

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE 9TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (1992-1993) OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD

AT 2.00 P.M.

ON MONDAY, 22ND MARCH, 1993

IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, GEORGETOWN

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (72)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Derek C. Jagan, S.C., J.P., M.P., Speaker of the
National Assembly

Members of the Government - People's Progressive Party/Civic (42)

The Hon. Samuel A. Hinds, M.P., Prime Minister (Absent - Excused)

The Hon. Peepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P., Senior Minister of
Agriculture (Leader of the House)

The Hon. S. Feroze Mohamed, M.P., Senior Minister of Home Affairs
(Government Chief Whip)

The Hon. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P., Senior Minister in the Ministry
of Public Works, Communications and Regional Development

*The Hon. Asgar Ally, M.P., Senior Minister of Finance

*The Hon. Rev. Dr. Ramnauth Bisnauth, M.P., Senior Minister of
Education and Cultural Development

*The Hon. Bernard C. DeSantos, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and
Minister of Legal Affairs

*The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P., Senior Minister of Labour
Human Services and Social Security

The Hon. Moses V. Naamootoo, M.P., Senior Minister of Information in
the Office of the President

The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Senior Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P., Senior Minister of Health

The Hon. M. Shree Chan, M.P., Senior Minister of Trade, Tourism
and Industry

Ms Janet Jagan, M.P.

The Hon. Clinton C. Collymore, M.P., Minister in the Ministry
of Agriculture

The Hon. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of
Labour, Human Services and Social Security

The Hon. F. Vibert DeSouza, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Public
Works, Communications and Regional Development

The Hon. George E. Fung-On, M.P., Minister in the Office of the
President

*Non-elected Member

Mr. Cyril C. Belgrave, M.P.
 Mr. Brindley H. Benn, M.P.
 Mr. Fazil M. Ali, M.P.
 Mr. Husman Alli, M.P.
 Mr. Shaik K.Z. Baksh, M.F.
 Mr. Komal Chand, M.P.
 Ms Shirley V. Edwards, M.P.
 Mr. Randolph Evans, M.P.
 Dr. Hughley H. Hanoman, M.P.
 Ms Una A. James, M.P.
 Mr. Alston A. Kissoon, M.P.
 Dr. Moti Lall, M.P.
 Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.
 Mr. Donald Pamotar, M.P.
 Mr. Lawrence E. Rodney, M.F.
 Ms Pauline Sukhai, M.P.
 Mr. Winslow M. Zephyr, M.P.
 Mr. Khadim Bacchus, M.P. (National Congress of Local Democratic Organs)
 Mr. Samar A. Baksh, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam) (Absent - on leave)
 Mr. Harrinarine Baldeo, M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)
 Mr. Joseph M. DeSouza, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Parima/Waini)
 Mr. Eugene La Cruz, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)
 Mr. Ranot Paul, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)
 Mr. Kum Karan Pandass, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
 Mr. Ramratan, M.P. a/k Balkarran (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/
 West Demerara)

Members of the Minority (29)

(i) People's National Congress (26)

Mr. H. Desmond Hoyte, S.C., M.P., Minority Leader
 Mr. Sase Narain, C.F., S.C., J.P., M.P.,
 Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, M.P.
 Mr. Winston S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P.
 Dr. Patrick L. McKenzie, A.A., M.P., Chief Whip
 Ms Clarissa Riehl, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Dr. Kenneth F.S. King, M.P.
 Dr. Deryck M.A. Bernard, M.P.
 Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P.
 Ms Anna Ally, M.P.
 Ms Jean M.G. Persico, A.A., M.P.
 Mr. Arthur A. Alexander, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly
 Mr. Simon H. No-See-Quan, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Mr. Dunstan Barrow, M.P.
 Mr. David Subnauth, M.P.
 Mr. Reynold N. David, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
 Ms Jennifer A. Ferreira, M.P.
 Mr. Aftabuddin Ahmad, M.P.
 Mr. Kenrick Tyndall, M.P.
 Mr. Phillip Bynoe, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)
 Mr. Andy Gouveia, M.P.
 Mr. Hukumchand, M.P. a/k Farag
 Ms Joan C. Richards, M.P.
 Ms Gwenneth A. Brouet, M.P.
 Mr. John A. Fredericks, M.P.
 Mr. Ivan Peters, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

(ii) Working People's Alliance (2)

Dr. Clive Y. Thomas, M.P.

Mr. Matheson Williams, M.P. (National Congress of Local Democratic Organs)

(iii) The United Force (1)

Mr. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.

OFFICEPS

Mr. Frank A. Narain, A.A., Clerk of the National Assembly

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

- (i) Leave The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to the following Members:

Mr. Samad A. Paksh for the period 22nd to 26th March,

Ms Clarissa Piehl for the period 22nd to 29th March,

Mr. Simon H. Ng-See-Fuan for that day's sitting.

