

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

69th Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Friday, 11th July, 1975

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government- People`s National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

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

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of National Development

Senior Minister (9)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

*Cde. H. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Mobilizations

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

(Absent – on leave)

*Cde.. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance

*Cde.. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Work and Housing

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

*Cde. G.B. Kennard , C.C.H.,
Minister of Agriculture

*Cde. C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development

(Absent – on leave)

Cde. F.R. Wills, S.C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice

Minister (5)

Cde. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture

(Absent – on leave)

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

*Cde. O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health

(Absent)

*Cde. C. V. Mingo
Minster of Home Affairs

***Non-elected Ministers**

Ministers of state (9)

Cde. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

Cde. O.E Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice / Corentyne) **(Absent –on leave)**

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

Cde. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister of State, Office of the
Prime Minister

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,
Minister of State - Regional
(Essequibo Coast/ West Demerara)

Cde. K.B. Bancroft,
Minister of State - Regional
(Mazaruni / Potaro)

*Cde. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection **(Absent)**

*Cde. A. Salim,
Minister of State - Regional
(East Demerara / West Coast Berbice)

*Cde. F. U.A . Carmichael,
Minister of State - Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (8)

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

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

Cde. S. Prasad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co – operative and National Mobilisation

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

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

(Absent)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. R. C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker

Other Members (16)

Cde. J. N. Aaron

Cde. L. M. Brano

Cde.. E.H.A. Fowler

Cde. J. Gill

Cde. W. Hussain

Cde . S. Jaiserrisingh

(Absent-on leave)

Cde. K.M.E. Jonas

(Absent-on leave)

Cde M. Nissar

Cde. L. E. Ramsahoye

Cde. J.G. Ramson

(Absent-on leave)

Cde. P. A. Rayman

Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

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

Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.

Cde. H.A. Taylor

Cde. 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 – F.A. Narain

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

11.7.75

National Assembly

2.05- 2.10 p.m.

2. 05 p.m.

PRAYERS

OATHS

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Frederick Rudolph Wills, who is not an elected Member of the National Assembly, has been appointed to be a Minister and, by virtue of such appointment, he has become a Member of the National Assembly. Before Mr. Wills can take part in the proceedings of the Assembly, he will have to make and subscribe the Oath of the Office. As Mr. Wills is at present in the Chamber, the Oath will now be administered to him.

[The Oath of Office was made and subscribed by Mr. F.R. Wills S.C.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Speaker: For the record, I wish to inform the Assembly of the following appointments. The hon. F.R. Wills, S.C., was appointed Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Justice with effect from the 24th April, 1975, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice with effect from 1st July, 1975. Mr. Wills was designated a Senior Minister with effect from 1st July, 1975.

The hon. Minister Miss C.L. Baird, Minister of Education and Social Development, has been designated a Senior Minister with effect from 1st July, 1975. The hon. Member Mr. J.R. Thomas, who was a Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Works and Housing, had been appointed Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of National Development with effect from 1st July, 1975. The hon. Member Mr. M.Corrica has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of works and Housing with effect from 1st July, 1975.

11.7.75

National Assembly

2.05 - 2.20 p.m.

(Mr. Speaker continued)

2. 10 p.m.

To these hon. Members I extend on behalf of the Assembly and myself congratulations on their appointments and best wishes for success in their new offices.

Leave to Members

Leave has been granted to the hon. Prime Minister, to the hon. Ministers Jack, Baird, Field – Ridley and Clarke and to the hon. Member Mr. Ramon for today's Sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Papers were laid:

- 1) Report of the Standing Orders Committee on the motion for the amendment to Standing Order no. 35(5). [**Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman, Deputy Speaker (as Chairman of the Standing Orders Committee in the absence of the Speaker)**]
- 2) Sugar Levy (Security for Payment) Regulation 1975(No. 8), made under section 7 of the Sugar Levy Act 1974 (No. 22 of 1974), on the 27th of June, 1975, and Published in the Gazette on the 28th of June, 1975.
- 3) Ministers, Members of the National Assembly and Special Offices (Emoluments) Order 1975 (No. 63), made under section 8 of the Ministers, Members of the National Assembly and Special Offices (Emoluments) Act, Cap. 1:07 on the 17th of June, 1975, and published in the Gazette on the 21st of June, 1975.
- 4) Customs Duties Order 1975 (No. 65), made under section 8 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, on the 26th of June, 1975, and published in the Gazette on the 28th of June, 1975.
- 5) Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order 1975 (No. 66), made under section 4 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, on the 27th of June, 1975, and published in the Gazette on the 28th of June, 1975.
- 6) Customs (Exemption from Duties) Order 1975 (No. 67), made under section 8 of the Customs Tax Act, Chapter 80:01, on the 27th of June, 1975, and published in the Gazette on the 28th of June, 1975.

- 7) Loan Agreement (Second Education Project) between Guyana and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development dated May 9, 1975 (Loan Number 1106 GUA).
- (8) Development Credit Agreement (Second Education Project) between Guyana and International Development Association dated May9, 1975 (Credit Number 544 GUA).

[The Minister of Finance]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read First time:

- (1) Customs (Amendment) Bill 1975 Bill No. 27/1975**[The Minister of Finance]**
- (2) Timehri International Airport (Amendment) Bill 1975 – Bill No. 26/1975.
[The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House on behalf Minister of Works and Housing]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILLS – SECOND READING

PRISON (AMENDMENT)(No. 2) BILL 1975

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to amend the Prison Act. **[The Minister of Home Affairs]**”

The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. Mingo): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the Second Reading of the Prison (Amendment) (No.2) Bill 1975. These amendments before the House are intended to tidy up the Prison Act to ensure that the administration of the Prison Service will proceed smoothly and efficiently.

