

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 7]

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

47th Sitting

10 a.m.

Monday, 11th November, 1974

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E.,
Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

Senior Ministers (8)

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

*The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice

*The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Mobilisation

*The Hon. H. O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

*The Hon. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance

*The Hon. K.F.S. King,
Minister of Economic Development

*The Hon. G. B. Kennard, C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture

(Absent)

Ministers (5)

The Hon. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

The Hon. Miss S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House

*The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development

*Dr. the Hon. O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health

Members of State (10)

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

***Non-elected Ministers**

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)

The Hon. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

(Absent - on leave)

The Hon. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister

The Hon. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)

The Hon. K.B. Bancroft
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)

*The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of State for Home Affairs

*The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection

(Absent)

*The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)

(Absent)

*The Hon. F.U.A. Carmicheal,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (7)

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Housing

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing

Miss M.M. Ackman,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the
Prime Minister and Government Chief Whip

***Non-elected Ministers**

Mr. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Mr. J.P. Chowritmootoo,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education
and Social Development

Mr. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

Deputy Speaker (1)

Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

(Absent – on leave)

Other Members (17)

Mr. J.N. Aaron

Mrs. L.M. Branco

Mr. M. Corrica

Mr. E.H.A. Fowler

Miss J. Gill

Mr. W. Hussain

Miss S. Jaiserrisingh

Mr. K.M.E. Jonas

Mr. M. Nissar

Dr. L.E. Ramsahoye

Mr. J.G. Ramson

Mrs. P.A. Rayman

Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

(Absent)

Mr. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.

Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.

Mr. H.A. Taylor

(Absent)

Mrs. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition – Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, Leader of the Opposition

Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F.A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M.B. Henry, AMBIM

11.11.74
10 a.m.

National Assembly

10 a.m.

PRAYERS

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

The Speaker: Hon. Members, in a minute or so we will take the suspension of the Sitting of this House until the arrival of the President of Liberia and his wife. I also wish to ask the Assembly that after the conclusion of the Sitting of this House, when the Adjournment will be taken, that hon. Members please remain until the President and the hon. Prime Minister leave for the Prime Minister's Office.

The Sitting of the House is now suspended until the arrival of the President of Liberia.

Sitting suspended at 10.00 a.m.

ARRIVAL OF THEIR EXCELLENCIES THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA AND MRS. TOLBERT

[Their Excellencies the President of the Republic of Liberia, Dr. William r. Tolbert, Jr., and Mrs. Tolbert entered the Chamber and took their places on the Dais]

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

10.30 a.m.

On resumption –

ADDRESSES OF WELCOME TO THEIR EXCELLENCIES

The Speaker: Your Excellencies, we are doubly honoured in that you have not only found it possible to visit Guyana but also this morning to contribute to our deliberations. I venture to think, Your Excellency, that your eight years as a Parliamentarian in the Liberian House of Representatives is an assurance of your special interest and sympathy with those of us who share the onerous task of the making of laws which shape and guide the destiny of the people.

Mr. President, I am sure that in the short time in which you have been in our country you have already become familiar with the diversity of our people and heritage. In this country, The land of six peoples as it has so often been called, people, whose ancestors come from nearly every continent, dwell in harmony and work together in the building of this nation. As you can see, the representation in this Parliament reflects this diversity. Much of the heritage from the countries of our ancestors, in such fields as religion, culture, especially music and food, has persisted and is part of our Guyanese way of life. It has been our experience, sir, that this mixed heritage has provided us with opportunities to act as a bridge between Latin America and Africa and Asia and to play a role of some significance in the councils of the nations.

10.35 a.m.

I am aware, Mr. President, that our two States share some commitments which are reflected from time to time in the deliberations of this Parliament. As with your own State, Guyana is dedicated to the provision of all possible assistance to the liberation movement in their struggle to free those territories which are still held in bondage by the minority racist regimes in Southern Africa. We believe that freedom is indivisible and that the dignity of each man is diminished while some of his brothers live in servitude.

Your Excellency, we also share the commitment to a Foreign Policy of Non-Alignment and membership of the great Movement which has played such an important role in diffusing areas of conflict. We are conscious of the important role which you have played at Algiers as a vice-President of the Fourth Summit Conference and of the role which your country has continued to play in the movement in dealing with those crises which characterize our age.

