

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 28TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2006-2007) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY, 26TH JULY, 2007
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Hari. N. Ramkarran, S.C., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government (42)

(i) People's Progressive Party/Civic (41)

(ii) The United Force (1)

The Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, M.P., (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice),
Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon. Shaik K.Z. Baksh, M.P., Minister of Education

The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P., Minister of Foreign Trade and International
Cooperation

The Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Minister of Health

The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P., (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),
Minister of Amerindian Affairs

*The Hon. Dr. Ashni K. Singh, M.P., Minister of Finance

*The Hon. S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water

***Non-elected Minister**

2.

The Hon. Robert M. Persaud, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Minister of Agriculture

The Hon. Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P., (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni),
Minister of Public Service (Absent)

The Hon. Kellawan Lall, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

*The Hon. Doodnauth Singh, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

The Hon. Dr. Frank C.S. Anthony, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

The Hon. B.H. Robeson Benn, M.P., Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

**The Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P., Minister of Labour

The Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P., (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice),
Minister of Human Services and Social Security (Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Dr. Desrey Fox, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Education

The Hon. Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Health

The Hon. Jennifer I. Webster, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Finance

The Hon. Manniram Prashad, M.P., Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Mr. Donald Ramotar, M.P.

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P.

Mr. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P.

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., Chief Whip

Ms Bibi S. Shadick, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, M.P.

Mr. Albert Atkinson, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)

***Non-Elected Minister**

****Elected Member from the United Force**

3.

Mr. Komal Chand, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.,
(Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

Mr. Bernard C. DeSantos, S.C., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Shirley V. Edwards, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Mohamed F. Khan, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam)

Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P.

Mr. Moses V. Nagamootoo, J.P., M.P.

Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P.

Mr. Neendkumar, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

***Mr. Steve P. Ninvalle, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

Mr. Parmanand P. Persaud, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam)

Mrs. Philomena Sahoye-Shury, C.C.H., J.P., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

***Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

Mr. Norman A. Whittaker, M.P., (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

Members of the Opposition (28)

(i) Members of People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana (22)

Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Winston Murray, C.C.H., M.P.

Mrs. Clarissa S. Riehl, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P., Chief Whip

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P. (Absent)

***Non-elected Member

4.

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

Ms Amna Ally, M.P.

Mr. James McAllister, M.P.

Mr. Dave D. Danny, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Aubrey C. Norton, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Ernest B. Elliot, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Judith David-Blair, M.P., (Region No.7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Mr. Mervyn Williams, M.P., (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

Ms Africo Selman, M.P.

Dr. John Austin, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

Ms Jennifer Wade, M.P., (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

Ms Vanessa Kissoon, M.P., (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice)

Mr. Desmond Fernandes, M.P., (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

(ii) Alliance For Change (5)

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

Mrs. Sheila V.A. Holder, M.P.

5.

Ms Chantalle L. Smith, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. David Patterson, M.P.

(iii) Guyana Action Party/Rise Organize and Rebuild (1)

Mr. Everall N. Franklin, M.P.

OFFICERS

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, Clerk of the National Assembly

Mrs. Lilawattie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The sitting commenced at 2:01p.m.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

- (1) By the Speaker of the National Assembly (Chairman of the Committee of Selection):
Minutes of Proceedings of the 4th Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on Wednesday,
20th June, 2007.

(Circulated)

- (2) By the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development:
The Annual Report of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development for the
year 2006.

(Circulated)

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Oral Replies

1. **STAFF OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Member Asking: Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

*Can the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly what measures are being taken to improve the morale and functioning of the staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

(Notice Paper No. 73 (Q55 Opp55) published on 2007-01-23)

Thereafter, the Minister of Foreign Affairs replied.

The Minister also replied to supplementary questions which were asked by Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

2. **COMPROMISING OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Member Asking: Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

*Can the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly what measures have been taken to address the problem of the compromising of the effectiveness of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a result of the establishment of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation as stated in the April, 2003 Report of the United Nations Advisory to Guyana on the restructuring and reorganization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

(Notice Paper No. 74 (Q56 Opp56) published on 2007-01-23)

Thereafter, the Minister of Foreign Affairs replied.