From time to time, changes were made in the administrative structure of the Prison Service. The Deputy Director of Prisons was formerly the officer in charge of the Prison and as such had all the powers of the officers in charge. Now, he is stationed at the Prison's Head Office where he is expected to assist the Director in the work of the administration of the entire service but has no power to adjudicate in disciplinary and other matters relating to both prisoners and officers.

If the Director of Prisons is to manage efficiently and effectively, then he should not be burdened with such routine duties as would curtail the time and effort which he should use in planning for the development of the service. Hence, it is necessary that the Act should be amended to state clearly what are the duties of the Deputy Director and give him the authority to perform those duties which would make it practicable for the smooth running of the service.

As the law now stands, only senior Superintendents are authorised to adjudicate in cases involving both prisoners and officers. The officer in charge of a prison is not necessarily a Senior Superintendent. For example, at Timehri, the Remand Centre there is managed by a Superintendent and at Sebley Hall the Manager is an Assistant Superintendent of Prisons. Also, in cases where a prison is managed by a Senior Superintendent, whenever this Superintendent is absent, the more junior officers, the Superintendent or the Assistant Superintendent, would have no power to operate and then the volume of work with respect to adjudication in the case of both officers and prisoners is so great that the officers in charge must have assistance to cope with it.

For these reasons, it is essential that not only Senior Superintendents but Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents should have conferred upon them the powers, rights and privileges of a Director. Clause 6 of the amendment therefore seeks to do this.

Clause 11 introduces a new section to the Act which is intended to spread the work – load of the Prison Service equitably and also to ensure justice in the enquiry of offences committed in prisons. For example, a person in charge of a prison may be a witness to the Commission of an offence. Under the old law this officer is empowered to enquire into that offence. By virtue of this amendment, the Director may appoint another officer to enquire into this offence.

There are some other minor changes which are envisaged. For example Clause 2 seeks to give an accurate description of the prison service. In Clause 4 the prison service has been given its correct designation and “Department” becomes “Service” in Clauses 5 and 7.

Clause 10(2)(c) seeks to have the report recommending the dismissal of an officer to be forwarded to the Public Service Commission which is the authority that must deal with disciplinary matters.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple Bill which is necessary for the implementation of certain desirable and necessary changes to the administration of the prison service in Guyana. It is essential if we are to have greater efficiency and effectiveness. I therefore commend this Bill to the House and ask all hon. Member to give it support.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, we do agree with the hon. Minister that the proposed legislation is intended to streamline the administration of the prison service. Indeed it is long overdue. It is intended to streamline the service generally and we are very, very happy to support the legislation before the House.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee

Clauses 1 to 2 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 3.

Mr. Singh: Just a slight typographical correction in Clause 3 (a). The inverted commas should not end at ‘Director’ but should include the word ‘or’. It should read: by deleting the words “the Deputy Director or”.

The Chairman: Thanks for bringing it to the attention of the House.

Clauses 3 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 4 and 5 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 5 A.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman I beg to move the Amendment standing in my name, by inserting Clause 5A in the Principal Act after Clause 5. This Amendment is necessary to clearly define what the duties of the Deputy Director.

Question –

That the following be inserted as Clause 5 A:

“Insertion	5 A. Insert immediately after section 5 of the
of section	Principal Act the following section -
5A in the	Duties 5A. The Deputy Director shall act
Principal	of Deputy as principal assistant to the
Act.	Director. Director in the performance of

his duties and shall have power,
during the absence or incapacity
of the Director, or when
so authorised by him to do or
suffer any act or thing which
may by law be done or suffered
by the Director.”

proposed, put, and agreed to.

Clause 5 A agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 6 to 10 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 10 recommitted.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister you may now move the amendment.

Mr. Mingo: I beg to move the Amendment to clause 10 (2) (c) standing in my name, that is substitute for the word “Minister” the words “Public Service Commission”. The Public Service Commission is the correct authority to deal with disciplinary matters.

Amendment proposed, put, and agreed.

Clauses 10, as amended, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 11.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman I beg to move the Amendment standing in my name which inserts after Clause 10 Clause 11.

Question –

That the following be inserted as Clause 11:

<p>“Insertion of , Section 39A in the Principal Act.</p>	<p>11. Insert immediately after section 39 of the Principal Act the following section – Appointment of Senior Superintendent etc. to enquire into prison offence.</p>	<p>39A. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Act, where a prisoner commits any prison offence the Director may appoint a Senior Superintendent, a Superintendent or an Assistant Superintendent to enquire into the offence and if the prisoner is found guilty of the offence the person</p>
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National Assembly

2.20- 2.30 p.m.

so appointed may impose

any or all of the punishments

specified in section 39 . . . “

proposed, put, and agreed to.

Clause 11 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Assembly resumed.

Bill considered and approved, read a Third time and passed as

Amended

2.30 p.m.

MOTIONS

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 76 (5)

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop): Your Honour, having regard to the powers that inhere in you under Standing Order 83, I seek your leave under this standing Order to move the suspension of Standing Order 76 (5).

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Your Honour, I now formally move that standing Order 76 (5) be suspended to enable the Motion for the adoption of the Report of the Standing Orders Committee to be taken at this Sitting.

Question put, and agrees to.

Standing Order 76(5) suspended.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House.

ADOPTION OF REPORT OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

“Be it resolved that the Report of the Standing Orders Committee on the motion for the amendment to Standing Order No. 35(5) be adopted.” [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

Mr. Ramsaroop: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Motion in my name receive the concurrence of this House, to wit, that the Report of the Standing Orders Committee and the Motion for the amendment to Standing Order No. 35(5) be adopted. The relevant section of this Motion, the gravamen, relates to paragraph 6 of the Report, which is , that the National Assembly, with the exception of Mr. M.F. Singh, Leader of Opposition, supported the Motion moved in the National Assembly on the 25th June, 1975 by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House for an amendment to Standing Order No. 35(5) to provide for the use of word “comrade” in addressing Members and recommends that the Assembly accepts the Motion. I formally move that this Motion be adopted.