Your varied and distinguished career as a public servant, as legislator, as banker, as President of the Baptist World Alliance for Africa and now as President of your great country has provided you with a fund of valuable experience and insight upon which we hope to draw in the all too short hour which you will spend with us this morning.

Your Excellencies, it is my profound honour and pleasant duty to bid you welcome in the name of all the representatives of the people of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): Mr. Speaker, as head of the Parliament, you have already exercised your prerogative of welcoming the distinguished President of Liberia on behalf of the representatives of the people, and, therefore, on behalf of the people of Guyana. But will you permit me, to say a few words of welcome on behalf of the members who sit on the Government benches.

I recall it was somewhere between six and eight years ago when first I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of His Excellency, the President of Liberia, when he was Vice-President of the Republic of Liberia as well as President of the Baptist World Alliance. I was struck then by his forthrightness, his simplicity and his deep concern for the people with respect to whose interest he had anything to do. He was interested in the people of Liberia whom he served and also particularly interested in the members of his flock, the Baptist Church, wherever they were. And then, it was later in fact in 1973, that I enjoyed the privilege of meeting Dr. William Tolbert, Jr., not as Vice-President, but as President of the Republic of Liberia.

His attitude had not changed even though he had been raised to the high estate of the Presidency of his country. If anything, his concern for the common folk, the humble people, the welfare of his State, of his country and the freedom of his brothers in the rest of the world became greater.

It was my pleasure last year to have visited Liberia. It was for just a few hours but those few hours were memorable. There was warmth, there was understanding, there was mutual trust and my only regret was that my stay then was short. I hope, however, with the help of God to be able to repair the disadvantage of having visited Liberia for just a matter of hours.

On that occasion it was my good fortune to be able to bear to the President of Liberia an invitation to visit Guyana and here we have our distinguished visitors, Their Excellencies the President and Mrs. Tolbert. The President, from my understanding, is not only a man of the church or of the cloth, he is a scholar and has been a legislator. Symbolic of the esteem in which he and his country are held is the fact that not only was he elected one of the Vice-Presidents of the Summit of the Non-Aligned Nations in September last year in Algiers, but also he was one of the few Vice-Presidents who had an opportunity to preside over the meeting there in Algiers.

Mr. Speaker, you have remarked on the fact that both Guyana and Liberia are members of the Non-Aligned Movement. That is not accidental because when one gets to know the President of Liberia one finds that he is irrevocably committed to the ideals, the objectives and the goals which inspire the Non-Aligned Movement, the control of resources, the restructuring of the international economic order to make it more consonant with the protestations of many a politician and statesman from the developed and the developing world. His has been the emphasis, especially since he has assumed office as President of Liberia, on self-reliance and motivating and activating the people of his country to ensure that they realise that the first efforts towards development are theirs and that in the final analysis they are the arbiters of their own destiny and guardians of their own fates.

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It is significant also that today, which marks the ninth anniversary of that most disgusting event of U.D.I. in Rhodesia, should be the day on which we should be addressed by the President of Liberia who is a significant and important member of the Organisation of African Unity which has been most unequivocal in its abhorrence of the racist regimes in Southern Africa, as typified by south Africa, Rhodesia, and until fairly recently Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. Perhaps, we may in this atmosphere and context contemplate the victories which have been won so far in Angola and Mozambique and steel ourselves to ensure that similar victories be won in Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.

The President, perhaps because of his Christian background, has a concept of humanity as one and in all of his doings, his statements and his actions, is motivated and inspired by the fact that he believes, in common with millions of others throughout the world, in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

10.45 p.m.

Some of us may put the concept differently but in any case it comes back to the proposition that there must be equality of men, there must be equality of nations and a nation should not be hampered by its size, in possessing what is its own property and bringing to its citizens the best that God and nature can offer.

Liberia has been independent, I understand, since 1847 but the history of that country makes very enlightening reading. Independence had to be maintained against the machinations of various European powers anxious to place their greedy talons on the rich resources of that country. It is a tribute to the people of Liberia and their successive Governments that they were able to maintain and retain their independence which they formally got in the 19th century.

Now Liberia, under the distinguished leadership of President Tolbert, is moving like so many other developing countries to achieve the real and final independence, independence from

neo-colonialism, economic independence. The people of Liberia have a rich and engaging history and I think they deserve a man of the energy, depth of feeling and foresight, His Excellency Dr. William Tolbert, Jnr. **[Applause]**

Again, in a representative capacity, I welcome him and we shall sit “at the feet of Gamaliel” in a few minutes.

The Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. M.F. Singh): Mr. Speaker, today is indeed a red-letter day for our country, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, for me far as I am told it is the first time in the history of Guyana that Parliament has met formally specifically to welcome a visiting Head of State. I am sure we will all agree that it is most appropriate that that Head of State should be His Excellency Dr. William Tolbert, Jnr., President of the Republic of Liberia, who, together with his most charming Lady, Mrs. Tolbert, are here with us today, for Liberia is the oldest independent Republic of Africa. The Republic of Liberia was proclaimed on the 26th July, 1847, and so Guyana is indeed most honoured to receive a visit from Their Excellencies.

We in Guyana, are proud of our reputation of being hospitable to visitors who may come to our country, to our land. We are very proud of the fact that on these occasions we are always able to sink our political differences, our differences generally, whatever they may be and to join together as one people extending the nation’s welcome to our visitors.

Today, it gives me very great pleasure indeed, personally, and on behalf of my party, the United Force, to join with yourself and with the hon. Prime Minister in extending to Their Excellencies and also to their party, the warmest welcome of the Guyanese people.

Much has been said about His Excellency Dr. Tolbert and I should like to associate myself with those remarks. With your leave may I address Their Excellencies directly and say:

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Your Excellencies, I do sincerely hope that your stay in Guyana will have been a most enjoyable and a most memorable one and that your visit here will strengthen to an unbreakable point the bonds of friendship which bind our two nations together. **[Applause]**

The Speaker: Hon. Members we will now have the privilege of listening to an address by the distinguished President of Liberia.

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY

The President of Liberia (Dr. William Tolbert, Jnr.): Mr. Speaker, hon. Prime Minister, hon. Leader of the Opposition, hon. Members of the National Assembly. A great and vast ocean separates our two nations and peoples. Yet my presence here today, in this beautiful and progressive country, and the honour you have accorded me by the privilege of addressing this distinguished and honourable body, are testimonies in themselves of the sincere friendship, and brotherhood, which exists between us.

The Government and people of Guyana have greeted Mrs. Tolbert, the members of my party and me with special warmth and a genuine generosity of a spirit which we will ever cherish, and extended us courtesies for which we will remain always indebted.

I am personally very gratified to have been afforded this opportunity to speak to you, hon. Ladies and Gentlemen. The great reservoir of goodwill and genuine admiration felt by the people of Liberia for the people of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana has been fostered not only as sovereign States by our fruitful and friendly contacts on the international scene, but also as a consequence of the fact that several sons and daughters of Guyana have from time to time made their home among us in Liberia, contributed and are continuing to contribute most positively to the life and development of our country.

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None of this is surprising; for, we share a cultural affinity which neither time nor geography can erase. Equally important, we are inhabitants of nations determined not only to preserve political freedom, but also to gain that degree of economic development and independence which will assure the well being of the masses of our people, and thereby give greater meaning to their freedom.

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We know that in the first instance such goals can only be achieved through self-reliance, hard work and undiminished faith in and sacrificial dedication to the greater purposes of the nation itself. During my short stay in Guyana, I have received lasting impressions of the determination, energy and vigour with which the Guyanese people have embarked upon the noble task of nation-building, despite all obstacles and difficulties created by the existing international economic situation. I assure you that I shall faithfully convey these impressions to the people of Liberia, who are also engaged and totally involved in creating a better Liberia for all, and building a wholesome functioning society in our country which assures for every citizen equally the opportunity to enjoy a better and more fulfilling life.

It is perhaps because of these similarities in our aspirations that our two countries have placed the greatest value on fostering genuine friendship and greater understanding among all nations and peoples of our one world. We have been steadfast in our support for the principles of national independence, the sovereign equality of states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, human freedom and equality, and preservation of the dignity of man. In the United Nations, and as members of the movement of non-alignment, in which our two countries currently serve as members of the Bureau, our activities have articulated our commitment to a common endeavour by all nations to make this world a better place for all humanity.

Mainly, because we share a finite planet, all nations and peoples wherever they may be, form a part of a single world community. We are therefore inextricably linked by this bond, and

by the fact that regardless of race, colour, geographic location, creed or religion, we are all part of the human family.

