

**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**

**63th SITTING**

**2:00 P.M.**

**MONDAY, 5<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 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)**

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

**(Absent – on leave)**

**Deputy Prime Minister (1)**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development

**(Absent – on leave)**

**Senior Ministers (8)**

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

**(Absent – on leave)**

\*The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Absent)

\*The Hon. H. Green,  
Minister of Cooperatives and National Mobilisation (Absent)

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

\*The Hon. F.E. Hope,  
Minister of Finance (Absent)

\*The Hon S.S. Naraine, A.A.,  
Minister of Works and Housing (Absent)

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

\*The Hon. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H.,  
Minister of Agriculture (Absent)

### **Ministers (6)**

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

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,  
Minister of Information and Culture (Absent – on leave)

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)

### **\*Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

**Ministers of State (9)**

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,  
Minister of State for Agriculture (Absent – on leave)

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) (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)

**\*Non-elected Ministers**

### **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

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

**(Absent)**

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

### **Deputy Speaker (1)**

Mr. R. C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

### **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.  
Mr. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.  
Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.  
Mr. H.A. Taylor  
Mrs. L.E. Willems

**(Absent – on leave)**

**Members of the Opposition – Liberator Party (2)**

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

**(Absent – on leave)**

Mrs. E. DaSilva

**OFFICERS**

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

**PRAYERS****ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER****Leave to Members**

Leave has been granted to the Hon. Prime Minister to the 7<sup>th</sup> May, 1975, to the Hon. Deputy Prime minister, Dr. Reid, Hon. Minister Mr. Hoyte, the Hon. Minister Mr. Jack, the Hon. Minister miss field-Ridley, the Hon. Minister Mr. Carrington, the Hon. Minister Mr. Clarke, the Hon. Member Mr. Nissar for today's sitting and to the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh from 5<sup>th</sup> May to 13<sup>th</sup> June.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS**

The following papers were laid:

- (1) Audited Accounts of Guyana State Corporation for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1973  
**(Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Prime Minister)**
  
- (2) (a) Statement of Guarantees given by the Minister of Finance under section 3 of the Guarantee of Loans (Public Corporations and companies) Act 1971 (No. 16 of 1971) for quarter ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1974.  
**(Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Minister of Finance)**
  
- (b) Loan Agreement between the Caribbean Development Bank and Guyana Agricultural Co-operative Development Bank (Agriculture Credit) (Loan No. 2.OR-GU)  
**(Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Minister of Finance)**

(3) Minimum Wages (Watchmen)(Amendment) Order 1975 (No. 39), made under the section 8(1) of the labour Act, Chapter 98:01, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April, 1975, and published in the Gazette on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1975. **(Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Minister of Labour)**

(4) Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Registration) of Premises sand Register of Repairs and Sales) Regulations 1975 (No. 3), made under section 103 of the Motor Vehicles and road Traffic Act, Chapter 51:02, on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, 1975, and published in the Gazette on the 12th of April, 1975. **(The Minister of Home Affairs)**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Minister, I think there was some word for you wished to correct.

**The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Mingo):** It should be “registration of Premises” in the first instance, sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Could you clarify it so that the records will be properly made. Which regulation is it?

**Mr. Mingo:** It is number 3 – Motor Vehicle and Road Traffic “Regulations of Premises and Register of Repairs and Sales.”

This should be “Registration of Premises.”

### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING**

The following Bills were introduced and read the First time:

- (1) Church of god of prophecy (Incorporation of Trustees) Bill 1975. Bill No. 16 of 1975  
**(Mrs. Branco)**  
Church of Christ (Incorporation of Trustees) Bill 1975. Bill No. 17 of 1975 **(Mr. Corrica)**

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(2) Universal Church of Scientific Truth (Incorporation of Trustees) Bill 1975. Bill No. 18 of 1975. (Mr. Van Sluytman)

(3) Sea Defence (Amendment) Bill 1975. Bill No. 19 of 1975. (The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture)

(4) Bauxite Nationalisation (Modification) Bill 1975. Bill No. 20 of 1975 (The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources)

2:10 – 2:20 p.m.

