

**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**

57th Sitting

2 p.m.

Wednesday, 12th February, 1975

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., S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Minister (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 (Absent)

*The Hon. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Mobilizations (Absent)

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

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

*The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Work and Housing

*The Hon. G.A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

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

Minister (6)

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour (Absent)

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 (Absent)

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

The Hon. C. V. Mingo
Minster of Home Affairs

***Non-elected Ministers**

Ministers of State (9)

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture **(Absent)**

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

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

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) **(Absent)**

The Hon. K.B. Bancroft,
Minister of State - Regional
(Mazaruni / Potaro) **(Absent)**

*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 . Carmichael,
Minister of State - Regional (North West) **(Absent)**

Parliamentary Secretaries (7)

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing **(Absent)**

Mr. C. E. Wrights, J. P.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing **(Absent- on leave)**

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

Mr. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co – operative and National Mobilisation

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

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

Deputy Speaker (1)

Mr. R. C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

Other Members (17)

Mr. J. N. Aaron

Mrs. L. M. Brano

Mr. M. Corrica

(Absent)

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

(Absent – on leave)

Mrs. P. A. Rayman

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

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

Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.

Mr. H.A. Taylor

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.

12.2.75

National Assembly

2.10- 2.20 p.m.

2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. Wright for today's Sitting and to the hon. Member Mr. Ramson for two weeks.

Sympathy to Mrs. Rayman

I would also like to take this opportunity of expressing, on your behalf as well as my own, sympathy to the hon. Member Mrs. Rayman on the death of her mother some time last week. I am sure hon. Members would wish me to extend our sympathy to her.

Congratulations to the Minister of Home Affairs.

And on a brighter note I am sure hon. Members would like me to congratulate the hon. Member Mr. Mingo on his elevation to the position of Minister of Home Affairs.
[Applause]

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

Statement of Guarantee given by the Minister of Finance under section 3 of the Guarantees of Loans (Public Corporation and Companies). Act 1971 (No. 16 of 1971) quarter ended 30th September, 1974. [The Minister of Finance]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read the First time:

- (1) Wesleyan Church in Guyana (Incorporation) Bill 1975 –

Bill No. 2/1975. [Mr. Aaron]

- (2) People Temple of the Disciples of Christ Church

(Incorporation) Bill 1975 – Bill No. 3/1975. [Mr. Fowler]

- (3) PROPERT Tax (Amendment) Bill 1975 – Bill No. 7/1975

[The Minister of Finance]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILL – SECOND READING

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH (INCORPORATION) (AMENDMENT)

BILL 1975

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Incorporation) Ordinance. [Mr. Sukul]

Mr. Sukul: Your Honour, on the 11th October, 1975, I presented to the Assembly a Petition from the Executive Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Church seeking to have introduced in the Assembly a Private Bill to amend the Ordinance which incorporated the Church. The Assembly granted leave for the Promoters to proceed. The amended Bill was published in the Gazette and in the Daily Chronicle Newspaper on the 11th, 18th and 25th January, 1975, and was introduced in the Assembly on the 29th January, 1975.

By an Ordinance enacted in 1948, the Church was incorporated in Guyana as the Evangelical Lutheran Church. A few years ago it was decided at the convention of the Church that the name of Church should be changed from “the Evangelical Lutheran Church” to the “Lutheran Church.”

12.2.75

National Assembly

2.10- 2.20 p.m.

The object of the Bill before the Assembly is to give effect to the change, that is, to amend the Ordinance to omit the word “Evangelical” wherever it appears in the Ordinance. The Bill, therefore, is very simple one and I commend it to the Assembly and now move that it be read a Second time.

Mr. Aaron Seconded

Question Proposed put, and agreed to

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly is Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed

BILL – SECOND READING

PENSIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1975

A Bill intituled:

“An act to amend the Pensions Act.”

