

THE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
OFFICIAL REPORT

[Volume 7]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

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205th Sitting

2 p.m

Friday, 8th February 1980

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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (63)

Speaker (1)

\*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., Speaker

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (46)

Prime Minister (1)

\*Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C, **(Absent)**

Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid,

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of  
National Development

Senior Ministers (11)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,

Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,

Minister of Works and Transport **(Absent- on leave)**

Cde. B. Ramsaroop,

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs  
and Leader of the House

Cde. C.V. Mingo,

Minister of Home Affairs **(Absent - on leave)**

\*Cde. H. Green,

Minister of Health, Housing and Labour **(Absent)**

\*Cde. H.O. Jack,

Minister of Energy and Natural Resources **(Absent)**

\*Non-elected Ministers

\*Cde. F.E. Hope,

Minister of Finance

\*Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H. **(Absent)**

Minister of Agriculture

\*Cde.M.Shabuddeen, C.C.H, S.C.,

Attorney General and Minister of Justice **(Absent)**

\*Cde. R.E. Jackson,

Minister of Foreign Affairs **(Absent)**

\*Cde. J.A .Tyndall, A.A.,

Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection **(Absent-on Leave)**

Ministers (2)

Cde.O.E. Clarke,

Minister –Regional

(East Berbice /Corentyne) **(Absent on Leave)**

Cde. C.A. Nascimento,

Minister, Office of the Prime Minister **(Absent)**

Minister of State (10)

Cde. F.U.A.Carmicheal,

Minister of State –Regional (Rupununi) **(Absent)**

Cde. P. Duncan J.P.,

Minister of State, Ministry of Economic  
Development and Co-operatives

Cde.K.B. Bancroft, J.P.,

Minister of State-Regional

(Mazaruni /Potaro) **(Absent)**

Cde. J.P Chowritmootoo, J.P.,

Minister of State –Regional

(Essequibo Coast /West Demerara)

Cde. J.R.Thomas,

Minister of State, Ministry of Education,  
Social Development and Culture **(Absent)**

Cde.R.H.O. Corbin,

Minister of State for Youth and Sport,  
Ministry of National Development

Cde.S.Prashad,

Minister of State –Regional

(East Demerara /West Coast Berbice)

Cde.R.C Van Sluytman,

Minister of State,

Ministry of Agriculture **(Absent)**

\*Non-elected Ministers

\*Cde. F.U.A..Campbell,  
Minister of State for Information  
Ministry of National Development                   **(Absent)**

\*Cde. H.Rashid,  
Minister of State,  
Office of the Prime Minister.

Parliamentary Secretaries       (6)

Cde. M.M.Ackman, C.C.H.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, and  
Government Chief Whip       **(Absent -on leave)**

Cde. E.L Ambrose,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture       **(Absent)**

Cde.M.Corrica,  
Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Education, Social Development  
and Culture                   **(Absent)**

Cde. E.M. Bynoe,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade  
and Consumer Protection.

Cde. C.E Wrights, J.P,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of  
Economic Development and Co-operatives

Cde. J.G. Ramson, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Works and Transport

Other Members               (15)

Cde. W.G. Carrington, C.C.H.

Cde. S.M.Field Ridley       **(Absent)**

Cde. E.H.A. Fowler

Cde. J.Gill

Cde.W.Hussain

Cde.K.M.E. Jonas           **(Absent)**

Cde. P.A. Rayman

Cde.A. Salim

Cde. E.M.Stoby,J.P.       **(Absent)**

Cde.S.H.Sukhu,M.S.

Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.

Cde.H.A.Taylor

\*Non-elected Ministers

Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P

Cde.L.E. Willems

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde.C. Jagan,

Leader of the Opposition **(Absent)**

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran,

Deputy Speaker

Other Members (12)

Cde. J.Jagan

Cde.Reepu Demand Persaud,J.P.,Opposition Chief Whip

Cde.Narbada Persaud

Cde.C.Collymore **(Absent)**

Cde.S.F. Mohamed **(Absent – on leave)**

Cde.I.Basir **(Absent)**

Cde.C.C.Belgrave **(Absent)**

Cde.R.Ally

Cde.Dalchand, J.P.