## PUBLIC BUSINESS

### MOTIONS

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 23(3)

**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop):** Your Honour, before you take the items under Public Business, may I with respect seek your leave to move the suspension of Standing Order No. 23(3) to allow this Assembly to proceed with the Motion which has been tabled under my hand.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave has been granted.

#### CONGRATULATIONS TO THE HONOURABLE S.S. RAMPHAL, S.C.

**Mr. Ramsaroop:** Your Honor, Members of this House are aware that latterly, to wit, the end of last week, a member of this National Assembly received a very distinguished honour. I refer to the Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and justice who, by unanimity I understand, was appointed to the distinguished post of Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat.



At two levels, the level of the Government and the party, felicitations have already been extended to the Hon. Minister, but members are aware that the Hon. Minister has served in this Chamber for well nigh, I think, 10 years and during that time has made an invaluable contribution to the proceedings of this House. Indeed, at all times his contributions have been characterised by the highest measure of brilliance and competence.

I feel, therefore, that I will be remiss in the discharge of my duties as Leader of this House if on this occasion, the first sitting after his elevation to such a high post, I did not take the opportunity to table the Motion standing in my name which accordingly reads as follows:

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly extends congratulations to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice, the Honourable Shridath Surendranath Ramphal, S.C., M.P. on his appointment to the Office of Secretary-general of the Commonwealth Secretariat.”

And that a cable be dispatched immediately conveying to the Hon. Minister such congratulations and the endorsement of his appointment by the Members of this National Assembly. (*Applause*)

*Question proposed*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Speaker, this is not Government business and I rise to second the motion moved by the Hon. Leader of the House to extend congratulations to the Hon minister of foreign affairs and justice, Mr. Shridath Ramphal, on his appointment. I wish to ask the Hon. Leader of the House, through you, sir, to include the congratulations of the Leader of the Opposition who is, as you know, out of the country at the moment and also the congratulations of my party, the United Force, and myself. We would like our congratulations and good wishes to be coupled with those already mentioned and that our good wished be conveyed to Mr. Ramphal in the cable of which the Hon. Leader spoke.

Very briefly, sir, I wish to add that many times we have had occasion in this house to speak to the many overseas trips made by Mr. Ramphal. This we did, not because we did not

realise the benefit and experience to be gained from such trips but because we felt, as we still feel, that a young nation like ours has to do some drastic cutting in cost and has to save any unnecessary expenditure. We felt that we could not afford such a luxury, at least not to such a degree.

The fact that we have done this, does not take away one iota from the high esteem and regard in which we hold Mr. Ramphal. Indeed, we know he was doing his duty as told to him. One can imagine that at many times he must have been very exhausted. He is a man who places his duty above everything else and in his new job as Secretary-General of the commonwealth Secretariat, this, we feel, will stand out not only to his credit but to the credit of the nation of Guyana. The honour conferred on him is not just for the man alone but for all Guyana.

He will have a big task ahead of him now as he will be representing not one nation, but 33 nations, the international community that makes up the family of the Commonwealth of Nations. We know that Sonny Ramphal is capable of this high task; we know that by his brilliance, his personality, his tact, and, above all, by his dedication to duty he will carry on and carry forward the work started by Arnold Smith, from whom he takes over, and that he will carry it on to even greater successes to his own glory and the glory of Guyana.

I wish formally to second this motion and to ask the Hon. Leader, as I said, to couple with his, our good wishes and prayers for God's blessings and guidance on behalf of the United Force and the Opposition.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

**BILLS – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS**  
**SEA DEFENCES (AMENDMENT) BILL**

A Bill Intituled:

“An Act to amend the Sea Defences Act.” (The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture)

**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Ramsaroop):** Your Honour, on behalf of the hon. Minister of Agriculture, I beg to move that the Sea Defences (Amendment) Bill 1975 be now read a Second time. The gravamen of this measure is as follows. Members will note that the person designated in the Sea Defences Act as the Chief Works and Hydraulics officer now performs certain statutory duties defined under that Act in relation to sea defences. The government, however, felt that hydraulics was more conceptually and developmentally related to agricultural development, and indeed, functionally related to agricultural development than to the previous slot into which it was placed.