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hope): Mr. Speaker I rise to move the Second Reading of the Pensions (Amendment) Bill. In accordance with the Article 80 (2) of the Constitution I signify that the Cabinet has recommended that the Pensions (Amendment) Bill be considered by the National Assembly.

The Pensions Act already provides for service in certain agencies to be counted as service for the purpose of pensions for public servants under the Pensions Act. At the

moment the Municipal District Council's Act already provided for the case where a public officer in a pensionable post is seconded to a to a Municipality or a District Council to be counted as service for pensionable purpose. In other words, where a public officer leave a pensionable employment on secondment on a temporary basis to a Municipality or a District Council that the officer is guaranteed that his pensionable service with the Government is not broken and that the period he a spends on secondment on a temporary basis with the District Council or Municipality, is, in fact, counted as part of his pensionable services.

What this Bill seeks to do is to take account of those long service employees who might have been with the Government but who also had service with the Municipality. Unless we proceed to approve this Bill it would mean that such long - service employees would, in fact, have a very short service for pension purpose under the Pensions Act on the basis of which they would have retired. Taking account of the fact that already it is recognised that officers moving from the public service into the Local Government service can have their pensionable service maintained, We think it is only right and proper that long – service employees, that is, people with long service straddling both Local Authority and the Central Government service should retire on the basis that their service in the Municipality or District Council, in other words, any Local Government agency is, in fact, counted as part of their pensionable service.

For this reason we have brought this Bill in order to ensure that these employees do not suffer by the mere fact that the exigencies of the service to the country required them to leave a Local Authority and work with the Central Government. In effect, we have covered the long – service employees by putting the commencement date for the counting of the service as January 1948 and, of course, it will affect all persons who retire after the 31st January, 1975.

We have also sought in the Bill to give the Minister power, by Order, to extend this special list under Section 23 of the Pensions Act. Under that Section, we have such service as the Society for Prevention And Treatment of Tuberculosis; service in the Infant

Welfare and Maternity League and service in the New Amsterdam Fire Service prior to the 1st January, 1953. We are going to have, if this Bill is passed, service to the Local Authority within a certain period. The Bill goes on to seek specifically to give the Minister the power to make an Order to extend this list in given circumstances when those circumstances make it appropriate for this to be done.

That, sir, is the simple function of this Bill and I therefore, formally at this stage, move the Second Reading in the hope that it will win unanimous support from the House.

Question Proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition: (Mr. Singh): Mr. Speaker, we do thank the hon. Minister for his very allusive explanation in respect of the rationale for the introduction of this Bill before this honourable House. We are very pleased to support the Bill and we certainly agree with him that the people who may benefit from this proposed legislation are deserving of consideration for their long and sterling service to the people of Guyana in the Municipality or, indeed, in the field of local Government generally. We do support this Bill.

Bill read a Second Time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment. read the third time and passed

12.2.75

National Assembly

2.30 – 2.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House.

MINERS ASSISTANCE BILL

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to provide for the establishment of a Miners Assistance Fund to aid miners in the orderly and effective extraction of valuable minerals.”

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop): Your Honour, after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, may I indicate to you that this other measure, the Miners Assistance Bill, 1975 will be deferred to a later date when it will be taken.

Bill, by leave, deferred.

DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION /(AMENDMENT) BILL

A Bill intituled.

“An Act to amend the Drainage and Irrigation Act.”

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kennard) : Your Honour , I beg to move that the Drainage and Irrigation (Amendment) Bill, 1975, be now read a second time. The Bill is a very simple one and amends the principal Act, namely the Drainage and Irrigation Act, Chapter 64:03. The need to amend the Act arises from the change in the holder of the post under which drainage and irrigation fall.

Section 4(1) of the Drainage and Irrigation Act provided for the holder of the post of Chief Works and Hydraulic Officer to be a member of the Drainage and Irrigation Board but the Hydraulic Division has now been integrated with the Ministry of Agriculture and it is therefore necessary for the Chief Hydraulic Officer to be a member of the Board in his place. This Bill, therefore, seeks to provide legislation for that purpose.

