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THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT
[VOLUME 4]

**PROCEEDING AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

41st Sitting

2 p.m.

Friday, 26th February, 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

(Absent)

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

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

(Absent)

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 Health

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

The Hon. D.A. Singh
Minister of Trade

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

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

Appointed Ministers

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

The Hon. H. Green, **(Absent)**
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

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

Dr. The Hon. Sylvia Talbot, **(Absent)**
Minister of Health

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. J. C. Joaquin, J. P.,
Parliamentary Secretaries, Ministry of Finance

Mr. F. Duncan, J. P.,
Parliamentary Secretaries, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. W. Haynes,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

Mr. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretaries, Ministry of Agriculture

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

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Mr. C. E. Wrights, J. P.
Parliamentary Secretaries, Ministry of Works, Hydraulic and Supply

Other Members

Mr. J. N. Aaron
Miss M.M. Ackman, Government Whip
Mr. k. Bancroft
Mr. N. J. Bissember
Mr. J. Budhoo, J. P.
Mr. L. I. Chan - A - Sue
Mr. L. I. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E. H. A. Fowler
Mr. J.R. Jordan
Mr. S. M. Saffee
Mr. R. C. Van Sluytman
Mr. M. Zaheeruddeen. J. P.
Mrs. L. E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr. C. E. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition
Mr. Ram Karren
Mr. R. Chandisingh (Absent)
Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye, S.C. (Absent – on leave)
Mr. D. C. Jagan, J. P., Deputy Speaker
Mr. E. M. G. Wilson
Me. A. M. Hamid, J. P., Opposition Whip
Mr. G. H. Lall, J. P.
Mr. N. Y. Ally
Mr. R. D. Persaud, J. P.
Mr. E. M. Stoby, J. P. (Absent)
Mr. R. Ally (Absent)
Mr. E.L. Ambrose (Absent)
Mrs. L.M. Branco (Absent)
Mr. Balchand Persaud (Absent – on leave)
Mr. Bholu Persaud

Mr. I. R. Remington, J. P.
Mrs. R. P. Sahoye
Mr. V. Teekah

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United Force

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

(Absent – on leave)

Independent

Mr. R. E. Cheeks

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**CANCELLATION OF SITTING OF 25TH FEBRUARY**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members will recall that at the conclusion of the business at the last Sitting on Wednesday 24th February, the Assembly was adjourned to Thursday, 25th February, 1971. I now wish to state for the record that on account of discussions which were taking place on Bills for consideration it was decided to cancel that meeting and hold it today.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS

HON. M. KASIM, A.A.

I should like to take this opportunity on behalf of the members of the Assembly and myself to extend our heartiest congratulations to the hon. Minister of Communications, Mr. Mohamed Kasim, who unfortunately is not here today, on the Award given him, the Golden Arrow of Achievement, for outstanding services as a farmer for many years and for contribution to the public sector. *[Applause]*

Leave to Member

I also wish to announce that leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. Sutton from today's sitting.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Bauxite Nationalisation Bill, 1971. *[The Minister of Mines and Forests]*

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****SITTING OF ASSEMBLY ON SATURDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1971**

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly agree that Standing Orders Nos. 8 and 9 be suspended to enable the Assembly to sit on Saturday, 27th February, 1971, at 9 o’clock in the forenoon, to consider the following Bills:

- (i) The Bauxite Nationalisation Bill, 1970
- (ii) The Minerals Bill, 1971. [*The Minister of Trade and Leader of the House*]

The Minister of Trade and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop): Mr. Speaker, on the 23rd February, 1971 the hon. Prime Minister of Guyana in an address to the nation announced Government’s intention to nationalise the Demerara Bauxite Company. It now becomes imperative that legislation be enacted to put the seal of authority on such a decision and in a matter of such overwhelming national importance it is equally imperative that swift legislative action be taken to preserve and protect our national interests.

In furtherance of these objectives therefore, it has become necessary that this honourable House should meet on Saturday, 27th February, 1971 at the hour of 9 a.m. to enable the requisite legislation to be passed. Hon. Members are aware, however, that sittings on Saturdays and Sundays are expressly precluded by the provisions of Standing Order No. 8 of the National Assembly except that a Motion to this effect can be moved by a Minister and, further, the hours of all sittings are governed by Standing Order No. 9 of the National Assembly.

This formal Motion standing in my name is a necessary enabling process, therefore, to be ratified by this House in compliance with the procedure set out in Standing Order No. 8(1) to allow for a sitting tomorrow at the time specified in the Motion.

I am happy to say that the Leader of the Opposition has indicated his support of this *ad hoc* Motion.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, allow me to commend the Motion standing in my name to this honourable House and to move for its adoption in the terms in which it is couched.

Motion proposed.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, we would have liked to support this Motion but how can we when it was only last night I received my copy of this Bauxite Nationalisation Bill, and it is only now, that my two colleagues received their copies of this Bill.

My colleague, the hon. Member Mr. Sutton, has particularly asked me to voice his strongest protest in this matter. He explained that he had made an appointment for Saturday, since it was not a day on which the House normally sits, and has had to cancel that appointment and bring it forward to this afternoon. This is why he is not here now: he knew that the Government would still go ahead and fix the meeting for tomorrow morning. He asked that I object most strongly to the way in which we are being treated.