To give concrete expression to this it now becomes necessary following the integration of the Hydraulics Division with the ministry of Agriculture, for the functions so defined statutorily to be vested in the Chief hydraulics officer who is now in charge of the Hydraulics Division. Hence the necessity to amend the Sea Defences Act. This measure, therefore, in fine, seeks to effect such an amendment to the Sea Defences Act so that the necessary change can take place. I commend this very simple measure to the House and I respectfully ask that it be read a Second time.

*Question proposed.*

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Very briefly, we wish to support this bill that is before the House. The hon. Minister has already explained it in detail and there is also the explanatory memorandum

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before us. It simply seeks to regularize the position. The person designated in the Sea Defences Act as the Chief Works and Hydraulics Officer is the person now performing the statutory functions under the Act in relation to sea defences. As a result of the integration of the Hydraulics Division with the Ministry of Agriculture, these functions will now be vested in the Chief Hydraulics Officer who is in charge of the division. It is necessary for this to come before Parliament to be ratified and I therefore wish to give it our support.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Bill read a second time.*

*Assembly in Committee*

*Bill considered and approved*

*Assembly Resumed*

*Bill reported without amendment, read the third time and passed.*

### **POLICE (DISCIPLINE) BILL**

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to enable members of the Police Force to appeal to the Police Service commission in disciplinary matters pursuant to article 108(5) of the Constitution and to make provision for the exercise of disciplinary powers in the Police Force.”

**[The Minister of Home Affairs]**

**Mr. Mingo:** I beg to move the Second Reading of the Police (Discipline) Bill 1975. In moving the second Reading of this Bill, I wish to point out that the Bill really seeks to make provisions relating to the exercise of disciplinary powers in the Police Force. One very important purpose of the Bill is to up-date the disciplinary regulations of the Guyana police Force, which were last revised in 1949, when there was a general revision of the laws of Guyana.

A further intention of the Bill is to provide for the welfare of all ranks of the force by ensuring that there is a code of discipline which is in keeping with the various developments which are taking place to raise the standard of the Force. The Bill will provide necessary safeguards which will foster good discipline and at the same time maintain the highest degrees of morale among all members of the Force.

Another aspect of the disciplinary code which must be appreciated is that it provides measures which will protect citizens from any unlawful or unnecessary exercise of authority by any member of the Force. The Bill, therefore, is of very special significance in that it seeks to protect the interests of members of the force as well as those of members of the public.

The right of appeal is an important part of our legal system. The arrangements which have presently in force in the Police force give this right only to those members of the Force who hold office above the rank of Sergeant. After discussions with the commissioner of Police and the Guyana Police Association, it was decided to make right this omission, so the law officers were approached to prepare the necessary legislation to give the right of appeal to all members of the Guyana Police Force.

I am indeed very happy to announce to members that the Bill which is before the House today has been produced after several sessions among the executive members of the Guyana Police Association, the commissioner of Police, and officers of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It therefore reflects complete agreement reached with members of the police Association who have not only assisted considerably but must be heartily congratulated for making a most valuable contribution to what I am very pleased to describe as a model disciplinary code for the proper administration of our beloved Police Force.

Article 108(1) of the Guyana constitution confers on the Police Service Commission disciplinary powers in respect of persons who hold office in the Police force of or above the rank of Inspector. Article 108(3) of the Constitution confers disciplinary powers on the Commissioner of police in respect of persons holding offices in the force below the rank of Inspector. Both the

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Police Service Commission and the commissioner of Police would be given the right to delegate the exercise of the disciplinary powers which have been conferred on them.

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By Article 108(5) of the Guyana Constitution, Parliament is allowed to make provision for all members of the Force to appeal to the Police Service Commission against decisions made by members of the commission in the exercise of the disciplinary powers by virtue of the authority which will be delegated to them by the Commissioner of Police.