Question proposed, put, and agreed to.

Motion Carried.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

AMENMENT TO STANDING ORDER NO. 35(5)

“Be it resolved that Standing Order No. 35 be amended by the substitution of the following for paragraph (5):

(5) A Member shall be referred to in the Assembly either with the title ‘Comrade’ before his surname or official designation or as the Honourable Member, Mr. “[**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

Mr. Ramsaroop: On the last occasion I had moved this Motion that was in my name. On that occasion I had gone into the question of the Motion. I now formally move the Motion standing in my name.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mrs DaSilva

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Speaker: Mr. Speaker, before speaking on this Motion moved by the hon. Leader of the House I should like to take this opportunity to offer congratulations to the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice. As my leader, the hon. Leader of the Opposition said, we look upon him to uphold the Constitution of our Country.

I could not help noting that today we all sat stuck and glued to our seats while a new Member of Parliament was taking the Oath. This I have noticed on the last couple of occasions. This is the sort of thing that is happening, the lowering of standards in our country. This really is a sign of the times in which we live; it is sort of tantamount to what we are doing today. In the old days, and I am talking about our colonial past, but of when I first came into this House six years ago when a Member took the Oath of Office the rest of the Member stood with that Member when the Oath was being taken.

It is stated in article 57 of our Constitution that:

“There shall be a Parliament Of Guyana, which will consist of a President and National Assembly.”

The procedure to be followed for the working of the Parliament is set out and contained in what is known as the Standing Orders, a title, which simply and explicitly says what it means. To us it should mean what it states.

However, on far too many occasions in this House we have had cause to complain of the misuse and abuse of the Standing Orders. Usually it is because the P.N.C. Government takes on unfair advantage of its position in this House because of its number, which it got illegally. It uses

its position to suspend the Standing Orders for frivolous and trivial excuses so that it can bulldoze a measure in this House which it wants passed without delay.

Today, we have before us another abuse. In the light of this new form of abuse we have to ask ourselves: Is it really necessary? Is this a case of coming events casting their shadows?

Our Parliament is based on the Westminster system and I wish to quote from Standing Order No. 84 (1) which reads as follows:

“In any matter not herein provided for, resort shall be had to the usage and practice of the Common House of Parliament of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which shall be followed as far as the same may be applicable to the Assembly, and not inconsistent with these Standing Orders, or with the practice of the Assembly.”

And it qualifies it in 84(2) which states:

“In case of doubt the Standing Orders of the Assembly shall be interpreted in the light of the relevant usage and practice of the House of Commons, but no restrictions which the House of Commons has introduced by Standing Order after the making of these Standing Orders shall be deemed to extend to the Assembly or its Members until the Assembly has provided by Standing Order for such restrictions.”

I am reminded that these Standing Orders were revised after our Independence. This is not that to debate whether the Westminster system which we follow here is relevant to our country or not. I do not propose to deal with it now. It ought to be sufficient to say that we are this moment in time Members of the Commonwealth Nations. All of us as parliamentarians are member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and our Standing Orders state quite clearly that we are to follow the usage and practice of the House of the Commons, the Lower House of Parliament of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Standing Order 35(5) states quite clearly that an hon. Member is referred to in Assembly as “the hon. Member Mr.” and now it is sought by the addition of the title “Comrade” before the Member’s surname or official designation, to make the use of the word “Comrade” part of

our procedure in Parliament. We note and we appreciate that it also says the title “hon. Minister” can be used as stated in the Standing Orders.

2.40 p.m.

The present Parliament of Guyana is composed of two political parties. What either of these political parties –the People’s National Congress or the United Force –wishes to call its members, formally or informally, outside of this House is its members whatsoever it wishes and the United Force the same. We still have some democracy and some privilege of speech at the moment. But, sir, why should members of this Parliament be forced to have the appellation of “Comrade” thrust upon them because it is the title which the P.N.C. prefers? Are we to understand, sir, that this Parliament irrespective of United Force –to adopt this nomenclature.

[Interruption]

The funny thing is, they are objecting to my speaking about it and reminding me that they have allowed us to use “the honourable Member” as a title in Parliament. Well, if they do not mind that, why are they objecting when I say we do not wish to be called “Comrade”? It does not make sense.

I read recently the His Worship the Mayor, the members of the Chamber of Commerce, in fact, everybody is now going to be called “Comrade”, the whole of Guyana; we are all going to be called “Comrades”. Nobody is going to know who belongs to the P.P.P., the P.N.C., the United Force or any other party because we must be put together under the all-embracing term of “Comrade”.

Well, sir, I am very pleased and proud that my leader and I still have the privilege and freedom of being able to choose what we want. But my sympathy goes out to the public servants, to the members of the Chamber of Commerce, to the teachers and to the other organisations where, whether people want it or not, they will be addressed where, whether people want it or not, they will be addressed as “Comrade” and will have to respond in the same manner. They will be forced to accept it whether they want to or not. Is this what we want in our country and is this what we mean when we talk about freedom? I do not know how it will all end. It will be

interesting to see but it very much appears as if coming events are casting their shadows and that egalitarianism and socialism in the context of the P.N.C. differ very little from what we call in plain English: dictatorship and communism.

I wish to go back a little and note here how I admired the delegates from overseas at the recent A.C.P. conference. These gentlemen came from countries where the climate is similar to ours. These gentlemen also had the colonial masters on their shoulders in the past but they knew how to behave, where to behave, what to say and how to address people in the correct manner. We are talking about culture. We waste thousands of dollars every year in our Ministry of Information and Culture, yet in our Parliament the highest forum in the land we are not able to distinguish between what is the correct procedure and what is the correct manner of decorum, of dress, of behaviour, of address. Very soon we will be coming here, no doubt in bathing costumes, and be saying: “Hi Frank” and “Hello George” and all that kind of thing.