The Minister also replied to a supplementary question which was asked by Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

3. **RECRUITMENT OF THE REQUIRED SPECIALISTS BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

Member Asking: Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

*Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly if the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is recruiting the required specialists that are needed to deal with issues that are emerging in International Relations?

(Notice Paper No. 75 (Q57 Opp57) published on 2007-01-23)

Thereafter, the Minister of Foreign Affairs replied.

The Minister also replied to a supplementary question which was asked by Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

4. **CONSTRUCTION OF ROAD FROM PARAMAKATOI TO KARISPARU**

Member Asking: Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P.

(i) *What is the status of the contract awarded in 2005 for the construction of a road from Paramakatoi to Karisparu in Region No. 8?

(ii) *If the contract is still valid, what is the expected completion date?

(Notice Paper No. 153 (Q 115 Opp 114) published on 2007-06-18)

Thereafter, the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development replied.

The Minister also replied to supplementary questions which were asked by Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P.

8.

5. **GLOBE TRUST**

Member Asking: Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P.

Will the Hon. Minister state:

1. *If a strategic investor has been found for the restructuring of Globe Trust?
2. *If so, when could the hundreds of depositors expect to be in a position to access their savings?

(Notice Paper No. 169 (Q 130 Opp 129) published on 2007-07-03)

Thereafter, the Minister of Finance replied.

The Minister also replied to a supplementary question which was asked by Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P.

6. **CONSTRUCTION OF ALL WEATHER ROAD – REDLOCK AND MAINSTAY
IN REGION NO. 2**

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

**Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and
Communications.**

*Could the Hon. Prime Minister, in his capacity as the Minister of Public Works and Communications, inform this National Assembly when the Government propose to honour its promise to build a mile of all weather road every year for the people of Redlock and Mainstay in Region No. 2?

(Notice Paper No. 164 (Q 125 Opp 124) published on 2007-06-27)

9.

Thereafter, the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications replied.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications also replied to a supplementary question which was asked by Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

7. **KOKER DOOR AT MAINSTAY**

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

*Could the Hon. Minister of Agriculture inform this National Assembly when the wire will be attached to the koker door at Mainstay, having regard to the fact that several reports were made to the RDC and the D&I authorities of Region No. 2, as well as through the Ministry of Agriculture Hotline?

(Notice Paper No. 165 (Q 126 Opp 125) published on 2007-06-27)

Thereafter, the Minister of Agriculture replied.

8. **THE NEW OPPORTUNITY CORP**

At the request of Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P., the following oral questions for the Minister of Human Services and Social Security were withdrawn:

Could the Hon. Minister of Human Services and Social Security inform this National Assembly:-

- (i) *Whether persons who have served time at the New Opportunity Corp are monitored after they are released from that institution?

- (ii) *The number of persons who, having served time at the New Opportunity Corp, repeatedly returned to the custody of the New Opportunity Corp for the last three (3) years?

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- (iii) *The number of persons who, having served time at the New Opportunity Corp continued to commit offences against the law for the last three (3) years?
- (i) * The number of persons who, having served time at the New Opportunity Corp, went on to lead criminal life styles for the last three (3) years?
- (ii) * Whether there are any programs in place to assist those persons who have served time at the New Opportunity Corp to, on their release, find meaningful employment and/or enroll in a suitable educational institution?

(Notice Paper No. 171 (Q 131 Opp 130) published on 2007-07-03)

For Written Replies

9. **ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIVATE RADIO STATIONS**

Member Asking: Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

- (j) Could the Honourable Prime Minister please tell this House if licenses will be issued for the establishment of private radio stations in Guyana in 2007?
- (iii) If the answer is no, could the Honourable Prime Minister state:
 - (a) Why no licenses will be issued in 2007?
 - (b) When will such licenses be issued?

(Notice Paper No. 167 (Q 128 Opp 127) published on 2007-06-27)

Answers:

- (i) Not likely.

- (ii) The last agreement between H.E. the President and the then Leader of the Opposition, envisaged the enacting of the Broadcast Law and then the establishment of the Broadcast

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11.