Clause 3 of the Bill seeks to provide such a right of appeal by all members of the Force and sets out the procedure to be followed when members make such appeals. Article 108(6) of the Constitution authorizes Parliament to make provision with respect to the offences against discipline in the Force. Clause 4 of the Bill seeks to prescribe these offences and to set out the punishment that may be imposed on members of the force found guilty of committing these offences.

The rest of the Bill seeks to set out certain procedures to be observed in executing such tasks as conducting investigations, holding enquiries, arresting members of the Force, recovering fines, preparing defaulters' sheets, dealing with absence without leave, dealing with cases of damage or loss of equipment and making Standing Orders and Regulations.

It may be of interest for members to note some innovations in the disciplinary code which have been introduced in this Bill. Disciplinary regulations presently in force make provision for a defaulter to be permitted to use a friend. Clause 6(1)(b), however, goes much further and specifies that if the defaulter is below the rank of Sergeant, the friend of the defaulter shall be of or above the rank of the defaulter but not above the rank of sergeant.

Another important change which has been made is to be found in clause 9(2)(a) and (b). In this, there are certain very noteworthy provisions with respect to the defaulter sheet for a member of the Force. It provides that if any member of the Force is of or above the rank of Inspector, any one or more entries on the defaulter sheet may be expunged from the defaulter

sheet at the discretion of the commissioner in recognition of a subsequent act of good service performed by him or if no disciplinary offence is committed by him within three years after the date of the last entry on his defaulter sheet.

And, further, if a member of the Force is below the rank of Inspector, any one or more entries on his defaulter sheet may be expunged from that sheet at the discretion of the Commissioner of Police in recognition of a subsequent act of good conduct performed by him or if no disciplinary offence is committed by him within three years after the date of the last entry on his defaulter sheet.

These provisions will be a tremendous improvement and it will give encouragement to members of the force, who may have gone astray, to forget the past, turn a new leaf and dedicate themselves to the responsibilities of the Force and share the benefits that are to be derived from being an efficient and loyal member of the Force.

As I pointed out earlier in my contribution in the presentation of this Bill to this honourable House, it has been a combination of efforts of the Secretariat of the ministry, the commissioner of Police and his senior Officers and the rank and file members of the Police Force as represented by their staff association. The objective is to produce a disciplinary code for the Police force which will make for the upliftment of the Force and the satisfaction of all of its members. I commend the Bill to the members of this House and ask that they give it their unanimous support. I have great pleasure in moving the Second Reading of the police (Discipline) Bill, 1975.

*Question proposed.*

**Mrs. DaSilva:** Mr. Speaker, in rising to give our support to this Bill, the Police (Discipline) Bill No. 15 of 1975, I wish to make a few comments. I know that the Hon. Minister will pay them some heed I think -0 and we have often mentioned this – that this Hon. Minister is one of the Ministers in the House who pays attention to what is going on and gives some consideration to the Opposition.

All Guyanese can be justifiably proud of our police Force. It is one of the better things we inherited from our colonial past. In an effort to raise this standard even more, it has been found necessary to bring this bill before the House because, after all, policemen are human beings like other people and they commit offences and have to be corrected and punished for them. The efforts in here to give a fair dealing to the policemen and to the citizen are highly commendable and should go a long way to allay the fears of those who, maybe for political reasons, have other ideas about the standards and values of the Police Force.

The Police Force is a regular Force established for the preservation of law and order and the prevention and detection of crime. It is an accepted fact that the more civilized and democratic the State, the less need there is for police intervention.

We are growing up as a nation and we have to realise, as citizens of the nation, that we have a responsibility to obey the laws and regulations of the nation, not only in our own selfish personal interest, but in the interest of the nation as a whole. We have our duty to the nation and those who flout the laws – no one is above the law, but it policeman, citizen President Prime Minister, Member of Parliament or the least important person in Guyana – must pay the consequences.

As I said, our Police Force is one of the better things we inherited from our colonial past. Their tradition of discipline, loyalty and fair dealings to all is something to be proud of and this Bill should help to reassure the citizens of Guyana. We should guard the tradition of loyalty, honesty and justice in our Police Force very zealously and jealously and ensure that the members of the Force continue to live up to the high standard. Never must there be any question of doubt about their integrity. Race and politics must not influence them in any way.