Cde.Dindayal

Cde.H.Nokta **(Absent)**

Cde.P.Sukhai **(Absent)**

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

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

Mr. M. A. Abraham

#### OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly-F.A Narain, A.A.

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly-M.B. Henry

#### PRAYERS

8.2.80

2.05-2.15 p.m.

National Assembly

2.05 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Comrades Mingo, Clarke and Mohamed, and to the hon. Member Mr. Singh for today's Sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILLS-SECOND READING

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION AND AUDIT (AMENDMENT) BILL 1980

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

[Minister of Finance.]

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Hope): Cde. Speaker, in moving the second Reading of the Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Bill 1980, I wish to explain briefly some background to the amendment. Indeed, the Bill is a very simple one with just two clauses and seeks merely to facilitate the business of the nation if, as it does happen on occasions, the Budget is not passed before the commencement of the financial year.

As things now stand, the spending in the public interest, where the Budget has not been passed, is restricted in two ways. One, it is restricted to a quarter of the expenditure under individual heads and subheads in the previous year's Budget and, secondly, it implies that no expenditure can take place on any new item, any new project or service, which was not included in the previous year's Budget until the Budget has been passed.

Experience has shown that this provision was made, I think in 1958, when the Financial Administration and Audit Ordinance was passed and in our experience since then it was demonstrated that very undesirable occurrences do take place when the Budget is not passed before the end of the year. We are restricted to one-fourth of the expenditure in the previous year and this very often means that a project which is on-going and which has gathered momentum during the course of the previous year has to be slowed down or sometimes even halted in order that the Budget be passed and new funds made available. In many respects this is undesirable because it is inefficient to have a project being implemented, gaining momentum over the previous years, and having to delay that momentum merely because the Budget has not been passed and the expenditure is therefore restricted to one-fourth.

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Similarly with the very desirable expenditure made necessary for certain services which may not have appeared in the previous year's Budget, under the present law the Government could not spend any money on such services merely because it wants to see it in this year's Budget. These days, we do not consider that to be very desirable and, in fact, what this Bill is seeking is similar to the way in which the Contingencies Fund operates. Members of Parliament know that after the Budget is passed it is possible for the Government to spend on certain items, new or old, during the course of that year based on withdrawals from the Contingencies Fund until Parliament approves it subsequently.

What this Bill seeks to do is on a similar principle, to enable the Government to proceed with the business of the nation without being constrained by this very restrictive item which was put in the law since 1958 when we were then a colony. Therefore, the Bill seeks to enable the Government to proceed with expenditure in the new fiscal year without the previous restrictions, pending the passage of the Budget.

Basically this is the nature of the Amendment. As I said, it would facilitate public business; it would facilitate the movement of the progress in the development plan; it would facilitate the implementation of various services and we think it is a desirable change in an Act which was passed when we were a colony. Therefore, I would like formally to move the Second Reading of the Financial Administration and Audit (Amendment) Bill 1980 with the hope that the Members of this Parliament would approve it very swiftly.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud.

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2.15-2.25 p.m

2.15 p.m

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Chairman, according to the mover of this Bill, Cde. Hope, one can find very little argument to disagree with him. But my position this afternoon would be one which is going far beyond what Cde. Hope, the mover of this Bill, has introduced into this House. He alluded to a very undesirable situation whereby projects which are on-going have to be slowed down or in some cases halted because of this restriction. I want to agree with Cde. Hope fully as far as this is concerned. The Bill, however, this afternoon before this House does not only seek to provide funds in order that such projects which would be halted or which would be slowed down would continue. No, that is not so. Cde. Speaker, if I am to read from the Bill, Clause 24(1) which is going to replace section 24 (1) of the existing law states:

“It shall be lawful for the Minister to issue warrants for the withdrawal of moneys”

and here it is different from what is stated in the existing law,

“from the Consolidated Fund for the purpose of meeting expenditure necessary to carry on the services of the Government”

and here again this is new, it is stated in this Bill in brackets,

“(whether or not provision therefor, had been ever previously made) until the expiration of three months from the beginning of the financial year or the coming into operation of the Appropriation Act for that year, whichever is the earlier.”

