

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE 92ND SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (1992-1997) OF THE SIXTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD

AT 2.00 P.M

ON MONDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY, 1997

IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, GEORGETOWN

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (74)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government - People's Progressive Party/Civic (44)

The Hon. Samuel A. Hinds, M.P., Prime Minister

The Hon. Reepu Daman Persaud, O.R., 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 of Local Government

*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. 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

*The Hon. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P., Senior Minister of Finance

Mrs. Janet Jagan, O.E., M.P.

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

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 Local Government

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

The Hon. Moses V. Nagamootoo, M.P., Senior Minister of Information

*The Hon. C. Anthony Xavier, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Public Works and Communications

*The Hon. Satyadeow Sawh, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture

* Non-elected Member

Mr. Cyril C. Belgrave, M.P.
 Mr. Fazil M. Ali, M.P.
 Mr. Husman Alli, M.P.
 Mr. Shaik K.Z. Baksh, M.P. (Absent)
 Mr. Komal Chand, C.C.H., M.P.
 Mrs. Shirley V. Edwards, M.P.
 Dr. Hughley H. Hanoman, M.P. (Absent)
 Mrs. Una A. James, M.P.
 Mr. Alston A. Kisson, M.P.
 Dr. Moti Lall, M.P. (Absent)
 Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.
 Mr. Donald Ramotar, M.P.
 Mr. Lawrence E. Rodney, M.P.
 Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Local Government
 Mr. Winslow M. Zephyr, M.P.
 Mr. Reuben A. Gilbert, M.P.
 Mr. Edward DaSilva, M.P.
 Mr. Khadim Bacchus, M.P. (National Congress of Local Democratic Organs)
 Mr. Samad A. Baksh, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam) (Absent)
 Mr. Harrinarine Baldeo, M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)
 Mr. Joseph DeSouza, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)
 Mr. Eugene La Cruz, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)
 Mr. Bagot Paul, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)
 Mr. Kum Karan Ramdas, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
 Mr. Ramrattan, M.P. a/k Balkarran (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/
 West Demerara)

Members of the Minority (29)

(1) People's National Congress (26)

Mr. H. Desmond Hoyte, S.C., M.P., Minority Leader (Absent)
 Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, M.P.
 Mr. Winston S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P.
 Mrs. Clarissa Riehl, M.P. (Absent)
 Mr. Dunstan Barrow, M.P.
 Mr. M. Idris Deen, M.P.
 Dr. Faith A. Harding, M.P.
 Miss Amna Ally, M.P.
 Miss Jean M.G. Persico, A.A., M.P.
 Mr. Arthur A. Alexander, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly
 Mr. Dharamdeo Sawh, M.P.
 Mr. Simon Ng-See-Quan, M.P. (Absent)
 Mr. David Subnauth, J.P., M.P.
 Mr. Reynold N. David, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
 Mr. Aftabuddin Ahamad, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Mrs. Cyrilda A. DeJesus, M.P.
 Mr. Kenrick Tyndall, M.P.
 Mr. Phillip Bynoe, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice) (Absent)
 Mr. Andy Gouveia, M.P.
 Mr. Hukumchand, M.P. a/k Parag
 Miss Joan C. Richards, M.P. (Absent - on leave)
 Mr. John A. Fredericks, M.P.
 Mr. Ivan Peters, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)
 Mr. Hubert K.H. Hyman, M.P.
 Mr. Ivor Allen, M.P.

(There is one vacancy)

(ii) Working People's Alliance (2)

Dr. Rupert Roopnaraine, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

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

(iii) The United Force (1)

Mr. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

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

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 2.00 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) Leave

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to Mr. Aftabuddin Ahamad and Dr. Rupert Roopnaraine for that day's sitting.

(ii) Second Statement By The Speaker Concerning A Remark Made By Mr. Idris Deen About The General Secretary Of The Trades Union Congress

The Speaker made the following statement:

'Hon. Members, as you are aware, on Thursday, January 30, 1997, I made a statement in the National Assembly as a result of a Press Release, which was issued by the People's National Congress (PNC) Secretariat. In the Release I was falsely accused of refusing a request by the PNC to address the issue involving the Hon. Member Mr. Idris Deen, who, even the PNC did not attempt to deny, referred to Mr. Joseph Pollydore, General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress, as being senile.

In my said statement to this House, Hon. Members will recall that I mentioned that the Hon. Member Mr. Barrow, in a note, informed me that "Mr. Deen would like to offer an apology, re: Mr. Pollydore's statement" and that I agreed to let Mr. Deen do so at the very first opportunity if it could be done under the Standing Orders, but that Mr. Deen had refused to avail himself of the opportunity to do so.

Hon. Members, one would have thought that the Leadership of the PNC, having seen my statement, would have requested Mr. Deen to apologise as he had informed his Hon. colleague Mr. Barrow or to disassociate itself from Mr. Deen and apologise to Mr. Pollydore or to remain silent and let the matter rest.

Instead, in another Press Release issued on January 30, 1997, the PNC misrepresented the facts in order to malign me.