We had, some time ago, a report from the I.C.I., the international commission of Jurists, which reported on the imbalance that exists in the Police Force. This imbalance still exists and there appears to be not much done to correct it. However, credit should be given where credit is due and I feel that credit should be given to the commissioner and officers, that in spite of this imbalance the men of the Police Force conduct themselves admirably. But, it is no excuse, for



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those whose duty it is to go into the recommendations of the I.C.J., to neglect these duties and we continue to look and hope for a correction to the imbalance that exists in the Force.

**2:40 – 2:50p.m.**

We know, sir, that the task of the police force is made very difficult by certain sections of the population, whose leaders should know better, who are out to cause trouble in our country and to interfere with the smooth working of the economy. They pay little heed to the maintenance of law and order. This provides an added strain and burden on the Police Force and it is to the credit of the Force in these difficult days that they have conducted themselves admirably. For example, there was the strike which we experienced in the sugar belt not so long ago. The Police did their fine work in their usual manner, quietly and efficiently, and our country passed over that particular difficulty smoothly and without any noise.

This is to the credit of our Police Force. They do not wave banners and go on marches. In fact, they have been going on marches all their lives but nobody goes in front with a band playing and a flag flying. The Police Force have quietly gone about their duties. They have marched a longer distance than from Kimbia to Georgetown.

It is a credit to them, too, sir, in this day and age when we hear in our country that civil servants should be identified with the Government. After all, policemen are a form of civil servants. I cannot remember the exact words of the Hon. Prime minister, but he said something to that effect. Everybody knows that the duty of a free and impartial civil servant is to work equally with whichever government is the Government of the day. I am dealing with the Police now. It is not right to try and impose on the police Force that they must make their personal political allegiance to the government and to say that if there is any doubt as to where their loyalty lies they are to vote by proxy on election day.

As a matter of fact, according to our election regulations a policeman on duty on polling day can go to the polls wherever he is stationed. There is no need for him to have a proxy. But, of course, there may be doubts. Policemen like everybody else, are entitled to their personal

political view and should not be forced to go and vote for somebody else or for any party other than the party of their choice.

I hope, sir, that that is that is the last example we have of that because if politics get into the Police Force they will no longer have the respect of the citizens of Guyana.

If I may remind you, sir, of Part III of the Bill, the section dealing with Discipline, Clause 4 states:

“Any member of the Force (other than the Commissioner) who –

- (c) disobeys lawful orders given him by his superior in rank, whether orally or in writing, or by authorized signals on parade...”

And it goes on with all the various misdemeanours and things that they could be disciplined for. I picked that section because it says:

“disobeys lawful orders given him by his superior in rank.”

I wish to refer once again to the traffic policeman whom the Leader of the opposition always speaks about, who was given an order to sell “New Nation” paper and count not, therefore, carry out his duties as a traffic policeman. This is the kind of thing we have to speak about and unfortunately, couple it with this Bill to which we willingly give our support. But this is the time when we ought to be able to air all of the little problems so that they may be brought to the attention of those concerned.

Going back to the traffic policeman, one cannot stress too often the need and the importance for the Police Force to be allowed to function and to continue to function free from political interference.

I wish to comment on two clauses in the Bill. The first relates to Clause 11(2) on page 17. I wish to commend the Hon. Minister for the manner in which he deals with damage or loss of

equipment. It refers to drivers in the police Force. If there is an accident and the driver is guilty he will be punished for it. The closing sentence states:

“...he may, in addition to any punishment, be ordered to make good the whole part of the amount of such damage by deductions from his salary.”

We wish to commend the hon. Minister for this particular clause in the Bill. Too many people have no respect for other people's property. They say that it is not theirs; it is the Government's and Government can pay for it, little realizing that they are taxpayers and they are paying for it. Too many people have that attitude; it is not theirs and it does not matter.

We know of the large number of accidents on the roads caused by carelessness and by negligence. There is careless use of property, careless use of equipment, property is broken, and so this is most commendable. I wish that the other ministers will take this to heart for their departments and introduce a similar type of code, to make drivers realise that they must take care of the property of the Government.

