

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME 7]

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FOURTH SESSIONS OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

27th Sitting

2 p.m.

Monday, 15th November, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

Members of the Government

People's National Congress

Elected Ministers

The Hon. L.F.S Burnham, S.C.,
Prime Minister

Dr. The Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of Communications

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Finance

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Education

(Absent – on leave)

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)

The Hon. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Trade

(Absent)

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Local Government

The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Co-operatives and Community Development

Appointed Ministers

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Attorney-General and Minister of State

(Absent – on leave)

The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

(Absent)

The Hon. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Mines and Forests

The Hon. E. B. McDavid,
Minister of Information and Culture

(Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture (Absent)

Mr. A. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works,
Hydraulics and Supply (Absent)

Other Members

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Cde. M.M. Ackman, Government Whip

Mr. K. Bancroft

Mr. N.J. Bissember (Absent)

Mr. J. Budhoo, J.P.

Mr. L.I. Chan-A-Sue

Mr. E.F. Correia

Mr. M. Corrica,

Mr. E.H.A. Fowler

Mr. R. J. Jordan

Mr. S.M. Safee

Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,

Cde. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr.C. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition (Absent)

Mr. Ram Karran,

Mr. R. Chandisingh

Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C. (Absent)

Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker

Mr. E.M.G. Wilson

Mr. A.H. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip

Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.

Mr. M.Y. Ally

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., (Absent)

Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. E. L. Ambrose
Mrs. L. M. Branco
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bholu Persaud
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent – on leave)

United Force

Mrs. E. DaSilva
Mr. M.F. Singh
Mr. J.A. Sutton

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks

(Absent)

OFFICERS

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

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

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker *in the Chair.*]

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**LEAVE TO MEMBER**

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister Miss Field-Ridley has been granted leave from the 1st to 30th November, 1971.

RESIGNATION OF MRS. R. P. SAHOYE

I have today received from Mrs. Philomena Sahyoe Shury, a candidate on the People's Progressive Party list of candidates, a letter dated 27th October, 1971, resigning as a Member of the National Assembly.

As Mrs. Sahoye Shury who was an elected Member of the National Assembly, has, in accordance with article 61 (2) (a) of the Constitution of Guyana, vacated her seat in the Assembly, I will, in accordance with article 70 (1) of the Constitution, call upon the representative of the People's Progressive Party list of candidates, to further extract from the list the name of a person who is not an elected Member of the Assembly but is qualified for election as and willing to become such a Member, to fill the vacancy.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Papers were laid:

Commonwealth Telecommunication Council Third General Report and Statement of Accounts for the period 1st April, 1970 to 31st March, 1971. [**The Minister of Communications**]

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte): I beg to lay on the Table, Financial Paper No. 5 of 1971 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 31st October, 1971, totaling \$1,782,113. I name Monday, 22nd November as the day on which this Paper will be taken.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

CATTLE AT BLACK BUSH POLDER

Mr. R. Ally: Mr. Speaker, I wish the hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture to answer Question No. 16 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

- (i) Will the Minister say whether he is aware that owing to the inadequate fence in the rear of Black Bush Polder, cattle get into it and damage the settlers' rice and provision crops?
- (ii) Will the Minister say whether steps will be taken to prevent cattle from entering the Polder?
- (iii) Will the Minister say, further, whether it is Government's intention to compensate settlers who have suffered loss through damage to their crops by cattle?

2.20 p.m.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture (Dr. Reid): Mr. Speaker, The Ministry is aware that in the absence of a fence – from the commencement 1962 – cattle get into the rear of the Black Bush Polder and caused damage to the rice and provision cultivation in that section.

The designers of the Black Bush Polder Land Development Scheme saw the need for pasturage for cattle belonging to settlers of the said scheme. With this in mind an area of approximately 30,000 acres contiguous to and in the rear of the Black Bush Polder, was constructed to contain the animals within the said grazing area.

During 1962, there was a widespread cutting of the fence resulting in destruction to the crops in the adjacent rice fields. Much has been attempted to abate the nuisance including the use of armed patrols and vigilante groups. The cattle owners, however, proved persistent as these measures resulted in wanton attacks on individual settlers. Impounding on a large scale proved equally ineffective in that the animals were boldly set loose and the pound keepers threatened with violence.

Pounds have been established in two sections of the Black Bush Polder. Action by the Government pound Keepers appears however, to go unheeded by the parties concerned with the cattle. In other words, impounding does not compensate for the damage done and the rice and provision farmers are afraid to take their own action by way of court procedure for damage.

Recently several farmers have volunteered to form into co-ops, and cultivate the lands co-operatively. It is hoped that out of the farmers' organisations the patrols they elect would be regarded as the functional authority to maintain the proper separation of the livestock from crops.

I am not aware of any plan by Government to pay compensation to the settlers.

Mr. R. Ally: Supplementary question, sir, I wonder if the hon. Minister could tell us whether he is aware of the fact that a Drainage and Irrigation Board ranger's hand has been chopped off by a man, also a farmer has been chopped up and whether anyone of those men are settlers of the Black Bush Polder.