There are two points on which I would like to make some comments. The first one is on the withdrawal of moneys. In the previous section there was a restriction, that restriction prevented the Government from withdrawing more than 25 per cent of the previous year’s estimate. This one is saying clearly that unlimited sums can be withdrawn. It is stated in the existing section of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, and I would like to quote, “Provided that no expenditure shall be deemed to be authorised by any such warrant in respect of any service for which no provision had been made during the previous financial year”. This Bill is removing this restriction whereby until the Appropriation Bill is passed, the Government or the Minister of Finance cannot issue any warrant for more than 25 per cent of the previous year’s budget. This Bill seeks to remove that limitation and the Government or the Minister of Finance can issue warrants not only for 25 per cent, not only 50 per cent, not only 75 per cent but whatever percentage the Minister wishes until the Budget is passed.

The second point, Cde. Speaker, is that the same paragraph excludes any new service. In this Bill which is before the House this afternoon, it is stated in brackets “(whether or not provision therefor had been ever previously made)” and I want to pick a quarrel with the Minister of Finance this afternoon as far as both of these points are concerned, those two restrictions which were there as far as the expenditure of Government finances, or the people’s or the country’s finances is concerned, and which this Bill seeks to remove. I would want to feel, Cde. Speaker, it is the business of this House, it is the business of the representatives in this House, whether rightfully or wrongly, who constitute at the moment the representatives of the

people of this country, to have a say as far as new services, as far as new projects are concerned.

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In the past, new projects had to be included in the Budget, showing the sums of money which would be allocated. This Bill seeks to give the Minister of Finance that authority on his own or on his Government's own to decide without bringing them first to this House, what new projects or new services are to be embarked upon.

I disagree totally with that Cde. Speaker, not because it does not augur well for prudent financial administration of any country but because of the nature of this Government. By the nature I mean the minority nature, the 10 per cent nature. It means that a 10 per cent government will not have to come into this House where it will have a rubber stamp placed on whatever it wants to do, but on his own, the Minister of Finance can decide and withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund to embark upon any project, whether it is mass games, whether it is Mashramani, and to spend any sum of money for any project before it is approved by this House.

We must understand that there is a distinction, and that distinction is that if a Government controls the majority of people in a country, then obviously, that step is unquestionable but because this Government does not represent the majority of people in this country, it has to be questionable. Why is it this Government wants that authority, to be given *carte blanche* to embark on whatever programme it would like to embark upon.

Cde. Speaker, Chapter 73:01, section 24, paragraph (1) states, and I quote:

“ It shall be lawful for the Minister to issue warrants for the withdrawal from the Consolidated Fund of such sums as may be necessary for the carrying on of the services of the Government until the expiration of three months from the beginning of a financial year...”

The Bill is saying the same thing but, Cde. Speaker, maybe in another few days we will be called upon to discuss this document and this document, because of that stolen majority of the Government, will be passed. Paragraph 111 of the existing Constitution states that the Minister responsible for finance shall cause to be prepared and laid before the National Assembly before or not later than sixty days after the commencement of each financial year the estimates of the revenues and expenditure for that year. The existing Constitution, Cde. Speaker, has to do with withdrawals from the Consolidated Fund, the subject matter which is being discussed this afternoon. The new constitution states that:

“The Prime Minister”

no longer the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister, who is going to be our good friend, Dr.Reid, I presume,

“or any other Minister designated by the President”,

that is our existing Prime Minister,

“shall cause to be prepared and laid before the National Assembly before or within ninety days”



the existing Constitution is assaying 60 days, the new Constitution is saying 90 days-

The Speaker: Cde. N. Persaud, we are debating this Bill. When the time comes for the new Constitution we will debate that, and if you are present, you will have full latitude. At the moment, we are debating this Bill. You have made at least ten times, the same two points that you have been making, first, that the old provision does not give him authority to go beyond 25 per cent, and secondly, that provision is now made to give him *carte blanche* to spend on anything, whether it is mass games or Mashramani, using your words. That is what we are debating and you have made that point at least ten times.

Cde. N. Persaud: It is very true that we will have an opportunity, whether we are here or not, to discuss the new Constitution, whether it is here in this Parliament or at the street corners. The new Constitution will be discussed by the People's Progressive Party but I think it is my right to draw relevance, because of what we are discussing this afternoon, because in this Bill a period of three months is prescribed. In the new Constitution, which will be passed in another few days, a period of four months is prescribed and I say whether we are here or not, I want to believe it is my right to draw relevance --

The Speaker: It is your right to discuss this Bill not your right to be wandering all over the place.