Finally, I wish to take the opportunity, in this Police Discipline Bill, to talk about choke and rob. I don't think I have to make an apology for this, because everybody is very concerned about choke and rob incidents in our country. I think these incidents give our country a bad name more so than any of the bad talking that is done by Guyanese who go overseas and talk about our country.

I wish to state that we had an example not so very long ago when the Hon. Minister of Trade was bringing in his infamous black-marketing Bill. He remarked that jail was no deterrent. That was the reason he gave why we have to take away licences from people who black-market. He said jail was no deterrent and this seems a terrible state of affairs to us on this side of the House because jail is supposed to be a deterrent but evidently it is not. In the case of black-marketing licences have to be taken away. I would like to urge the hon. Minister and the other members of the cabinet to turn their attention to the question of choke and rob in our country.

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Black-marketing has engaged everybody's attention. Something had to be done and we agreed with this because the situation was bad. Something was done. Well, it is the time that something drastic be done to catch and deal with those who choke and rob. We have said, sir, that we recommend the consideration of more policemen on the beat, more patrol cars moving around to catch them at the scene of a crime. It should not be left for someone to phone 999 because it takes time for the police to get to the scene of the crime, during which time the robbers have escaped. The time has come for more police on the beat and more patrol cars.

**2:50 – 3:00p.m.**

In mentioning this I think I ought to take this opportunity to offer congratulations to the Inspector and police in New Amsterdam. I have recently been discussing the incidence of choke and robe and the general upsurge in crime with some people from New Amsterdam, and I was told by them that the crime rate in New Amsterdam has gone down. These are just citizens who are concerned and they said it has gone down in New Amsterdam within recent times because of the increase in the number of patrol cars regularly going round New Amsterdam. Of course there is Glasgow and the outlying areas. There is a much larger area to be covered in Georgetown but if New Amsterdam can do it why can Georgetown not increase its patrols and increase the number of beat policemen?

And, sir, if there is no respect for jail, if jail is not a deterrent, it is time for the hon. Minister and the cabinet to get down seriously to thinking about what will be a deterrent. What do the choke and rob boys fear? I am not going to use this opportunity to go into the pros and cons of "The cat", whether it is good, bad or ought to use used in this civilized day and age. All I say is that the minister should turn his attention to what the choke and rob people really respect and to what they really fear and maybe he will come up with the answer.

We throw out these thoughts for the Hon. Minister to think about because we are seriously concerned about the crime rate in this country. We are seriously concerned that the choke and rob incidents still go on. Because one does not read about them in the newspapers, it does not mean that they are not happening. Word gets around easily here. Every day one hears

about one incident, at the very least, so this is a very serious matter and it is time that thought be given to it.

I was wondering, sir, if the Hon. Minister would be prepared to give this House an assurance. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if he will be prepared to give this House an assurance that he will go into the matter of the handling of and dealing with the choke and rob element in our community. They are known; their hide-outs are known. Let the police flush them out; let them do that, get behind them and put a stop to this serious menace in our community.

One final word on the police. The attitude of the average Guyanese towards our police should be one of trust, the policeman is a friend; the police are there to help. But, this may be one of the bad things that we inherited from our colonial past. We look on the police as persons to get away from. One does not ask a policeman anything; one does not speak to him unless he speaks to you. Parents tell their children: “If you are naughty, I am going to tell the police on you.” This attitude must stop and this is the time to do so while we are educating our children for the new concept of a cooperative Guyana. This is the time to teach the children the right approach – that the police are there to help; policemen are their friends. This attitude of being afraid of the police must stop.

The Government has a vast propaganda machinery at its disposal. It wastes huge sums of money every year on a lot of unnecessary propaganda. It could spend some of that money and use some of the media at its disposal to publicise the workings of the Police Force; to teach the children the respect that is due to the members of the Force and what their attitude should be; to teach them that the police are there to serve the nation, are there to help them.

Sir, with those words, I wish formally to give our support to this Bill, the Police Discipline Bill of 1975, Bill No. 15.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Minister, do you wish to reply?