The said Release further accused me of not understanding my role as Speaker and of being partial in the discharge of my duties.

The said Release does not deny that Mr. Barrow was requested by Mr. Deen to inform me that he, Mr. Deen, wished to apologise for the statement he made about Mr. Pollydore.

The Release also alleged that I did not permit Mr. Deen to provide an explanation; this is untrue.

The PNC Release was that Mr. Deen wanted to make a statement about what he said of Mr. Pollydore whilst Mr. Deen was in his seat and I denied him that opportunity.

I wish to remind Hon. Members, that Mr. Deen was sitting when he used the words "he is senile" and later, whilst standing, Mr. Deen said he did not call anyone's name.

In the Release it is stated "In the first instance the Speaker has been absurd in requesting an apology for a statement allegedly made during the processes of heckling. One had to ask: since when the Speaker takes cognisance of heckling during debate in the National Assembly? That the Speaker has attempted to solicit an apology for an alleged statement which he himself contended was made when the Hon. Member Shree Chan, Minister of Trade, Tourism and Industry, was speaking as opposed to a statement which was formerly made to the National Assembly, supports the view of the PNC's press statement of January 28, 1997, that the intention is to use the incident for nefarious political purposes".

Hon. Members, I never requested an apology nor attempted to solicit an apology from Mr. Deen as alleged in the Release. As to the taking of cognisance of heckling during debate of the National Assembly I have done so on numerous occasions during the Budget Debate last week and on many previous occasions.

What is puzzling to me Hon. Members, is that if I had requested an apology for the statement made during heckling and also of attempting to solicit an apology from Mr. Deen, which I deny; why was Mr. Deen willing to apologise and the PNC is criticising me for not permitting him to do so?

The Release implies that the Speaker has no authority to deal with a Member who is sitting and heckling whilst another Member is addressing the House. Such a view is nonsensical and shows a total lack of knowledge of the powers and duties of a Speaker in the conduct of debates and the maintenance of Order in this Honourable House.

A Speaker has very wide powers to prevent disorder over Members in the House whether a Member is addressing the House or not.

The following passages appear in Erskine May, Parliamentary Practice, 21st Edition at page 394; "When any Member... makes any noise or disturbance whilst another Member is speaking, or commits any other breach of order or decorum... it is the duty of the Speaker, if in his judgement the occasion demands it, to interfere and call the Member offending to order". "Where any disorderly or unparliamentary words are used whether by a Member who is addressing the House or a Member who is present during a debate, the Speaker intervenes and calls upon the offending Member to withdraw the words".

I wish to remind Hon. Members that Parliamentary Practice and Procedure will not be found in any written code. The Standing Orders are only part of the rules of procedure. The greater part of Parliament's rules are unwritten. They comprise of practice and conventions to supplement the Standing Orders.

The PNC's Release also states "It is true that the Speaker of the House did not permit Member of Parliament, Mr. Idris Deen to provide an explanation. Rather he demanded that Mr. Deen should meet him in his Chambers. It is clear that he did not want an explanation. What he wanted was time to be able to obtain political mileage for the PPP".

Hon. Members why would I have refused to permit Mr. Deen to provide an explanation if as the Release had earlier stated I had requested and attempted to solicit an apology from Mr. Deen?

In my statement to the House last Thursday I said that I had agreed to permit Mr. Deen to make a statement under the item "Personal Explanations" on the Order Paper and he refused to do so. This is not denied in the PNC Release.

I had requested to see Mr. Deen in my Chambers after the Hon. Mr. Barrow spoke to me. Since I wanted to know what he intended to say.

In the same Edition of Erskine May at page 304, it is stated that "the House will permit a personal statement to be made.... provided that the Speaker has been informed of what the Member proposes to say... Because the practice of the House is not to permit such statements to be subject to intervention or debate, the precise contents of the proposed statements are submitted in advance to the Speaker to ensure that they are appropriate".

The PNC in its second Release expressed surprise that I did not "comprehend a simple statement" which appeared in their first Release of January 28, 1997 and in which it was stated that Mr. Pollydore was held in high regard by the Leadership and all the Members of the PNC.

Hon. Members, I found it difficult to understand how it can be said that all the Members of the PNC held Mr. Pollydore in high regard when a top PNC "front bench" Parliamentarian said that Mr. Pollydore is senile. It does not matter whether the Member was sitting or standing.

Hon. Members, the discharge of my duties as Speaker was referred to by the Hon. Member Mr. Winston Murray, Chairman of the PNC on December 19, 1995, whilst speaking on behalf of the PNC in the House and extending seasons greetings. He said "We would like, Mr. Speaker, to single you out for special mention. We believe, Sir, that you have maintained the dignity of the Chair and that you have conducted the debates in this Assembly with a great deal of fairness. I would like to congratulate you. I think that augurs well for the future of our Parliament".

Dr. Kenneth King, a former PNC front bencher in his letter of resignation to me dated December 28, 1996, stated "I take this opportunity to thank you for your many kindness to me during my short term in Parliament, and formally to congratulate you on your fairness and objectivity in your exercise of the Office of Speaker".'