Cde. N. Persaud: I do not think it is irrelevant.

The Speaker: I rule that that is irrelevant.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I want to say that the new Constitution has provision--

The Speaker: Cde. N. Persaud, there is no new Constitution. We have an existing Constitution.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, the point that I would like to make is this that a Constitution has been tabled in this House and so long as it is tabled in this House, maybe I am wrong and I am subject to your guidance, it becomes a subject matter.

The Speaker: It only becomes a subject matter for discussion when it is being debated.

Cde. N. Persaud: I am not debating the Constitution.

The Speaker: But you are drawing reference to something that does not exist. Anyway, I have ruled that that is not relevant.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, the point I wish to make is that according to this Bill before the House, these are two points. One is that the Minister of Finance, if this Bill is passed, will have authority to withdraw any sum of money. The 25 per cent, which is stated in this Constitution under which we are all governed today, will be removed and the Minister of Finance will be able by way of warrant to withdraw from the Consolidated Fund not only 25 per cent, even 99 per cent. I want to feel that it is wrong. The second point I make and I wish to emphasise is that the existing Constitution states that he will not withdraw any money from the Consolidated Fund for any new projects unless those projects are brought to this House whereby we can decide whether they are necessary or not. This Bill seeks also to remove that restriction.

Cde. Speaker, in the explanatory memorandum it is stated and I would like with your permission to quote: "The existing limitations on the amount of money which may be withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund to carry on public services pending the enactment of the Appropriation Act for the financial year in question have produced serious difficulties." I want to submit to you, Cde. Speaker, that there have not been any difficulties much less serious difficulties, but it is because of manipulation, it is because of what you have intention to do that is why this Bill is before the House today shortly before the new Constitution is promulgated. I must refer to it.

Cde. Speaker, I wish to continue. Clause 2 of this Bill accordingly seeks to remove those limitations, however, full financial control by the National Assembly will be retained by virtue of the requirements under section 24(2) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, Chapter 73:01 for any sums so withdrawn to be accounted for in accordance with the provision of the provision of the Appropriation Act. And I move to the second phase of my discussion this afternoon.

The creation of the Consolidated Fund, as I understand it, is to ensure that all revenues are paid into a single fund and that all issues for disbursement therefrom are made from the fund. It is essential therefore that the fund should be inviolate and that issues from it are sanction by a single officer of outstanding and independent status. You will recall, Cde. Speaker, that two years ago this very Government brought a Bill, a Motion or Order, whatever it was, to remove that requirement whereby the Director of Audit, now called the Auditor General, authenticated all the warrants signed by the Minister, that they were in order, and that the money which was being withdrawn was the order in keeping with the estimates. That has already been withdrawn. [Interruption.] All of them will get jail; some of them will face the firing squad. Here it is stated, Cde. Speaker, that full financial control will be there as far as the Parliament is concerned. I want to state, Cde. Speaker that the serious difficulties as mentioned in this Bill can be overcome by the use of the Contingencies Fund.

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Chapter 73:01, section 25 states, and that is from the existing law,

“In order to defray unforeseen and urgent expenditure for which no other provision exists, the Minister may established a Contingencies Fund by issues from the Consolidated Fund not exceeding in the aggregate five hundred thousand dollars or such greater sum as the National Assembly may approve.”

The \$ 500,000 or the half million dollars is not limited if the Minister of Finance comes to this House within the period and states whatever the case may be. This Parliament will approve. There is no hindrance as far as urgent work is concerned but it is because of ulterior motives that today this Government brings this Bill to the House. The motives will, of course, be known to the nation in a short while. It is clear that this Government wishes again to throw dust in the eyes of the people, fool them as it has been doing for a number of years. At this point I wish to warn them, if the members have not been brilliant enough to see that the workers and the people of this country have been catching up with all those tricks then they must at this stage be alerted to the fact.