[Interruption]

Everything has its proper place. It is noteworthy that other people can use the term and respect it and do not use climate or colonialism as an excuse. We have to differ and this latest “Comrade” Motion now is almost making us ridiculous because in the highest forum of the land part of the members are to be called “Comrades” and the rest are called “honourable members”. This ill befits members of Parliament who are supposed to be responsible, mature people. They are behaving in a childish and foolish manner, just being different for the sake of being different, to make our country the laughing stock of world.

We are well aware that the hon. Prime Minister likes to set the pace for Guyana and that he believes that we must be always ahead in the region. That is very good. But this ridiculous Motion is making us the laughing stock not only of the Caribbean but also of the world. We are going to be different from our brothers and sisters in the Commonwealth Parliaments of the world. Indeed, in the Parliaments of the world Guyana will be known as that strange country where half of its members of Parliament are called “Comrade” and the Opposition members are called “honourable members”. I have been given to understand that it is going to be compulsory for my friends – a much nicer word – on the other side to call each other “Comrade”

There is a time and place for everything. We are told we are going to have a new Constitution. When that new Constitution is drafted and comes before the House and becomes a fact for the country, no doubt it will be spelt out there what form of address will be used. That will be the time and place to do it. But we are as usual - or shall I say, the Government of Guyana is as usual - doing its work in a piece - meal fashion. We are having this little bit of nonsense put in whereby some are going to be addressed as "Comrades" and the rest as "honourable members" instead of waiting until we have our new Constitution put together. Whatever nomenclature, whatever title is used, that will be the time to deal with it but we should not mess around with the existing system. It is quite inconsistent to have as a model the Westminster system where it is stated in the Standing Orders how a Member is to be addressed and then to be told that the Government is bringing up this matter of "Comrade". Why the unnecessary haste? Why the rush and why the hurry? We gather it will not be too long before we have a new Constitution. We know that our law officers, for whom we have the highest respect, have an awful lot of work to do. It is a waste of their time to be dealing with things like this. They can get on with formulating many laws in Guyana that need revising and updating.

In introducing the Motion, sir, I noticed that the hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House, the Hon. Cammie Ramsaroop was trying to curry favour with the women because he says here - I am quoting from the Daily Chronicle of the 26th June, 1975;

"The Minister further declared that in this International Women's Year, the term 'comrade' was the great equaliser between the sexes."

He was trying to curry favour with the women in here. We Guyanese women are proud that we are more free, more emancipated, more liberated - call it what you will - than many of our sisters in other parts of the world. To suggest that by calling us "Comrade" will give us equality here in the House in an insult not only to us but to the men of this House who, whilst according to us equality as members of Parliament, still treat us with the respect, deference and courtesy one associates with cultured, educated and civilised persons in man / woman relationship the world over.

We women of Guyana, we women in here, are proud of being women. We should conduct ourselves with the dignity and decorum that befit a woman and accept graciously the courtesies extended our way. Whilst we ask and expect no favours and will not tolerate inequality or discrimination against us because of our sex, we wish to recognize as women and not some sort of mouth less human beings being accorded the privilege of equality with men. God created men and women differently for His own divine purpose and the French have a way of saying: "Vive la difference!" We wish it to remain that way. Let the "Comrades" keep this so-called "badge of honour" to the political party where it applies. I still treasure and hold most dear my right of freedom of association. I do not wish to be forced on any pretext whatsoever to be made to join a party or use a form of address which, in my mind, stands for communism and dictatorship, no matter how you dress it up, no matter how much rhetoric is used to make it sound good.

2.50 p.m.

I am not clinging to the relics of a colonial past. I do not see "Comrade" as a form of address as a means of de-classing our society, which we are given to understand is the reason our society, which we are given to understand is the reason behind this Motion.

My party fully supports and gives all assistance in this House to any Motion that gives equality to all. However, we are fully conscious of the fact that, given equal opportunities, there will still be in the end those who have and those who have not; those who have made use of the opportunities given to them and those who have not made use of the opportunities. And in this will lie the difference. Whatever the reason why there are have-nots in spite of equal opportunities, it will always be the duty of the State to look after the weaker and poor members of our society.

In spite of all the talk of this Government, we still have those who are unemployed, those who are underemployed, those who are sick and cannot afford to pay expensive medical bills, children who go to school hungry, old people who eke out an existence on a pitiful old-age pension, mothers who receive a trivial amount as social assistance. And I could go on and on.

Let the State show its concern for these people in a real and tangible manner. Do not try to fool the people by introducing new gimmicks, by dragging red herrings across the trail. Do not fool the people that by calling us “Comrade” their problems are solved. Do not fool the people that by calling us “Comrade” all will be equal. The great equalizer is to be found by finding a job for the jobless, a home for the homeless, a proper health service, peace of mind and rest for the aged. That is our concept of what egalitarianism and socialism is all about. **[Interruption]** Whether you call me “Comrade” or not, does not mean a thing to me. What does it matter?

As I said before, at the moment, we are in a Parliament that follows the pattern of the Westminster system of Government. We still enjoy freedom of association. To be called “Comrade” is inconsistent with the former, that is the Westminster system of Government, and, as for the latter, I have not and will not be joining the P.N.C. If we agree to be called “Comrade” it will be a mockery on our part. We have no ideas of clinging to a colonial past nor do we wish to be address as hon. Member for reason of superiority. We are here in this House as representatives of more people than our allocated seats would suggest and it is our duty to serve than. The term ‘hon. Member’ is not used by us to denote any form of superiority but it is the accepted address of a Member of Parliament. My leader and I will address you as “Your Honour”, “Mr. Speaker”, or “Sir”. We will address the hon. Member of this House as, “the hon. Minister of or, “the hon. Member Mr.” or “Mrs.” or “Miss”, and we, in turn, wish to be addressed as, “the hon. Leader of the Opposition” and “the hon. Member “Mrs. DaSilva.”