Now, more than ever before, the need for interdependence among the nations of the world, both political and economic, has become more real and intensive. All indications would seem to suggest that we shall become increasingly interdependent as the years go by. Consequently, our steady progress, and indeed our very survival, will depend on our ability to work together for peace and complete human freedom and to share equitably in the bounties of the earth, since indeed we all have been created “to dwell upon the face” thereof.

No nation, however vast its wealth, can for long prosper in isolation. Whether we like it or not, we need one another; we need what each can provide – technology, raw materials, manufactured goods, food and energy. The age-long dream of attaining a totally self-sufficient nation, self-sustaining, is now clearly shown to be nothing more than a mirage, unobtainable and elusive. It was this illusion which led men to seek dominance over others in order to control and exploit their human and material resources.

But that dream, which arose out of fear, was selfish. It denied the possibility that men could aspire purposefully to assure the common good. It sought an unattainable standard of independent national strength and security. It bred colonialism, encouraged exploitation, fostered expansionism, ignited wars, inspired aggression and intrigues which have all caused incalculable suffering and untold sorrow and misery to mankind.

Today, when man has designed and acquired in ever increasing number implements of war capable of the complete destruction of humanity, such destructive attitudes should no longer exist. Unless we can find ways to stimulate and foster international co-operation and to solve the urgent problems of poverty, disease, ignorance, deprivation and human misery which persistently afflict so many, we shall indeed come face to face with the threat of evermore dangerous conflicts and even of a global holocaust. It is entirely unrealistic to believe and incompatible

with the attainment of international peace and security that in this our one world community, some should live in a paradise of abundance while others, for the indefinite future, should remain distressingly mired in squalor and despair. Prosperity and security can only be assured if all to a reasonably acceptable degree come to enjoy these benefits as well.

Historians and students of political science have long observed that nations tend to respond to and act in accordance with a fixed perception of the requirements of their national interest. Traditionally, this perception has been rather narrow, confining itself to the short-term gratification of national needs, and the expansion or enhancement of national power, prestige and wealth. However, the necessities of our times require a new and far more enlightened concept of self-interest and of national interest. For although the goal of securing the nation's interest remains a matter of paramount concern to every government, conditions no longer allow the attainment of that objective if, in the process, the interests of other nations and peoples are overlooked, exploited or trampled upon.

There is a clear distinction between self-interest and selfish interest. Selfish interest is shortsighted; it seeks merely to achieve immediate gratification and national aggrandizement, and, however successfully realised, is destructive in its long-term effects. To remain oblivious to and act in a manner inimical to the well being and welfare of others is to invite a disequilibrium in international relations which results in misunderstandings, resentments, confrontations and even armed conflicts. Worse of all, it provokes in others an equally narrow counter reaction which promotes not the common good and the progress of all through mutually beneficial and complementary activities, but rather ruthless attempts to maximize immediate benefits at all cost.

Can we, living on the same planet containing limited resources which are widely dispersed throughout the world, and facing problems of allocating these resources among all nations, afford a course of action determined by selfish interest or selfish nationalism?

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[Dr. Tolbert contd.]

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As members of the family of man, we are linked with all humanity in an indissoluble bond of brotherhood. It is important, indeed essential, that we affirm this bond in every way

possible. Great expressions of the human spirit, through which alone we have been enabled to create beauty, to seek truth, and to ensure the continuing progress of mankind can be found in love, friendship and co-operation, rather than hatred, suspicion and destructive rivalry.

The pursuit of goals dictated by selfish interest, as opposed to an enlightened self-interest, encourages a denial of human brotherhood, a disregard for the fate of others, and results in an all-consuming, selfish nationalism. If we do not truly regard others as our brothers, we become unconcerned about their condition. It then becomes easier to regard them as inherently different, less worthy or, perhaps, genetically or otherwise doomed to a less desirable life. If we view our one world through selfish eyes as a world in which we are merely called upon to assure our national wealth and standard of living, whatever the cost to others, then it is easy to believe that we are encompassed not by friends and partners in development, advance and progress, but by foes.

To retain these attitudes would be indeed tragic; for it is my firm belief that the world contains sufficient resources to provide for the well being of all through co-operative endeavours, and careful, equitable and judicious planning. More than that, with the guidance of Almighty God, it is within the demonstrated genius of mankind to solve the grave and urgent problems already confronting us, and avert apparent disasters likely to arise in the future if we falter in doing so.