PUBLIC BUSINESSMOTION

1. MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1996

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1996.

In Committee of Supply

The following Heads and Divisions were approved, as printed in the Estimates:-

Head 01-01	Office of the President	498,901,000
Head 01-02	Guyana Defence Force	1,285,785,000
Head 01-03	Guyana National Service	170,201,000
Div. 501	Office of the President	426,260,000
Head 01-04	Ministry of Information	104,500,000
Div. 513	Ministry of Information	30,000,000
Head 04-02	Office of the Ombudsman	1,978,000
Head 04-03	Public & Police Service Commissions	12,315,000
Head 04-04	Teaching Service Commission	9,191,000
Head 04-06	Public Service Appellate Tribunal	2,133,000
Div. 505	Constitutional Agencies	35,300,000
Head 02-01	Office of the Prime Minister	21,495,000
Head 14-01	Ministry of Public Works & Communications	351,305,000
Head 14-03	Civil Aviation Department	236,954,000
Div. 519	Ministry of Public Works & Communications - Sea Defences	1,770,000,000
Div. 520	Ministry of Public Works & Communications	2,246,220,000
Div. 521	Ministry of Public Works & Communications - Road Construction, Rehab. and Studies	1,860,200,000

	\$
Head 03-01 Parliament Office	57,249,000
Head 08-01 Ministry of Agriculture	68,845,000
Head 08-02 Crops and Livestock Division	433,664,000
Head 08-03 Lands and Surveys Division	36,221,000
Head 08-05 Hydrometeorological Division	82,244,000
Head 08-06 Fisheries Division	12,097,000
Div. 508 Ministry of Agriculture	1,091,900,000
Div. 510 Ministry of Agriculture - MMA III	40,000,000
Div. 512 Ministry of Agriculture - Artisanal Fishery	10,800,000
Head 04-07 Elections Commission	27,041,000
Head 07-01 Ministry of Home Affairs	27,984,000
Head 07-02 Police	1,260,002,000
Head 07-03 Prisons	214,625,000
Head 07-04 Police Complaints Authority	1,483,000
Head 07-05 Fire Protection Services	92,398,000
Head 07-06 National Registration Centre	421,315,000
Head 07-07 General Register Office	21,499,000
Div. 507 Ministry of Home Affairs.	149,850,000

Assembly Resumed

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.30 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.00 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

The following Heads and Divisions were approved, as printed in the Estimates:

	\$
Head 14-02 Ministry of Local Government	80,765,000
Div. 522 Ministry of Local Government	500,500,000

Region 1 - Barima/Waini

Head 14-04	Administration	64,914,000
Head 14-05	Agriculture	7,133,000
Head 14-06	Education	111,635,000
Head 14-07	Health	41,312,000
Div. 531	Region 1	35,800,000

Region 2 Pomeroon/Supenaam

Head 14-08	Administration	62,048,000
Head 14-09	Agriculture	39,048,000
Head 14-10	Education	223,820,000
Head 14-11	Health	76,409,000
Div. 532	Region 2	187,500,000

Region 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara

Head 14-12	Administration	77,852,000
Head 14-13	Agriculture	64,981,000
Head 14-14	Education	268,507,000
Head 14-15	Health	131,609,000
Div. 533	Region 3	205,420,000

Region 4 - Demerara/Mahaica

Head 14-16	Administration	76,850,000
Head 14-17	Agriculture	71,916,000
Head 14-18	Education	352,433,000
Head 14-19	Health	49,510,000
Div. 534	Region 4	110,500,000

Region 5 - Mahaica/Berbice

Head 14-20	Administration	65,766,000
Head 14-21	Agriculture	43,916,000
Head 14-22	Education	148,356,000
Head 14-23	Health	54,214,000
Div. 535	Region 5	143,000,000

Region 6 East Berbice/Corentyne

Head 14-24	Administration	85,357,000
Head 14-25	Agriculture	85,798,000
Head 14-26	Education	307,707,000
Head 14-27	Health	267,955,000
Div. 536	Region 6	209,800,000

Region 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni

Head 14-28	Administration	87,782,000
Head 14-29	Agriculture	4,091,000
Head 14-30	Education	79,026,000
Head 14-31	Health	54,638,000
Div. 537	Region 7	54,210,000

Region 8 - Potaro/Siparuni

Head 14-32	Administration	36,115,000
Head 14-33	Education	49,268,000
Head 14-34	Health	13,577,000
Div. 538	Region 8	61,900,000

Region 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo

Head 14-35	Administration	50,583,000
Head 14-36	Agriculture	8,016,000
Head 14-37	Education	71,241,000
Head 14-38	Health	46,170,000
Div. 539	Region 9	46,300,000

Region 10 - Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice

Head 14-39	Administration	48,034,000
Head 14-40	Agriculture	13,262,000
Head 14-41	Education	208,594,000
Head 14-42	Health	48,651,000
Div. 540	Region 10	158,000,000

Assembly Resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.05 p.m., the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 4th February, 1997.



D.C JAGAN

Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

3rd February, 1997