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Singh): Mr. Speaker, what we are proposing here is the institutionalizations of the word, “Comrade”, as the form of address in this the highest forum of the land. Let me say here and now, Mr. Speaker, that I am no colonialist. I have never been, and any term which we inherited from the British, and which no longer has any real meaning for us, I will most happily agree to dispense with.

What mode of address do we now have in Parliament? We have the Standing Orders. Standing Order No. 35 (5) states that a Member shall be referred to in the Assembly as the hon. Member Mr. What is wrong with this? The term “honourable” is presupposed? Do Members of

this honourable House object to being called “hon. Members? Do we really? How many of us object to being called “honourable?” Is that the objection? We are objecting to the appellation given in the Standing Orders, which were promulgated after Independence, not during the colonial era. It states here, “Revised Standing Orders”, revised after Independence, after we were masters of our own destiny. What then is wrong with the appellation “hon. Member?” Do we really take objection to being called honourable? I do not.

I should like to think – and I would feel honoured to know – that the hon. Members on the other side regard me as an hon. Member of this Honourable House. I do not wish to change it, my party does not wish to change it, but maybe the hon. Members on the other side have some doubt as to whether or not they are honourable. I for my part, my party, and those of us, few as we are, on this side, would want to remain in that category which would uphold the Standing Orders promulgated after Independence, which states that Members must refer to one another as “hon. Member.”

Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the hon. Leader of the House said in Parliament on the last occasion, the word “comrade”, is not used in democratic socialist societies. In societies like Sweden it is not used. Why? Because democratic socialists want to distinguish themselves from the communist countries where the word is institutionalized as a mode of address. When this word is commonly used, and not in any specialised sense, it is, in fact, synonymous with communism. “Comrade” is a term used in the communist countries and for those who will say that this is not so, let me quote from a dictionary which I am sure is acceptable to the hon. Leader of the House, the Oxford dictionary. I have it in my hand and I will read the whole of the definition of the word, “comrade” which appears in the Oxford dictionary. My hon. Friend quoted from the dictionary and the dictionary has this to say.

“Comrade: Mate or fellow in work or play or fighting, equal with whom one is on familiar terms fellow members of trade union, communistic society.”

(Mr. Singh continued)

3 p.m.

It is here. [Mr. Hope; “It is not finished.”] That is the definition of it. Fellow member of trade or communistic society”, and then it goes on:

“Hence ---- ship, comradeship, comrade, camaraderie etc. That is the end of the definition, the dictionary meaning of the “comrade”. it states it very clearly here. “Fellow member of trade union or communistic society”. my hon. Friend quoted from the dictionary and I am doing so also. That is what it connotes and the Oxford Dictionary states so. That is what it conjures up in the minds of John Public. “communistic society”.

Is the P.N.C. Government intent on setting up a communist society in Guyana? Is that what it wants? If that is so, what were we fighting against in 1962, 1963 and 1964? The United Force, with my “friend” Mr. Kit. Nascimento, and the P.N.C. were together fighting against Jagan and his P.P.P. in 1962, 1963 and 1964. Is that not true? Is it not true that the violence which erupted in 1963 and 1964 in this country was brought about because the majority of the Guyanese claimed that the then P.P.P. Government was leading this country along the road to communism? I dare them to say otherwise because at that time we said it. Is that not true? Are our memories so short that Guyanese do not remember the vehemence with which they rejected Fidel Castro and all he stood for, even though the P.P.P. Government that was in power at that time said that it was merely seeking to trade with Cuba? let us remember the vehemence with which we rejected this. Both the United Force and the P.N.C. and some of my good friends on the other side of the House came out against communism. There are many names I could call. We fought against the P.P.P.’s association with the Cubans and the Russians.

It is true that we have them all here. That is band enough as it is but are we now going further and setting up a communist society with the word “comrade” patterned after Russia and Cuba?

There is another very searching question. Does the P.N.C. have a mandate to do this to the country as a whole? There does appear to be a band – wagon effect in the use of the word

“comrade”. According to the Guyana Graphic of July 10, the Berbice Chamber of Commerce has adopted the usage. At least, it appears that no member of that body could be found to disapprove the usage of the word. I am surprised and disappointed to see Chamber member, leaders of all people, behaving like sheep. At the same time, too, I must recognise and appreciate the genuine fear which the P.N.C. has generated in the country as a whole and particularly among the business community. The business community are afraid that if they do not toe the line, if they do not play ball, if they appear to oppose the P.N.C. in any way, they will not be allowed to survive.

Fear is what permeates the whole of Guyana at the present time. They have seen what has happened to some of their associates and so they know that there is good reason to fear. Let us recognise that. There are many of us who can verify the fact that the P.N.C. has retaliated against so many who have opposed them that now, regrettably, almost all are afraid, to such an extent that some of them are running with alacrity and joining the P.N.C. Some of them did it a long time ago. Others are running to do it now.

The P.N.C. has retaliated against many who have opposed it, but as I said before now, almost all are afraid. There are those who object very strongly to what is being the consequences of voicing their objections and this, I submit, is the tragedy, the stark, naked, absolute tragedy existing in our beloved country, Guyana, at the present moment.

To revert to the Motion, what the P.N.C. members call each other is their business. I am told, on a very strong authority, that they frequently use much more basic terms of salutation than the word “comrade”. They frequently use terms that one would normally expect associated with the kind of language that would land one before the courts if the officers were very alert. But one knows the realities of politics at the present time and we know that they can get by the law as they have done on many occasions.

But basically, what they call each other is their business. What they are doing now is a Government matter and I believe that is most unfortunate. Indeed, I would go so far as to say it is most immoral that the ruling party did not see fit to raise this matter and, indeed, the whole

ideological system in which this term is imbedded before or during the 1973 elections. This would have provided the electorate an excellent opportunity of expressing their view point.

3.10 p.m.