In addition, the Bill seeks to provide for certain consequential amendments relative to the change in the particular holder of the post and it provides for places where documents and plans and estimate pertinent to Drainage and Irrigation projects shall be deposited. There are, therefore, amendments to Section 15(1)(a), 15(1)(b) and 15(1)(c).

Question Proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Singh): Mr. Speaker, I do agree with the Hon. Minister that the Bill is indeed a very simple one and of course, we would not complicate it by going into any long discussion and irrigation, particularly at a time when my throat is not feeling too well. It is a necessary procedural matter, as the hon. Minister said, consequent on the transfer of the Hydraulics Division to the Ministry of Agriculture from the Ministry of Works.

We agree that the Hydraulic Division should properly belong to the Ministry of Agriculture and so we heartily support the Bill which, as we said, is merely a procedural matter.

Bill read a Second Time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment. read the third time and passed

MOTION

GUARANTEE OF LOAN TO BERBICE MINING ENTERPRISE LIMITED

12.2.75

National Assembly

2.30 – 2.40 p.m.

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly do hereby Authorise the Minister of Finance to give the guarantee in the sum of \$16,500,000 (sixteen million five hundred thousand Guyana Dollars), in accordance with the State Enterprises (Guarantee) Act 1974. [**The Minister of Finance**]

Mr. Hope: Your Honour. I beg to move the Guarantee of Loans to the Berbice Mining Enterprise Limited Motion. It is well known to this House, as to the country and indeed, to the world at large, that this Government acquired the assets of the Reynolds Metals Company to Guyana on the first day of this year. As was our experience in the past, when the enterprise was taken over, there was no working capital available in the accounts of the nationalised company. In fact, as is well known, this particular company operated its business in Guyana in the full tradition of an absentee landlord: in this case, an absentee shareholder.

In the circumstances, very little of the financial transactions pertaining to this particular enterprise, that is, the Reynolds Metals Company in Guyana was in fact conducted in Guyana. The enterprise, as is well known, was the mere extension of the Reynolds Enterprises operating out of Richmond, Virginia, in the United States of America. It was therefore necessary for a substantial amount of re-organisation to be done to the enterprise that was taken over so as to ensure that what we have is a viable enterprise in the immediate months ahead. We know that it is well within the capacity of the people of Guyana, having assumed the ownership of these particular assets, to operate those assets as a going concern and profitable concern. But, to do that, certain necessary imputes must be made into the company, in particular, inputs to ensure that the equipment that have been taken over are modernised and the necessary working capital is provided.

It has been estimated that to do this, it would require an infusion of an amount of something like \$16 ½ million (G), immediately, so as to ensure that funds are available for bringing the assets into the best and maximum working conditions in terms of their efficiency and to ensure that there is adequate working capital to run a smooth business.

To do this, it was necessary to negotiate loans with lending agencies operating in Guyana and the people who are in charge of the company have been able to do this. One of the conditions

involved is quite naturally, the provision of a Government guarantee to cover the advance of \$16.5 million. It is therefore in that context that the Motion is brought to this House in order to secure approval for the government to guarantee a sum of \$16,000,000 which the State Enterprises (Guarantee) Act 1974. I, therefore, formally move the Motion for its adoption.

Question Proposed

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition heartily supports this Motion. It is indeed a necessary supplement to the nationalization of Reynolds (Guyana) Mines Ltd. The Opposition is totally committed to do everything within its power to ensure the success, we are committed to the success of Guybau, for if any were to fail, all Guyana will suffer.

May I also take this opportunity to say that the Opposition is very happy to announce that in the spirit of consultation between the Government and the Opposition, the Opposition was requested to, and we did, nominate for appointment, one of the present directors of this now Company, Berbice Mining Enterprise Ltd. We wish this new company every success from the bottom of our hearts.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion Carried

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 2.45 p.m.