Cde.Speaker, we are talking about the Consolidated Fund. The Auditor General, as I said, has been removed as the man who is supposed to oversee those expenditures. The Bill states that there will be enough parliamentary control but, Cde.Speaker, I wish to point out certain deficiencies of this Government as far as control is concerned and, therefore, what is stated here in this Bill, no one can really rely on. I speak again as far as the Consolidated Fund, the fund that we are discussing this afternoon, is concerned. Chapter 73:01, section 7, paragraphs (1), (2), and (3),states, “ In respect of each financial year and as soon as possible after the close of such financial year, the Minister shall lay the following statements in the National Assembly:” and those are deemed withdrawals from the Consolidated Fund. ”

I raise this, Cde. Speaker, and I hope that you will not rule me out of order because the Minister speaks about a statement of receipts and payments of the Consolidated Fund certified by the Director of Audit to be laid in this House. A statement of the revenue actually paid into the Consolidated Fund as compared with the estimates of revenue, has not been laid in this House. The report of the Director of Audit, the last one that we had was for the year 1970. There are these things that I am talking about but the provision in the law Chapter 73:01 section 7, paragraph (1), states that at the end of each financial year the Minister of Finance has that responsibility to lay in this House a statement showing how much money has been withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund. Here today we are being asked to pass this Bill whereby that restriction to 25 per cent will be removed and the Minister of Finance can withdraw before the 30<sup>th</sup> March, 99 per cent. What guarantee is there that this House or the nation would know how that money is being spent?

Cde. Speaker, we all understand that when we come here maybe in another month to discuss the estimates, that they will be “guesstimates.” Figures of money coming in will differ

from what has actually come in. Figures showing money spent will defer from what is actually spent. All revenues ought to go into that fund which is known as the Consolidated Fund and the

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Minister of Finance has that authority, he has that responsibility, he has that duty to come to this House as soon as practicable in the new year to tell us how much money is collected. The question is, one decade has already passed and the nation does not know how much money has been spent or how much money has been collected. Statement of the public debt that also is not given.

Cde. Speaker, I stated here that the Minister has not been fulfilling his obligations as far as informing this House much less the nation as to how much money has been spent and how much has been received in that Consolidated Fund, therefore, the explanatory note here is just a piece of paper which anyone can take wherever he goes to ease his bowels. The Report of the Director for the last year, that is, 1970, states, and I am speaking now on his comments on the Consolidated Fund. "The annual financial statement revenue account, and appropriation account, comparing the public accounts, are required to be submitted to me by the Accountant General, Principal Receiver of Revenue and accounting officers respectively within a period of four months after the close of each financial year." Here we are being asked to give blanket approval to the Minister of Finance and the Government to do whatever they want to do with the money the workers have to sweat out and pay to the Consolidated Fund in the form of taxes. Here we are giving Government and the Minister of Finance that approval to do whatever he wants to do with it. The law states what he is supposed to do with it. They have not fulfilled that for one decade and we are called upon today to give them more power, power which they have usurped by fraud by rigging the elections.

Cde. Speaker, it is time that we examine where we are going in every aspect of the lives of the people in this country. The Government has eroded their power. It has violated year after year the financial regulations since it came to power. The Public Accounts Committee which is to scrutinise ways and means by which money has come into the country, how money has been spent, is being subverted and cannot meet. We have the 1970 accounts, ten years after; the 1967 accounts, thirteen years after. Here we are giving more power in the hands of people who have gained power and sit over there because of fraud, corruption and rigging. I look above your head and I see the scales of justice and I want to feel that you are impartial and you should decide, because the scales of justice are hanging over your head, where are we heading. Here is a case where I had to pay 8% in income tax which goes to this Government and here we give it permission to do whatever it likes. It was mentioned only a few days ago, that Guyana is one of the heaviest-taxed countries, not only in the Caribbean, but in the world. There is no need, Cde. Speaker, and I call upon you, as the one who holds the scales of justice, to decide this afternoon where do we go.

2:45 p.m.

Cde. Hope (replying): Cde. Speaker, we have been regaled over the last thirty minutes with a series of statements which only demonstrate clear ignorance or otherwise dishonesty on the part of the previous speaker. For instance, Cde. Speaker, he says there has been no statement of revenue and expenditure of the Consolidated Fund laid in this House for the last ten years. How should one interpret that? It could have been ignorance; it must be dishonesty, but a transparent kind of dishonesty because every year laid before this House, is a statement of Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the coming year, along with a statement of the revised expenditure and revenue for the previous year and a statement of the actual amounts collected in revenue and spent from the Consolidated Fund in two years before. Cde. Speaker, if Cde. Narbada Persaud would remember to read the book which comes before Members of Parliament every year, and which he has, I am sure, in the front pages he would see there a statement of revenue and expenditure going back to two years- the current year and two previous years. That is the statement.