On Tuesday when we were having tea I mentioned that up to that time I had not received a copy of the Bauxite Nationalisation Bill. It was promised to us since Tuesday. I received my copy only yesterday afternoon; my colleagues have only just received theirs now. We must complain about this. If I might go further. This Order Paper states that this meeting has been called and it quotes Standing Order No. 23 (2) which says that

“with the consent of the Speaker, a Government motion may be placed upon the Order Paper for the sitting of the day following that on which the notice was given to the Clerk.”

If we are to presume that this Standing Order was observed, we must presume that, the notice for the calling of this meeting under this Standing Order, was given since it is yesterday here on the Order Paper that a notice was given to the Clerk yesterday. So if the notice was given to the Clerk yesterday, the Government knew since yesterday that it scheduled a meeting for Saturday morning. Yet it is only this morning that the hon. Leader of the House telephoned and informed me of the meeting for Saturday morning.

2.20 p.m.

All that was needed was a telephone call and a message being left that the House was sitting on Saturday.

If the notice of the Motion was received yesterday and not this morning, then the Government obviously knew. The notice to be given in to the Clerk during business hours, that is, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Normally, the House does not meet on Saturdays. If the Government is calling an extraordinary meeting on Saturday, tell us at the first opportunity. Surely, we should have been told earlier. It is a simple matter. How can we support the Motion when we have been treated in this way in respect of this matter? Surely, this is wrong.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. Leader of the House wish to reply?

Mr. Ramsaroop: No, sir. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: The Motion will be read by the Clerk.

[The Clerk reads the Motion.]

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE MR. J.A. VEERASAMMY

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly express its deep regret at the death of Mr. J.A. Veerasammy and its desire that its sympathies be conveyed to his relatives.” [The Minister of Trade]

Mr. Ramsaroop: May I crave your leave to move, maybe out of turn and with some measure of impropriety, a Motion of condolence in respect of the recent demise of an ex Member of this Assembly albeit in another form. I speak of the death of Mr. J.A. Veerasammy. We all know that Mr. Veerasammy served this Legislature with distinction during the years when it was his good fortune to do so. In addition to performing admirably in that field, he has acquitted himself as a Magistrate in the Magistracy of Guyana with equal distinction and I think it is meet and right that our record of appreciation be placed for the services he has rendered to this nation, and secondly, that our condolences be extended to his sorrowing relatives.

With the imminent visit of the touring Indian cricket team, one remembers in these times the performances of Mr. Veerasammy on the field of cricket. I understand he rendered good services to this nation and has also left in permanent form, his memoirs on bowling in a book which he has written. In those spheres of activity Mr. Veerasammy distinguished himself, and I think it is only right that our debt of gratitude be placed on record.

Personally, and on behalf of this Government, I wish to place on record our appreciation of the services he has rendered to this nation and I ask that a letter of sympathy on the loss of Mr. Veerasammy be conveyed to his sorrowing relatives.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to second the Motion of sympathy moved by the hon. Minister of Trade and Leader of the House and wish to associate this side of the House with the expression of sympathy accorded to the relatives of the late Mr. J.A. Veerasammy.

Perhaps there is one thing that needs to be said at this moment and that is the fact that this gentleman served the country very well in the colonial times when it was not possible for him to get any further than the office of a magistrate. Today, the situation has changed and Guyanese of ability can attain the highest positions. There was one lapse, however, and this must be stressed. With the small pensions were paid at that time and it is difficult to believe that he was able to live to age 80 on his small pension.

This, perhaps, will arouse the Government to consider the needs of its civil servants. These civil servants who retire and live long should have periodical increases in their pensions so that they would not have to suffer the indignity suffered by some of our retired civil servants. If what my friend is saying from his seat is true, the increases should be more substantial. One would not like to place on record the place where the late magistrate spent his last days. I am sure the hon. Leader of the House knows that. I think for good reasons he has not mentioned the place.

Mr. Veerasammy, besides all the qualities which the hon. Leader of the House mentioned, has been a stalwart fighter for the masses in this country. During the last General Elections, I met him at Lusignan where he was visiting and he told me that he had left Barbados in order to exercise the franchise. Unfortunately, he was not permitted to do so as a Guyanese. I wish to join in the expression of sympathy moved by my hon. Friend.

Mr. M.F. Singh: We of the United Force - - *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: It is a solemn occasion and I think we ought to give some dignity to the Motion which was moved by the hon. Leader of the House.

Mr. M.F. Singh: We of the United Force would like to give our support to the Motion which is before the House. I got to know Mr. Veerasammy during the latter years of his life but I

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am sure that hon. Members of this House all know of his career. The records are there. We all know of his service to Guyana, some of which has been given to the House, I feel certain that Members will agree with me that his contribution to Guyana has indeed been sterling. We would like to express our sympathy to his sorrowing relatives. We certainly feel Guyana has lost one of her good sons.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members of the House the Motion is now put. The Assembly will stand in silence for one minute.

Assembly stood in silence for one minute.

Motion carried

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow, Saturday 27th February, 1971, at 9 o'clock.

Assembly adjourned at 2.32 p.m.