- (ii) Abuse of Privilege of Speech by Members, and Publication by Media of Certain Remarks made by Members

The Speaker made the following statement:-

" Honourable Members, during the debate on the Budget there were occasions when a few Hon. Members' speeches contained clear incitement to racial hostility and also clear imputations of improper conduct on the part of the Hon. Senior Minister of Finance and other Hon. Ministers.

I do not think I have any power under the Standing Orders to prevent inflammatory remarks which are designed to incite hostility or ill will against any section of the Public and which are contrary to the provisions of the Racial Hostility Act, Chapter 23:01. I have, however, power to request an Hon. Member to withdraw improper imputations, to request an apology and to have offensive remarks expunged from the record of the proceedings.

I did not however exercise the power I have during the Budget debate because my intervention would have highlighted the Hon. Members' remarks which I knew would have been published in the media.

Hon. Members, the Bill of Rights 1988 provides that "the freedom of speech and debates or proceedings in Parliament ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of Parliament." As a result

statements in Parliament are absolutely privileged.

This August House also enjoys a similar privilege, that is, "what is said and done within its walls cannot be inquired into in a Court of Law."

Because of this immunity Hon. Members cannot be sued or prosecuted for anything said in Parliament. A Member can, therefore, because of this privilege breach a law such as Racial Hostility Act or falsely and maliciously impute improper conduct against other Hon. Members and/or members of the public. Such conduct can incite hatred, contempt or ridicule against other Members and/or persons and thereby causing right thinking members of society to shun or avoid other Members and/or persons.

There are provisions however under the Standing Order preventing the conduct of certain persons to be raised by an Hon. Member other than by a substantive motion. But even if such a breach occurs and it is brought to the Member's attention and he apologises and his statement is expunged from the record of the proceedings the offending statement might well be published in the media.

A Member of this Hon. House can maliciously and falsely attack a member of the public and the Speaker may have no power to censure that Member. Such an attack may also be published.

The publication of such statements although malicious and slanderous is privileged if it is a fair and accurate report of the proceedings and it is published contemporaneously.

Hon. Members, as you are aware, we now have contemporaneous radio and television coverage of proceedings in this House. Because of this I will be failing in my duty as Speaker if I do not remind Hon. Members that the privilege of the right of free speech; if abused, can cause conflict among citizens and severe pain, hardship and ruin.

If despite this reminder any Hon. Member should abuse this privilege steps must be taken to protect citizens whose rights may be infringed and who will be denied legal redress, also to prevent any incitement to racial hostility.

I think it must be the duty of the media to exercise responsible editorial judgement on their reports. Statements which may tend to incite ill will among citizens and/or are libelous ought to be edited before publication or denied publication altogether.

On the 7th day of January, 1993, the Hon. Moses Nagamootoo, the Senior Minister of Information said in this House that the Government has taken steps for extensive coverage by the media of parliamentary proceedings. The media must however be on guard to ensuring that the freedom of the press is not abused. I wish to remind Hon. Members and the media of the power of the Speaker under Standing Order 81 which permits representatives of the media to attend the sitting of this House at the Speaker's pleasure."

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1993

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1993.

IN COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

At the request of the Senior Minister of Agriculture (Leader of the House), consideration of the following Heads and Divisions was deferred:-

Head 1 - Office of the President
 Head 2 - Guyana Defence Force
 Head 3 - Guyana National Service
 Head 5 - Office of the Prime Minister
 Head 8 - Office of the Ombudsmen
 Head 9 - Public and Police Service
 Commissions
 Head 10 - Teaching Service Commission
 Head 12 - Public Service Appellate
 Tribunal
 Div 501 - Office of the President
 Div 505 - Constitutional Agencies

The Committee of Supply considered and approved of the following Heads and Divisions, as printed in the Estimates:-

Head 62 - Ministry of Public Works, Communications and Regional Development	\$314,023.000
Head 65 - Civil Aviation Department	109,206.000
Head 67 - Region 1- Barima/Waini Administration	38,349.000
Head 68 - Region 1- Barima/Waini Agriculture	4,745.000
Head 69 - Region 1- Barima/Waini Education	28,478.000
Head 70 - Region 1- Barima/Waini Health	10,528.000