The issues of war and peace continue to face us. The problems posed by the need to assure sufficient food, raw materials, energy supplies and finished products not merely to sustain

present demand but also to cope with a projected expansion of demand even without improvements in living standards must be resolved. The challenge posed by increasing an unevenly distributed world population and dangers to the environment made increasingly grave by our very presence and activities on this planet must be effectively dealt with. And the persistent level of poverty and deprivation bred by economic underdevelopment and maldistribution of wealth among nations is a fundamental problem, which threatens all of us and affects the very quality of human existence. Yet, they are all susceptible only to solutions founded in co-operative global action. This much is clear!

What is less evident, is whether or not we possess the necessary will and determination to undertake timely and appropriate measures before it is too late to avert the evil. Are we prepared to embark upon a consistently realistic course to acquire a true understanding of the brotherhood of man? Are we willing to engage ourselves with absorbing dedication to building one world community in the interest of all, by pursuing international co-operation even if as nations some timely sacrifices may be required? Let us remember that we are each our brother's keeper and responsible to some extent for his well-being.

I believe that as individuals concerned for our posterity, as nations in a world community, and collectively as inhabitants of this our one world, we have a responsibility to rise to this challenge, to provide the vision for the construction of a new progressive age for all mankind. In so doing, we must be courageous, firm and resolute, but never inflexible and unyielding. Spurred by our firm convictions, as individual human beings and as nations, whatever our status, size or level of wealth, we can each make some positive contribution to this noble cause of improving the condition of mankind everywhere.

In this effort we must teach and learn from one another, and be ever sensitive to the special fears of any people or group of peoples, even those who have for so long disproportionately enjoyed the largest share of the bounties of the world. We must be moved by

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a common sense of purpose and determination which will lead beyond mere words of good intention and, having clearly established our objectives, utilise the knowledge and skills of specialists from every corner of our one world to prepare realistic, precise and feasible programmes of action for the speedy attainment of these lofty goals.

Our purpose must be to learn from the failures of the past and the inadequacies and injustices of the present, in devising a truly equitable, just and peaceful world order to face the challenges of the future. The fundamental change in perception and attitudes towards our world community and our major responsibility for the common good, applies to all of us, and not merely to those nations who have been the greatest beneficiaries of an unjust international system. Precisely because of their wealth and economic strength, however, certain nations have a special responsibility in promoting the realization of these objectives.

Recent events in international economic affairs have been interpreted to presage a shift in the direction of a more equitable world economic order. But I remain unconvinced that this is the case. What appears to me to be occurring seems to result from the peculiar strength of some previously deprived nations, rather than from any genuine desire on the part of the traditional centres of economic wealth to reach a new accommodation through real international co-operation.

Many developing countries, such as the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and Liberia, have suffered the full impact of an ever upward spiralling inflation.

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Certain natural adversities, rising prices for commodities from developed countries, as well as increase in prices of certain strategic raw materials have intensified the economic problems for these nations already in the least favourable position. These conditions illustrate not that we are

moving towards a more equitable economic system, but to the contrary they demonstrate how critical the nature of such a system has become.

Conceptual difficulties have neither been dealt with nor fully explored. Thus, a certain degree of debate has ensued over the extent to which newly wealthy nations should be expected to contribute to less developed countries, as compared with traditional centres of entrenched power and wealth. As important as these considerations are for meeting the urgent needs of an existing economic crisis, we cannot afford to forget that our deeper concern is with structuring a new world order which will allow every state the opportunity for accelerated growth and development and greater prosperity in accordance with well defined and generally acceptable guidelines.

Nor does the answer for most developing countries lie merely in obtaining better prices for raw materials. All countries, obviously are not equally well endowed with raw materials, whether critical or not, nor is the market demand for each product equally favourable. As the case of petroleum exemplified higher prices affect all nations, developed and developing. Consequently, we cannot ignore the possibility that even if it were feasible to bring about widespread beneficial changes in the international economic system solely through alteration by improved bargaining power of the price structure of various commodities, we still might fail in our efforts to achieve that common understanding and commitment which alone can assure for the long term the social progress, prosperity and security of all.

Our definite task, then, is to give through international co-operation leading to the diffusion on equitable terms of capital and technology, and a generous degree of assistance by the entire international community to the most needy, our fullest attention to assuring that the abundance of the Earth is placed at the disposal of all mankind and enjoyed equitably by all. Let us move forward with sober planning, dedication and a perceptive realisation of the limitations of our finite resources, to create that new economic order for mankind about which we now all speak.

