

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 7]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA.

211th Sitting 2 p.m. Tuesday, 8th April, 1980

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (63)

Speaker

*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.,
Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid, O.E.,
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
Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House
Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs
Cde. H. Green,
Minister of Health, Housing and Labour
Cde. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources
Cde. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance
Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture
Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C.,
Attorney General and Minister of Justice
Cde. R.E. Jackson,
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A.,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

Ministers (2)

Cde. O.E. Clarke,
Minister – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister, Office of the Prime Minister (Absent – on leave)

*Non-elected Ministers

Ministers of State (10)

- Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)
- Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)
- Cde. K.B. Bancroft, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro)
- 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
- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,
Minister of State for Youth and Sport,
Ministry of National Development (Absent)
- Cde. S. Prashad,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)
- Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman,
Minister of State,
Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. F.U.A. Campbell,
Minister of State for Information,
Ministry of National Development
- Cde. H. Rashid,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

- Cde. M.M. John, C.C.H.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the
Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip (Absent)
- Cde. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
- 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,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Transport

Other members (15)

- Cde. W.G. Carrington, C.C.H. (Absent – on leave)
- Cde. S.M. Field – Ridley
- Cde. E.H.A. Fowler
- Cde. J. Gill
- Cde. W. Hussain
- Cde. K.M.E. Jonas
- Cde. P.A. Rayman
- Cde. A. Salim, C.C.H.
- Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
- Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S.
- Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.
- Cde. H.A. Taylor
- Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P. (Absent)

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

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran,
Deputy Speaker

Other Members (12)

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

Liberator Party (2)

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

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F.A. Narain, AA.
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKERLeave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Carrington for a period of one month from the 1st April, 1980.

Broadcast of Proceeding

Comrades and hon. Member, I have given permission to the Guyana Broadcasting Corporation for the Budget Speech today to be broadcast live as usual.

I have also given permission to the Corporation to record for subsequent broadcast the speeches made by Members on the Budget proposals, provided that these subsequent broadcasts are in proportion to the representation in the National Assembly, that is, the Government must be given two – thirds and the Opposition one – third of the total broadcasting time.

Mr. Singh rose - -

I believe that you are also a Member of the Opposition.

Permission has also been given for the Video Section of the Ministry of Information to record a film on today's proceedings.

PRESENTATION OF PAPER AND REPORTS

The following papers were laid:

- (1) Estimates of the Revenues and Expenditure for the financial year 1980.
/The Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives./
- (2) Pensions (President, Parliamentary and Special Offices) (Designation) (Registration Agent, New York) Order 1980 (No. 16), made under section 2 of the Pensions (President, Parliamentary and Special Offices) Act, Chapter 27:03, on the 22nd of March, 1980, and published in the Gazette on the 22nd of March, 1980. /The Minister of Finance./

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONSMr. M.F. Singh – Misleading Statement in the Assembly

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, under this Head I crave your indulgence to make personal explanation.

At the meeting of this honourable House on Friday, 28th March, 1980 during my contribution in the debate on the Criminal Law Bill 1980, I told this honourable House that the Guyana Bar Association had held an emergency meeting that very morning, that I had not attended that meeting, but that I had been informed by an

executive member of the Guyana Bar Association that three resolutions had been unanimously passed to the effect –

- (1) That the Guyana Bar Association had rejected out of hand the Amendments to the Bill proposed by the honourable Attorney General;
- (2) That the lawyers had agreed to withhold their services to the courts until 7th April, 1980; and
- (3) That the lawyers had resolved that they had no confidence in the hon. Attorney General.

Mr. Speaker, I regret to say that I have since discovered that my information in respect of the third resolution was incorrect and that in fact no less a person than the President of the Guyana Bar Association, Mr. B.O. Adams, had voted against the motion of No Confidence in the hon. Attorney General.

Mr. Speaker, to mislead the House as I did in a matter such as this is indeed very serious. It is no excuse for me to plead that I was misinformed. I have to take full blame, and I consider that I am in duty bound to set the records straight and to humbly apologise to this honourable House and in particular to the hon. Attorney General.

I have been a member of this honourable House since 1996 and I have always tried to live up to the high ethical and moral standards expected of Members of Parliament. It grieves me deeply to know that I was, albeit unwittingly, the bearer of false information to this honourable House.

May I add, Mr. Speaker, that even though I still remain opposed to the retroactivity in the Criminal Law Act, as it now is, were I at that meeting of the Guyana Bar Association on Friday, 28th March, I also, like Mr. B.O. Adams, would have voted against the resolution of No Confidence in the hon. Attorney General. [Comrades (Government): “Hear! Hear!”] Why? Because as a former Cabinet Minister, and having seen the amendments proposed, I was in a position to appreciate to what lengths the hon. Attorney General had gone to meet the objections of the Guyana Bar Association.

Mr. Speaker, let me assure this honourable House that I continue to have the highest regard for the integrity and scholarship of the hon. Attorney General – in the Criminal Law Act 1980 – and that is all I disagree with: the retroactivity [Applause] – while retaining the right to disagree in respect of the retroactivity in section 2. That is as far as my objection goes.

Mr. Speaker, I humbly ask that my apology be accepted by this honourable House and in particular by the hon. Attorney General. Thank you.

Motions relating to the Business or Sitzings of the

Assembly and moved by a Minister

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS Nos. 9(2) and 32(9)

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde. Speaker, to enable the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives to complete the reading of the Budget Speech uninterrupted and to enable the Sitting to proceed beyond the statutory 4 p.m. if necessity arises, may I move that paragraphs 9 (2) and 32 (9) of the Standing Orders be suspended.

Question, put, and agreed to.

Paragraphs 9 (2) and 32 (9) suspended accordingly.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1980

BUDGET SPEECH

The Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives (Cde. Hoyte): In accordance with article 80 (2) of the Constitution I signify that Cabinet has recommended that the Assembly should proceed with the Motion to approve of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1980.

The Speaker: Please proceed, Cde. Minister.

Cde. Hoyte: I now move the Motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1980.

Cde. Speaker, Comrades and hon. Member,

8.4.80

3.50 p.m.

Motion proposed.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Speaker, I now name Friday, 11th April, 1980 as the day for the resumption of the debate on the Motion.

The Speaker: Cde. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Cde. Ramsaroop: Cde. Speaker, I move the Adjournment of this House to Friday, 11th of April.

Adjourned accordingly at 3.53 p.m.