**Mr. Mingo:** Mr. Speaker, the remarks made by the Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva were confined, more or less, to two areas, that is the I.C.J. report and the question of the incidence of

choke and rob in our community. Now, on the question of the recommendations of the I.C.J. Report, in the first place, I would wish to draw to the Hon. Member's attention that when I.C.J. came to Guyana the situation was entirely different from what it is now. I think she recognises that the racial animosity which existed when I.C.J. came has been considerably reduced now, ten years later, under the banner of the People's National Congress. It means therefore, that situation does not now exist.

I wish to tell her, however, that every effort has been made, and is still being made, to ensure that some of the recommendations of that Commission are implemented. The hon. Member should realize that there is a tremendous amount of wastage in the force especially among people of certain race groups and although we make efforts to attract Guyanese of all ethnic groups, still, we do not very well succeed in getting what she would like to have. We have our selection there on merit as happens in all other aspects of life in Guyana. Merit is an important consideration and merit will continue to be an important consideration for a very long time to come.

I would ask her to desist from harping on this tune of racial imbalance as far as possible because, very often people who harp on this tune can themselves be accused of being very racially prejudiced. So, one has to be very careful how one harps on the tune of racial imbalance. We are making every effort to ensure that we have in our security forces people who would sympathise with the objectives of this country; people, whom we can depend on for loyalty and people who have merited to be selected as members of the security forces.

Now, on the question of choke and rob, which I prefer to call "larceny from the person", I would wish to let the hon. Member know – I think I did make some remarks on this in December – that I think I should really commend the police for the excellent job which they are doing to help to lessen the incidence of this type of crime. Over the last six months, the efforts of the police have almost doubled. One will find more policemen on beat, especially in Georgetown. We have only lately redefined our beats and we have been able to establish more beats.

**5.5.75**

**National Assembly**

**2:50 – 3:00 p.m.**

Generally, I think the police are doing a good job and we must recognise that when we are dealing with crime we cannot only blame the law enforcer or the persons who are concerned with seeing that law and is maintained. There are several other people who would have to play their part in the community if we are going to be able to control or to lessen the incidence of crime in any community.

For instance, I was in West End last week – as Hon. Members know, West End is the fancy name for the Tiger Bay area – and, from reports which I received, the incidence of crime has lessened considerably in that area. When one sits down and thinks what might be responsible for this, one sees as one of the chief factors responsible for the lessening of crime that that area, the sort of a very dedicated committee, the committee which is responsible for running the West End Youth Centre.

That brings home the point that if more of us go out into voluntary organisations, out into the community and try to help our citizens who perhaps are less-privileged, citizens who perhaps have less opportunity, we would find that we would do an excellent job to help to lessen the incidence of crime in our community. The point is, not only law enforcement is going to help, but a conscious effort on the part of all the citizens of our country. In other words, one has to think in terms of being his brother's keeper and think in terms of carrying social work into those areas, helping to improve the lot of those people and, think in terms of helping them in education and that type of thing.

**3:00 – 3:10 p.m.**

If the incidence of crime in our communities is to be lessened, many of us – I think I will commend this to the Hon. Member – ought to go out and join this type of organisation. Go out and try to reach out to those people, and try to help them to improve their lot. Certainly, if she did that, she would be doing a great job towards assisting a situation in the country which none of us likes.

**5.5.75**

**National Assembly**

**3:00 – 3:10 p.m.**

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that the situation in relation to “choke and rob” is improving and statistics show that over the last few months there have been fewer cases. I am hoping that, with the efforts of the police on the one hand, and that of the social workers on the other hand, and when the impact of our education system with the new approaches, and other new ideas in education become felt “choke and rob” in our country will be entirely obliterated from the community.

Although the situation is not what we would like it to be, it is not as bad as the Hon. Member tries to make it. *(Applause)*

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Bill read a Second time.*

*Assembly in Committee*

*Bill considered and approved.*

*Assembly resumed.*

*Bill reported without Amendment, read the third time and passed.*

## **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 3:10 p.m.*