Since the term and the doctrine are now being launched some two years after the elections, the only fair and moral thing to do, Mr. Speaker, would be to resort to a referendum to test the reaction of the small man, the ordinary man, the man in Guyana whose standard of living we say should be raised. Let us hear what he has to say about this by means of a referendum. And I say this because many people have expressed their concern to me about what the Government is doing. I therefore have a very, very strong suspicion that the Government would be surprised at the outcome of such a referendum.

I predict that a genuine secret ballot – not what we had at the last election – a genuine ballot would reveal that a sizeable majority of the P.N.C. supporters themselves would reject the term because of its obvious Soviet / Communist connotation.

I believe that the P.N.C. membership would display a better memory than its leadership in recalling the close P.P.P. Soviet/Cuban relationship which the term "Comrade" conjures up in the mind. I further suspect that even supporters of the P.P.P., the other party, would reject the use of the term since almost everybody, except possibly DR. Jagan and perhaps his close associates, seem to be aware that the communists in the P.P.P. are restricted to people who are on the party payroll or on the payroll of the P.Y.C., Gimpex, the Michael Forde Bookshop or, indeed, one may go on to add this 'Mirror.'

If the P.N.C. feels that it has to institutionalise the term "comrade" in our society, at least let us first have a referendum. But I want to go further and say that the P.N.C. has its priorities all wrong. How many times before, Mr. Speaker, have you not sat there and have I not sat here and have we not heard that legislation came to this House long, long after it should have come? Have we not heard the explanations and made the necessary allowances and appreciated the fact that the legal drafting department was really very hard pressed?

Now instead of dealing with other urgent and important legislation, such as, for example, severance pay which the Trade Unions have been clamouring for so long and instead of establishing a genuine social welfare system, instead of that kind of legislation, we have the legal draftsmen involved in legislation to institutionalise the word “comrade” as a mode of address.

I am really very worried and very sad because I believe that what is really important at this point of time, at this point in our development, is our achievement and not this “comrade” business. We should work towards the realisation of our economic development, the creation of an effective social welfare system and, most important of all, the maintenance of our political freedom. To institutionalise the word “comrade” will only tend to discourage our Guyanese citizens and friends abroad who are only too aware of the tragic history of communist dictatorship.

I have recently come from a short trip overseas and let me tell this Government that Guyanese overseas are alarmed and very worried at the recent drift towards totalitarianism, towards communist dictatorship in this country. They are very, very worried. Those are the people that you ask for their votes, those are the people who, presumably, you will ask for their votes at the next elections.

Let us recognise that these people are very, very worried. perhaps I should sound a word of warning to this Government at the present moment that if it does not mend its ways, if it goes on as it is at the present time, i predict that 99.9 per cent of the of the overseas votes at the next elections, if they were to be genuinely counted, would represent a rejections of the P.N.C. Government in this country, a rejection of the P.N.C. party in this country. I am sounding a word of warning. Let us cut out this emotionalism; let us cut out this drift towards communism and communist dictatorship and let us recognise that the Guyanese society does not accept that sort of thing.

Once again we say that if the P.N.C. hierarchy feels that it has to institutionalise the word “comrade” then let it at least be democratic enough to have a referendum. let us have a referendum and see what the people have to say about the way in which we are going.

There are those on the other side who very seldom speak in this House, who indeed do not have the opportunity to speak because democracy does not operate on the other side to such an extent as to give them an opportunity to speak. They would seek to speak from their seats and invariably they would seek to speak such stuff as would be classified as absolute rubbish, nonsense.

Mr. Speaker, we oppose this motion and I sincerely hope that the Good Lord would continue to give courage to all those who are unwilling to put their stamp of approbation on this retrograde step in the annals of the history of Guyana.

Mr. Speaker: Hon Leader of the House.

Mr. Ramsaroop (replying): Your honour, I think it might be useful and meet to say a few words in response to some of the comments and observations made by the hon. members to my right. Let me not bother with their excursions into the realms of triviality and irrelevance. But there are some points that they have made that are worthy of some form of explanation.

To start with, let me make it clear on behalf of all members of this House who have the distinction to belong to the People's National Congress that once they indicate to us that they do not desire to be addressed as comrade we shall scrupulously abide by their request. **3.20 p.m**

It is said that even the devil quotes the scriptures and my hon. and learned Friend just now gave a definition of the word "comrade" as is contained in the smaller version of the Oxford Dictionary. Maybe if he has seen the larger version he would have seen a more ample definition of the word.

It is true on that last occasion that I said that the word "comrade" has been defined **inter alia** as being a mate or fellow in work, play or fighting. But I think the hon. Member ought to know that the word has a more generous width of definition. I understand, in a lighter vein, that even members of the Salvation Army use this term, Members who belong to trade unions have been using this word also.

There is a pathological fear in the minds of the two members of the Opposition that this word conjures up images of authoritarianism and communism. I wish to exorcise that fear from their minds. At the same time I wish to state – categorically that in the pursuit of the socialist ideal, to which the People’s National Congress subscribes, we make no apology for the use of the word “comrade”. Fears there are and fears there must be and will be. There was a time when we blithely accepted the term “subjects” when we were called subjects; there was a time when we even accepted being called “objects” without saying a word. Indeed, someone writing under the nom de plume of Lucian spoke of the protest that greeted the word “citizen” when it was first introduced after the French Revolution. I quote from the Guyana Graphic of Wednesday, 2nd July, 1975. Lucian said as follows:

“The Revolution which changed France from a Monarchy to a Republic indentified its supporters by calling them ‘Comrade’. Revolutionaries greeted one another with the word ‘Citizen’ because to be a citizen gave them a common purpose and a status of equality they hadn’t under the Absolute Monarchy.”

There are many who associate the word “comrade” with ideology. That may be valid, that may be legitimate. But the word “comrade” has also a distinct emotional flavour, it is an integrative thing as it were. Again I refer to Lucian whose facility of language I commend to this House:

“Comrade has been chosen because it had – like citizen – connotations of social cohesion and companionship. In its primary function, therefore, the word had been chosen for its integratory and not ideological effect.”