Head 71 - Region 2- Pomeroon/Supenaam Administration	\$ 57,050,000
Head 72 - Region 2- Pomeroon/Supenaam Agriculture	56,989,000
Head 73 - Region 2- Pomeroon/Supenaam Education	85,018,000
Head 74 - Region 2- Pomeroon/Supenaam Health	33,047,000
Head 75 - Region 3- Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara - Administration	22,581,000
Head 76 - Region 3- Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara - Agriculture	38,868,000
Head 77 - Region 3- Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara - Education	148,718,000
Head 78 - Region 3- Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara - Health	53,628,000
Head 79 - Region 4- Demerara/Mahaica Administration	37,301,000
Head 80 - Region 4- Demerara/Mahaica Agriculture	34,216,000
Head 81 - Region 4- Demerara/Mahaica Education	125,930,000
Head 82 - Region 4- Demerara/Mahaica Health	54,986,000
Head 83 - Region 5- Mahaica/Berbice Administration	41,359,000
Head 84 - Region 5- Mahaica/Berbice Agriculture	50,424,000
Head 85 - Region 5- Mahaica/Berbice Education	59,754,000
Head 86 - Region 5- Mahaica/Berbice Health	31,258,000
Head 87 - Region 6- East Berbice/Corentyne Administration	65,390,000
Head 88 - Region 6- East Berbice/Corentyne Agriculture	75,936,000
Head 89 - Region 6- East Berbice/Corentyne Education	132,959,000
Head 90 - Region 6- East Berbice/Corentyne Health	147,211,000
Head 91 - Region 7- Cuyuni/Mazaruni Administration	42,393,000
Head 92 - Region 7- Cuyuni/Mazaruni Agriculture	1,968,000
Head 93 - Region 7- Cuyuni/Mazaruni Education	23,276,000
Head 94 - Region 7- Cuyuni/Mazaruni Health	14,633,000

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Head 95 - Region 8- Potaro/Siparuni Administration	\$ 22,767.000
Head 96 - Region 8- Potaro/Siparuni Agriculture	1,534.000
Head 97 - Region 8- Potaro/Siparuni Education	13,918.000
Head 98 - Region 8- Potaro/Siparuni Health	2,432.000
Head 99 - Region 9- Upper Takatu/ Upper Essequibo - Administration	18,892.000
Head 100 - Region 9- Upper Takatu/ Upper Essequibo - Agriculture	1,616.000
Head 101 - Region 9- Upper Takatu/ Upper Essequibo - Education	28,043.000
Head 102 - Region 9- Upper Takatu/ Upper Essequibo - Health	11,596.000
Head 103 - Region 10- Upper Demerara/ Berbice - Administration	9,206.000
Head 104 - Region 10- Upper Demerara/ Berbice - Agriculture	1,689.000
Head 105 - Region 10- Upper Demerara/ Berbice - Education	64,599.000
Head 106 - Region 10- Upper Demerara/ Berbice - Health	10,027.000
Div 517 - Guyana Water Authority	362,540.000
Div 520 - Ministry of Public Works, Communication and Regional Development	1,461,666.000
Div 531 - Region 1- Parima/Maini	7,500.000
Div 532 - Region 2- Pomeroon/Supenaam	19,500.000
Div 533 - Region 3- Essequibo Islands/ Demerara	211,700.000
Div 534 - Region 4- Demerara/Mahaica	20,100.000
Div 535 - Region 5- Mahaica/Berbice	12,050.000
Div 536 - Region 6- East Berbice/Corentyne	18,700.000
Div 537 - Region 7- Cuyuni/Mazaruni	12,300.000
Div 538 - Region 8- Potaro/Siparuni	4,400.000
Div 539 - Region 9- Upper Takatu/ Upper Essequibo	11,612.000
Div 540 - Region 10- Upper Demerara/Berbice	6,300.000
Head 6 - Parliament Office	18,234.00

Assembly resumed.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.45 p.m. the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.16 p.m. the sitting was resumed.

RESUMPTION OF CONSIDERATION OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1993

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply and resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1993.

In Committee of Supply

The Committee of Supply considered and approved of the following Heads and Divisions, as printed in the Estimates:-

Head 29	Ministry of Agriculture	\$ 18,123,000
Head 30	Crops and Livestock Division -	349,079,000
Head 31	Lands and Surveys Division	16,267,000
Head 32	Hydraulics Division	8,461,000
Head 33	Hydrometeorological Division -	71,715,000
Head 34	Fisheries Division	2,433,000
Div. 508	Ministry of Agriculture -	1,421,950,000
Div. 510	Ministry of Agriculture MMA III	39,000,000
Div. 512 -	Ministry of Agriculture Artisanal Fishery	101,217,000
Head 13	Elections Commission	10,520,000
Head 22	Ministry of Home Affairs	16,006,000
Head 23	Ministry of Home Affairs Police	738,176,000

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Head 24 - Prisons	\$ 77,182,000
Head 25 - Police Complaints Authority	871,000
Head 26 - Fire Protection Services	32,649,000
Head 27 - National Registration Centre	123,935,000
Head 28 - General Register Office	5,667,000
Div. 507 - Ministry of Home Affairs	88,650,000

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.30 p.m. on a motion by the Senior Minister of Agriculture (Leader of the House), the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 23rd March, 1993.



J.C. JAGAN

Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

22nd March, 1993