Cde. Chairman, he has spoken about the Auditor General being removed from authenticating withdrawals from the Consolidated Fund. Cde. Speaker, I don't know if the comrade knows but this particular section was put in the Financial Administration and Audit Ordinance by the British in 1958 specifically to control Dr. Jagan, when he was the Premier and at that time the Auditor General, he was then the Director of Audit, was an expatriate, whom the British could trust. But Cde. Speaker, we have passed that stage a long time ago; we are now an Independent Republic and therefore the controls which were controls necessary on Dr. Jagan, as Premier, and his Government by the British Government are no longer necessary in our circumstances. That is why we moved them.

Cde. Speaker, it seems to me the comrade misunderstands what we are speaking about. We have said and the Bill is quite clear, and in my opening presentation I made it quite clear that one of the purposes of the Bill was to remove the constraint, the restriction of 25 per cent of the previous year's expenditure until the budget is passed which the present Act has put on the Government. Let me demonstrate for the Speaker. A project was in the estimates last year at \$ 2 million because, then, the project was just getting on the move. This year or the following year, we are now in a position to award a contract and so we have put \$ 20 million for that project in the coming year. Cde. Speaker, 25 per cent of the previous year's expenditure is \$500. If we want to award that contract to get the work moving in the following year, we have to put up at least 20 per cent as the mobilisation fees, or cost of funds to the contractor. If the contract price is \$20 million we are talking about a need of \$4 million right away to get the project on the move. Obviously, Cde. Speaker, a requirement which says that you can only spend one-fourth of the previous year's expenditure which will then in my example be half million dollars must prove inefficient and completely untenable, if, in fact, we do have to pay an advance payment to the contractors. So clearly, Cde. Narbada Persaud who spoke for the Opposition does not really understand what he is talking about and on this one, I can agree it is ignorance and not pure

dishonesty as in the first instance.

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2.45 -2.55 p.m.

Similarly, Cde.Speaker, on the question of new services, what the Bill proposes, and I said so very clearly in my opening remarks, is to enable the Government to spend on new services before the Budget is passed, but Cde. Speaker, I did say, maybe Cde. Persaud missed the point I was making, that this was similar in principle to the Contingencies Fund warrants whereby the Government, the Minister of Finance, can withdraw from the Contingencies Fund amounts to be spent on new services after the Budget has been passed. What this is permitting the Government to do is to do the same thing but before the Budget is passed. The principle is the same and if in fact there was absolute control- because the request and the figures came to Parliament subsequently in the case of the Contingencies Fund- one cannot see where the problem is if the funds are required and are made available prior to the passage of the Budget rather than after the passage of the Budget, where the Contingencies Fund becomes applicable.

Cde.Speaker, no one is removing the surveillance of Parliament, in this respect. The votes will come to Parliament as part of the Budget. It would be stated, as we have always stated in the past, that these sums have already been appropriated and spent, therefore, Cde. Speaker, I need to correct the impression which Cde. Persaud seems to have left with members, that it is possible to spend up to 99 per cent of the new year's expenditure. What this possibly means is you have no limit in relation to the previous year's expenditure.

Cde. Speaker, in my view, there is one Government, in my view there is the Parliament and if the Opposition feels that this Bill should not be passed, let it vote it down. It is the Parliament which represents the people and the majority which the Government has in this Parliament is a reflection of the support which the Government has at large, therefore, if the Opposition feels that his Bill should not be passed, let it vote it down. But Cde. Narbada Persaud did in fact start off by saying that he agree with the principle and he proceeded to inject a great number of irrelevancies, mis-statements and so on in this exercise. I want to say that the Bill is providing for expenditure before the Budget without the restriction of the 25 per cent of the previous year's expenditure as in the present law. The Bill would in fact enable the Government when passed to put the new services into play even before the Budget is passed and I think both of these things, is the interest of the people, are sufficiently desirable for this Bill to be passed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

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 Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1980, at 2 p.m.

[The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House.]

Adjourned accordingly at 2.55 p.m.