Finally, the author has a word for those vanishing few who still remain to my right and he said:

“Those who dislike being called ‘Comrade’ are showing that they resent their pretensions of superiority being invaded and swept away by the equalising properties of this form of address.”

If my friend means that there is going to be type of dictatorship, that is a phantom of his mind. Let me state that it is not the intention of this Government to institute that type of dictatorship. But let me say unabashedly and unapologetically that if my friend means by that

dictatorship what we mean, the dictatorship of the masses, of the proletariats, of the small men, we will pursue that course to establish that dictatorship.

Says my hon. and learned Friend that in Sweden or in Nordic countries the word “comrade” is not used. That is a betrayal of a lack of political sophistication on the part of my hon. and learned Friend. There are many who describe themselves as socialists, but one must draw a distinction between socialists and social democrats. My learned Friend will appreciate that in countries like Western Germany and Sweden and Finland, there are many who describe themselves as social democrats but it is an . . . of a lack of the rudimentary grasp of ideology to mistake the difference between social democracy and Socialism. I think my learned Friend has fallen into that error. One must draw a distinction between a glorified state of welfarism and Socialism. We do not subscribe to the principles of the former, but we do to the latter. It is true in countries like Sweden the word “comrade” is not used, but there is a different concept of Socialism. Although I understand reliably that in Sweden the word “comrade” is used.

Mr. Speaker, in the Declaration of Sophia, our Leader the Prime Minister of this country said that “Socialism aims at establishing a classless or egalitarian society. In the latter case, though there will be functional superiors and an inferior, for organisational purposes, every citizen is valuable and has an important task to perform.” There is no automatic preferment because of wealth or birth and there is equality of opportunity for all based on ability, aptitude and society’s needs and priorities. The emphasis is on the value of the human being as part of a whole society.”

And, Mr. Speaker, I submit that if there is a word that emphasised the brotherhood of man, the unity of purpose of a nation, that word is “comrade”. And that word we are adopting. The English Language, we all know, has never been a logical language and that is why in English one asks: What is your name? While in French, which is a more logical language, it is written “*Comment vous appelez vous?*” How do you describe yourself? How do you call yourself? And one sees that the distinction is placed on what the person feels is the best description to be used. In the circumstances, we feel that the best description that can be used is the word “comrade”.

Let me say finally, because there is this illusion in the mind of the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this word will be foisted on the Opposition Members, but the Standing Orders have been so framed that the option will be given to them, if they choose, to be described as hon. Members, to be so described. I hope that I have been able to clear up some of the points which have been bedevilling the minds of my friends from the Opposition.

3.30 p.m.

We feel, having regard to the course upon which we are set, and having regard to the philosophy and ideology which we pursue, that the word “Comrade”, in the circumstances of our country today, is the best word that can be found to bring about that unifying spirit that will promote the revolution in Guyana. **[Applause]**

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

The Speaker: No objection can now be taken to the mode of addressing Members of this House as “Comrade”, as the Standing Orders have now been amended. When history is written, it will be recorded that to me has fallen the pleasure, honour, and distinction, of being the first person to implement the decision just taken, addressing members on the Government side as, “Comrade”.

Comrade Minister of Finance. **[Applause]**

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, I want to make it quite clear I do not want to be addressed as “Comrade”.

The Speaker: It seems to me, hon. Leader of the Opposition, that you have not really understood and appreciated what the Amendment is. It gives an option to those who wish to address you as “hon. Member” to do so and you have indicated that you and your colleague wish to be addressed as, “hon. Member”.

Comrade Minister of Finance. **[Applause]**

CONFIRMATION OF THE CUSTOMS DUTIES ORDER 1975**(NO.65)**

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly, in terms of section 9 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01 confirm the Customs Duties Order 1975 (No. 65), which was made on the 26th of June, 1975, and published in the Gazette on the 29th of June, 1975. “ **[The Minister of Finance]**

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Hope): Thank you, Comrade Speaker. **[Applause]** I should like to move the Motion standing in my name, that this National Assembly confirm the Customs Duties order 1975 (No. 65).

In moving this Motion, the expressions and the explanations I would offer would in fact apply to this Customs Duties Order as well as to the two succeeding orders, the Consumption Tax (Amendment) Orders and the Customs (Exemption from Duties) Order, even though I will move them separately.

Order No. 65 seeks merely to provide for certain exemptions from duties with respect to the importation of certain goods to be used as raw materials in the manufacture of a number of commodities, such as , jam, jellies, and a number of other things, tomato ketchup, chains, and so on. We have, in fact, been pursuing this policy for a long time, giving out local manufacturers encouragement and incentives by removing the duty payable on materials when those materials are used as raw materials. It is in these circumstances that this Motion is presented to this House.

Normally, in order to make sure that the revenue is not lost and that the manufacturers do not take an unfair advantage of their consumers, we usually do a very fine exercise of transferring the customs duties so removed to the form of a consumption tax. The effect of this is that since consumption tax is payable on all like commodities, whether locally produced or imported, it gives the local manufacturer a modicum of advantage against the foreign competitor without , at the same time , leading to a loss of public revenues. Consequently, we have taken

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the opportunity to amend the consumption tax law and at the articles and commodities manufactured from the raw materials, the duty on which we have removed.

With that explanation I should like formally to commend the Motion dealing with the confirmation of the Customs Duties Order 1975 (No. 65), and I hope that the National Assembly will approve of it.

Question proposed, put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

CONFIRMATION OF THE CONSUMPTION TAX (AMENDMENT) ORDER

1975 (NO. 65)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly, in terms of section 5 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, confirm the Consumption tax (Amendment) Order 1975 (No. 66), which was made on the 27th of June, 1975, and published in the Gazette (Extraordinary) on the 28th of June, 1975. “ [The Minister of Finance]

Cde. Hope: I wish to move the Motion standing in my name, to confirm the Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order 1975 (No. 66), and hope that this National Assembly will see fit to confirm it.