Mr. Speaker: I will not allow that question.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Speaker, supplementary question. The hon. Minister said he is not aware of any decision, I wonder as Minister of Agriculture, if he would consider compensation to farmers who suffered.

Dr. Reid: What is being considered is for the farmers to use their organisation and let persons who will supervise their farms prevent damage. It is a dangerous practice to accept responsibility for that type of damage. *[Interruption by the hon. Member Mr. Hamid.]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Maccie Hamid, I will not tolerate that kind of behavior.

Mr. Hamid: I am sorry sir.

**REQUEST FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF
THE ASSEMBLY ON DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT
PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

MIBICURI GOVERNMENT SCHOOL, BLACK BUSH POLDER

Mr. Teekah: I ask leave to move the Adjournment of the National Assembly on a definite matter of urgent public importance. The matter concerns the Mibicuri Government School, Black Bush Polder. In a recent letter to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, the Headmaster said, "I have on several occasions over the past three years brought to the notice of the Chief Education Officer, the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply, the District Education Officer, etc., the existing conditions of the building. The Labour Minister, the Public Health Officer, the District Engineer, East Berbice and his predecessor are all aware of the situation..." The Headmaster further stated, "Conditions have been deteriorating steadily over the past three years and have now reached a point where it is necessary to determine whether school can be kept under these conditions. It is unsafe for the students to walk along the corridors

because the sills, flooring and beams are rotten.” These are only a small number of defects at the school mentioned in the Headmaster’s letter.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah, do you think this is a matter relevant for your discussion?

Mr. Teekah: Unless something urgent is done now at this school, there is a definite possibility that students face the danger of being seriously hurt at anytime. Since the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply and the Ministry of Labour have been informed about this tragic situation three years ago and nothing has so far been done, it is my considered opinion that this matter deserves the swift attention of the National Assembly.

Accordingly, I ask for the adjournment to discuss this matter as a definite matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah, I have given consideration to your claim and to the points which you have set out in your written notification to me. For a matter to qualify under this item, the Speaker must first be satisfied that it is :

- (i) definite,
- (ii) urgent, and
- (iii) of public importance.

While the position regarding this particular matter which you wish to discuss may be serious, I am not satisfied that the matter is urgent to qualify as one which may properly be raised on a motion for the adjournment of the Assembly. I cannot therefore allow your claim.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read the first time:

- (1) Pensions (Consolidation) (Amendment) Bill. [**The Prime Minister**]
- (2) Customs (Amendment) (no. 2) Bill. [**The Minister of Finance**]

2.30 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS**EXAMINATION OF RECORDS OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

Mr. Ram Karran: At the commencement of the sittings of the Public Accounts Committee of the present Session of Parliament, it was found that the previous Public Accounts Committee had been unable for some reason or the other to bring its work up to date, as a result of which, the accounts relating to the period from 1962 to 1965 had not been examined by the Public Accounts Committee in to. The present Public Accounts Committee began to examine those portions that had not been examined by the previous Committee and we have reached the stage where the Committee has completed that, but members who are new to the examination carried out before are not in a position to sign the Report for submission to Parliament.

The opinion was expressed that those of us who did not serve in the previous Public Accounts Committee could not examine those verbatim reports of the previous Public Accounts Committee and we thought it necessary, therefore, for us to seek authority from Parliament to permit us to open those documents and be in a position to report on the whole period. Members will appreciate that Members who served on that Public Accounts Committee are now no longer Members of Parliament.

It is unfortunate that this has happened and we have been trying during the current Session to see that our work is brought up to date and that at the close of this Session it will not recur, but since this is a rather unusual situation, we thought that Parliament would give us the necessary authority to go through those accounts and submit a Report for that period.

Prior to Independence, we all accepted the Reports of the Director of Overseas Audit as the final recommendation in respect of our accounts in this country but Members will recognise we are now Independent, there is no Director General of Overseas Audit, and our Public Accounts Committee therefore should be regarded as the final authority. The Motion is not controversial at all. Members of the Government who have served and who are serving on the Public Accounts Committee will recognise and I am sure they will assure their colleagues of the importance of passing this measure as it is.

Mr. Sutton: I have pleasure in rising to second this Motion in support of the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran particularly as a member of the Public Accounts Committee. In doing so, perhaps the House will be glad to know that this Committee is now engaged in doing everything possible to bring the work of the Public Accounts Committee up to date. Things appear to have fallen into a situation where meetings did not take place for some time. In order to facilitate the work of the Committee and to ensure a degree of continuity, also to ensure that persons on the committee will understand, we were advised that these records would not be put at the disposal of the Committee except a Motion was brought to this House and the permission of the House was obtained. As you know, sir, the Government is well represented in this House and this Motion was unanimous. We have no doubt the House will accept this Motion and so assist the Committee in bringing its work up to date.

Question proposed.

Question put, and agreed to.

15.11.71

National Assembly

2.30 – 2.35 p.m.

Motion affirmed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 22nd November, 1971, at 2 p.m. [Mr. Ramsaroop]

Adjourned accordingly at 2.35 p.m.