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You as representative of the dynamic people of this progressive Nation have a unique responsibility and opportunity significantly to contribute to this process of restructuring the world order to provide new dimensions for the upliftment of mankind.

Let us seek to achieve social justice for all men, and as a statesman and humanitarian once said, “admit the vanity of our false distinctions among men and learn to find our own advancement in the search for the advancement of all.” Let all men, wherever they are, join hearts and hands and work towards creating together through international co-operation a wholesome functioning society for our world community.

The Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House

ADDRESS OF THANKS

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop):
Mr. Speaker, Your Excellencies, Dr. William Tolbert Jnr., President of the Republic of Liberia and Mrs. Tolbert, Your Excellencies, Members of the diplomatic corps, Your Lordships, distinguished guests: In the chequered history of this Chamber, and, indeed, this Third Parliament of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, there have been moments of strident debates, searing exchanges, and serious divisions by members of this honourable House, and rightly so, I submit, for the art of sophistry and the skillful use of polemica are the stock-in-trade of every competent debater.

Equally, in the highest traditions of this House, on many occasions that can be described as transcending partisanship and politics, there have been moments that have called forth the spontaneous applause, the unsolicited acclamation and, indeed, the unanimous consent of all members of this House.

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Your Excellency, on this occasion of the special sitting of the National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana, I have heard such applause, I have perceived such an acclamation and I have seen and sensed such a consent. Emboldened, therefore, by the spirit that now prevails in this House, among its members, and the full confidence of their support, personally and on behalf of my colleagues, the leadership of this House compels me, constrains me to extend to you our warm congratulations and deep appreciation for your inspiring and illuminating address.

[Applause]

Your visit to Guyana, Your Excellency, has left and will leave memorable moments, but I sincerely believe that you could have left us no monument more lasting, no memorial more durable than the message you have left in the address we have just heard in this honourable Chamber. **[Applause]** It was the poet Horace, I think, in his *Arts Poetica* who said “words are like leaves, some wither every year and every year a young race succeeds”. Yours, however, have been words that have left an indelible mark on our minds and, indeed, have struck a chord in our hearts. For the hearts of nations, no less important than their souls, are just as important as their minds and bodies.

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It is rare to see a person who combines the pragmatic approach of the statesman with the impassioned appeal of the missionary but you enjoy both. It is rarer still to find a man who can serve God and mammon at the same time.

Yours, Your Excellency, have been words of hope, words of peace, words of passion, words of compassion, words of sense, words of sensibility, words of the growing interdependence of economies and internationalism of the world and these words can only strengthen those bonds of co-operation and friendship that now exist between our two countries and between all developing countries.

How does one say, therefore, thank you for such an address, I ask? Indeed we are in your debt and it was no less a figure than the mighty Bard of Avon himself who said that words cannot repay a debt but mankind has devised no more effective instrument for the expression of thanks than words and deeds.

On behalf of all members of this Chamber we thank you for your presence here today and we assure you that the records of this House will be adorned by, and illumined with, the message of your address. Let us hope that what we lack in the plainness of words can be redeemed by the warmth of our feelings for your distinguished presence and the sincerity of our good wishes for your continued success.

I feel, finally, it would be an impropriety of the gravest order if on behalf of my colleagues I did not extend also to your gracious lady our sincere thanks for her presence here in this Chamber this morning. **[Applause]** If light and wisdom have been the hallmarks of your address, certainly charm and aplomb have attended her presence in this Chamber. **[Applause]**

We pray that God will continue to endow Your Excellencies with those qualities of mind, of spirit, that will equip you to continue to serve your people and to lead them to greater peace, prosperity and happiness.

Your Excellencies, last night I heard the sermon by President Tolbert and the theme was “Christian mindedness” among others. I feel, finally, that it will be appropriate if on behalf of my colleagues, and indeed on behalf of this nation, I leave with you, righteous man that you are, a prayer invoked by the great Bengali poet, Rabindranauth Tagore many years ago. I quote:

“This is my prayer to Thee,
O Lord, strike, strike at the
root of penury in my heart;

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Give me the strength never to
disown the poor, nor bend my
knees before insolent might;
Give me the strength to make
my love fruitful in service;
Give me the strength to surrender
my strength to Thy will with Love.”

[Applause]

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.” [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

Adjourned accordingly at 11.30 a.m.