Question proposed.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Finance, is dealing with the confirmation of the Customs Duties Order 1975 (No. 65), referred to the tax on tomato ketchup. I just want to make one brief point.

I am very pleased that the hon. Minister of Trade is in the House. maybe, this might be of more interest to him , or it might be something more in line with the matters with which he can deal , rather than the Minister of Finance who is more concerned with the revenue side of it.

I wish to take this opportunity to draw the attention of the hon. Minister of Finance, the hon. Minister of Trade, and the hon. Member of this House, to the position existing with regard

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to tomato ketchup that comes into Guyana. This Order I know, is to give concessions in the importation of the raw material that goes into tomato ketchup, but the standard and the quality of the tomato ketchup that comes into Guyana, and the standard and quality, too, of some of the locally manufactured tomato ketchup, leave much to be desired.

It brings us back, of course, again to our old talk about the necessity for the early establishment of a Bureau of Standards. I should like to use this opportunity to draw it to the attention of those concerned for them to find out if it is not time we started thinking in terms of making it compulsory that the labels on the tomato ketchup, and other items for that matter, whether coming into Guyana or being processed here, contain quite specifically and clearly the percentage of the various type of ingredients used for it appears regarding tomato ketchup in particular, that many of the brands contain a greater proportion of corn starch than of tomatoes.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

CONFIRMATION OF THE CUSTOMS (EXEMPTION FROM DUTIES) ORDER 1975

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in terms of section 9 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, confirm the Customs (Exemption from Duties) Order 1975 (No.67) which was made on the 27th June, 1975 and published in the Gazette (Extraordinary) on the 28th of June, 1975. “ **[The Minister of Finance]**

The Speaker: Cde. Minister of Finance.

Cde. Hope: Cde. Speaker, I wish to move the Motion standing in my name Confirmation of the Customs (Exemption from Duties) Order 1975, (No. 67) and ask that the National Assembly do confirm the Motion.

Question proposed, put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

**AMENDMENT TO RESOLUTION NO. XXXII OF 17TH APRIL, 1974 –
GUARANTEE OF CREDITS TO GUYANA BAUXITE COMPANY LIMITED**

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly do amend the terms of Resolution No. XXXII, passed on 17TH April, 1974 by the addition at the end of the amount of forty two million, five hundred thousand U.S. DOLLARS (U.S. \$42,500,000)”. [**The Minister of Finance**]

The Speaker: Cde. Minister of Finance.

Cde, Hope: Cde Speaker, i wish to move the Motion standing in my name namely the Amendment to Resolution No. XXXII OF 17TH April, 1974, Guarantee of Credits to the Guyana Bauxite Company Limited.

Cde. Speaker, it would be recalled that by virtue of Resolution No. XXXII passed on the 17th April, 1974, the National Assembly did authorise the Government to enter into certain guarantees for certain credits which the Guyana Bauxite Company Limited (GUYBAU) was then proposing to negotiate. Most of those credits are in United States dollars; a small bit is in Canadian dollars, in the Motion however, the limit of the Guarantee was stated as \$85 million (Guyana). At that time, it was thought that that expression was adequate but because of developments which took place subsequent to the passing of this Resolution in financial markets, the exchange value of the Guyana Dollars in relation to the United States dollar has been subject to rather wide fluctuations.

In the circumstances, it does appear now, that merely to say that the Guarantee is of a total sum of \$85 million (Guyana) is inadequate and some more precision should be introduced in the authority, particularly in view of the instability of currencies on the market today. Consequently, the Motion seeks to place an alternative sum of money against the \$85 million this House has previously approved and has therefore expressed that amount as \$42,500,000 (U.S.) as the equivalent amount of \$85 million (Guyana). So that if the National Assembly does approve this Resolution, it will mean that the Government of Guyana would be undertaking to guarantee a sum of \$85 million (Guyana) or a total sum of \$42,500,000 (U.S.). This is the purpose of

Motion, sir, merely to extend the previous authority by introducing a little more precision in the amount which the Government is proposing to guarantee. I therefore commend the Motion to the House for its approval.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Singh: I want to rise on a point of order, not particularly on this item but as any time I can so rise. It has just occurred to me that what we have just passed is that a member can be referred to as “comrade” or “the honourable Member” but there is nothing which says how one refers to the Speaker. One always referred to you, sir, as “Mr. Speaker”. This does not cover you. The Member on the other side are not entitled to refer to you as “Comrade Speaker” and until I got a ruling from you, sir, that you are entitled to be referred to under the Standing orders as “Comrade Speaker” I would like to object to your being called “Comrade Speaker”.

The Speaker: Am I not a Member of Parliament?

Mr. Singh: Yes, sir. But under the Standing Orders we never refer to you as “the honourable Member”, we have always referred to you as “Mr. Speaker” and in Committee stage we refer to you as “Mr. Chairman” even though you are a Member of this honourable House.

From that point of view, sir, I would say, looking at the practice in the past – and I would pursue this further in consulting, as we are entitled to consult, the relevant uses and practice in the House of Commons, and I propose to do that also – I would say that under the Standing Orders we have called you in the past “Mr. Speaker” but in the past we have never called you anything like “the honourable Member”. That is a distinction I want to make.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

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Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, in pursuance of my point of order, I thought I would have had a ruling from you.

The Speaker: I have already ruled. I am a Member of the House like anybody else and like yourself. If you wish to address me as “honourable Member” you are welcome. You have indicated that you wish to be addressed as “honourable member” and so I will address you.

Mr. Singh: Sir, I see nowhere in the Standing orders where----

The Speaker: You asked for a ruling. A ruling has been given.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: ‘That this National Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.’ [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

Adjourned accordingly at 3.45 p.m.
