made under section 63
of the Public Corporations Act, Chapter 19:05,
on the 20th November, 1978, and published in
the Gazette on 21st November, 1978.

(Circulated)

(2) By the Minister of Finance:

- (a) Development Credit Agreement (Import Program)
between Guyana and International Development
Association - Dated October 24, 1978.
(Credit Number 853 GUA).

(ST: 3/2/2/12)(Circulated)

- (b) Loan Agreement (Import Program) between Guyana
and International Bank for Reconstruction and
Development - Dated October 24, 1978. (Loan
Number 1622 GUA).

(ST: 3/2/2/12)(Circulated)

- (c) Financial Paper No. 2/1978 - Schedule of
Supplementary Provision on the Current
and Capital Estimates for the period ended
15th November, 1978, totalling \$64,088,672.

(ST: 10/4)(Circulated)

In terms of Standing Order No. 68, the Minister of Finance
named Friday, 1st December, 1978, as the day for the consideration of
the Financial Paper.

- (d) Guyana Agricultural Co-operative Development
Bank (Amendment) Order 1978 (No. 123), made
under section 15 of the Co-operative Financial
Institutions Act, Chapter 75:01, on
20th November, 1978, and published in the
Gazette on 21st November, 1978.

(Circulated)

- (e) Statement of Guarantees given by the Minister
of Finance under section 3 of the Guarantee
of Loans (Public Corporations and Companies)
Act, Chapter 77:01, for the quarter ended
31st March, 1978.

(ST:G:692^{III})(Circulated)

- (f) Statement of Guarantee given by the Minister
of Finance under section 3 of the Guarantee
of Loans (Public Corporations and Companies)
Act, Chapter 77:01, for the quarter ended
30th June, 1978.

(ST:G:692^{III})(Circulated)

- (g) Statement of Guarantees given by the Minister of Finance under section 3 of the Guarantee of Loans (Public Corporations and Companies) Act, Chapter 77:01, for the year ended 31st December, 1977.

(ST:G:692^{III})(Circulated)

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Question No. 29

Cde. Nokta asked the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives the following question:

QUESTION: Is the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives aware that the southern section of Industry Crown Dam, known as Seven Beds Dam, is in a deplorable state and that this adversely affects the lives of residents in the area?

If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister say how early the residents can expect a reasonable maintenance from the taxes they have been paying for this purpose?

The Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives gave the following reply:

ANSWER:

The 'Industry Seven Beds' road which is the subject matter of the question by the P.P.P. member, Cde. Harry Nokta, is situated within the Plaisance-Industry Local Authority. It is in an area which benefits from capital developmental works financed by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. Maintenance works are carried out and financed by the Local Authority. It follows, therefore, that the level of construction and maintenance works which can be carried out on the Industry 'Seven Beds' Road depend upon the revenues available to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee and the Local Authority respectively.

2. (a) Cde. Nokta has incautiously asserted that the residents of the 'Seven Beds' road have been paying their rates and are therefore entitled to have the road maintained. If it were true that the residents have been fulfilling their civic and legal obligation by paying their rates, then they would have been justified in complaining about the state of the road and Cde. Nokta's implied strictures against the Local Authority would have been well grounded. Unfortunately, however, truth is not on the side of Cde. Nokta.

(b) The facts are that as at 31st December, 1977, the total arrears of rates due owing and payable to the Local Authority was \$92,874.00. At the present time, \$67,000 of this amount is still outstanding. Total rates collectible for 1978 amounted to \$336,000.00. Arrears of rates for 1978 at the present time amount to about \$244,000. With respect to the 'Seven Beds' area of which Cde. Nokta complains, rates collectible for 1978 amount to \$6,560.00. On the latest information, the 'Seven Beds' residents have to date paid rates totalling only \$332.00.

(c) Local Authorities can discharge their responsibility to provide services and development works only if ratepayers pay their rates. It does not lie in the mouth of a ratepayer (or any self-appointed spokesman on his behalf) to complain of inadequate services or development if he has not fulfilled his duty to pay his rates. The residents of the 'Seven Beds' area need urgently to put themselves in order.

3. (a) As I have already remarked, any capital construction work on the 'Seven Beds' Road would be financed by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. The financial resources of the Fund depend solely upon the export of sugar.

A cess of \$12.00 is levied on every ton of sugar exported, and paid into the Fund. Obviously, the higher the production, the higher will be the exports and the greater will be the financial resources available to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund to provide improved facilities for sugar workers. In 1977, sugar production was low, exports were consequentially low and the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund's resources fell to a low level. All of these adverse consequences flowed directly from the political strike in the sugar industry, the wanton burning of sugar cane, other acts of sabotage, and the intimidation of sugar workers - all engineered by the political faction to which Cde. Nokta has the misfortune to belong. Honourable members will also recall the frenzied efforts by the leaders of that faction to organise a blockade against this country and prevent the export of even the low volume of sugar which was actually produced.

(b) In 1977, the Fund projected an income of \$3.5 million. Its actual income was only \$2.5 Mn. It is clear therefore that disruptive activities in the Sugar Industry which result in low production and productivity have a direct adverse impact upon sugar workers by depriving them of wages, bonuses and other cash benefits; by depriving them of physical facilities and amenities such as improved roads, pure water supply, health services and housing; and generally by preventing any improvement in the quality of life and standard of living of sugar workers.

4. (a) However, notwithstanding the constraints to which I have referred, the Party and Government take the view that welfare of people is the paramount consideration. As a result, despite the low incidence of rate paying and the reduced income of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund, substantial work has been done on the 'Seven Beds' Road.

The Industry 'Seven Beds' Road comprise four (4) Sections of a total length of 6,696 feet, as follows:-

Section A-B	(from Public Road to the Railway Embankment - 1,815 feet)
Section B-C	(from Railway embankment to Industry (South) Housing Area - 1,076 feet)
Section C-D	(from entrance to Industry (South) Housing Area to the Sideline Trench - 870 feet)
Section D-E	(from Sideline Trench to the end of the Road - 2,935 feet).

The Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee has so far completed Sections A-B, B-C, C-D of the Road of a total cost of \$195,018.61. In other words, of the total length of 6,696 feet, a length of 4,761 feet has already been constructed.

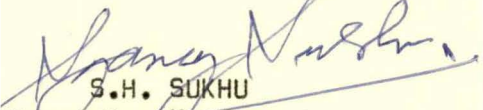
The Fund has approved of the construction of the last section of the Road. The Chief Engineer Roads, Ministry of Works and Transport has been asked to submit an estimate of the cost. As soon as this estimate has been received and accepted, construction would start.

(b) In view of the fact that the last section of road is soon to be reconstructed, large expenditure for major maintenance activities would not be justified. However, the Local Authority would continue to carry out routine maintenance works on the section until it is reconstructed.

Cde. Nokta asked a supplementary question.

ADJOURNMENT

At 2.45 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 Friday, 1st December, 1978.


S.H. SUKHU
Presiding Member

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown
30th November, 1978