Authority which will consider and grant applications for Public Broadcast Stations, both radio and television. The Government continues to envisage proceeding in this way. At this time I imagine that this process will require six months to one year. So, I don't at this time see any radio license being issued before the end of 2007 and not likely before mid 2008.

10. COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION

Member Asking: Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Could the Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport please inform this National Assembly when the Government plans to Table Copyright Legislation to promote and protect the intellectual property of local artistes?

(Notice Paper No. 168 (Q 129 Opp 128) published on 2007-06-27)

Answer:

The Copyright Legislation is a complex piece of legislation and is intended to promote and protect more than the intellectual property of artistes. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport has been engaged in the discussions with other Ministries on the legislation, and we are assured by the lead Ministry that once the consultations are completed and a revision is done, that it would be tabled in the National Assembly.

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS – Second Readings

ITEM 1 - GUYANA FORESTRY COMMISSION BILL 2007 – Bill No. 20/2007 published on 2007-06-21

The Minister of Agriculture moved the second reading of the following Bill:

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12.

A BILL intituled AN ACT to repeal and replace the Guyana Forestry Commission Act 1979, re-establish the Guyana Forestry Commission, and provide for incidental matters.

(Read a first time on 2007-06-28)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Winston Murray

Mrs. Pauline Sukhai

While Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan was speaking to the motion the time for the suspension of the sitting was reached.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4:01 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4:40 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan continued and concluded his speech.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. E. Lance Carberry

Mr. Odinga Lumumba

Mr. Aubrey Norton

Thereafter, the Minister of Agriculture replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

The Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

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13.

In Committee

Clauses 1 – 15 were passed as printed.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 6:14 p.m., the sitting was suspended.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 6:24 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Clause 16

Mr. Winston Murray, M.P., moved the following amendments which were put and carried:

Clause 16(2): “After the word ‘deficiency’ delete the words ‘shall be charged on the Consolidated Fund’ and insert the words ‘met out of monies appropriated by the Parliament’.

The Minister of Agriculture moved the following amendments which were put and carried:

Clause 16(3): “Insert a ‘full stop’ after the word ‘Finance’ and delete the remainder of the sentence.

Clause 16 was then passed as amended.

Clauses 17 – 33 were passed as printed.

The Schedules were passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Agriculture, the Guyana Forestry Commission Bill 2007 was read a third time and passed as amended.

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14.

MOTION

ITEM 2 - CONCLUSION OF THE CONSIDERATION OF THE 2004 REPORT OF THE DISCIPLINED FORCES COMMISSION

The Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, M.P., Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications moved the following motion:

WHEREAS Article 197 A(5) of the Constitution provides that the Disciplined Forces Commission may be constituted by the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS on the 16th May, 2003, the National Assembly passed Resolution No. 21 approving the establishment and terms of reference of a Disciplined Forces Commission – that is the Guyana Police Force, the Guyana Defence Force, the Guyana Prison Service and the Guyana Fire Services, and all their branches, departments and units, focusing on making recommendations for this reform, sustained professional development and structure;

AND WHEREAS the Disciplined Forces Commission was constituted and conducted frequent and extensive hearings;

AND WHEREAS the Disciplined Forces Commission submitted its Interim Report on the Guyana Police Force in the National Assembly on the 11th December, 2003;

AND WHEREAS the Final Report of the Commission was delivered to the Honourable Speaker on 6th May, 2004 and was presented to the National Assembly on 17th May, 2004;

AND WHEREAS by Resolution No. 48 passed on 8th July, 2004, the National Assembly referred the Report of the Disciplined Forces Commission “to a Special Select Committee for review

within a period of four months, and thereafter to report to the National Assembly as to the manner in which such of the recommendations which are accepted ought to be implemented including which committee of the National Assembly will monitor such implementation”;

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15.

AND WHEREAS the Special Select Committee was established on 4th November, 2004 and commenced its deliberations on the Report by inviting the Heads of the Disciplined Forces to share their views on the recommendations pertaining to their agency;

AND WHEREAS the Special Select Committee first examined the recommendations pertaining to the Guyana Police Force and completed a draft preliminary Report in April, 2006, but was unable, owing to the dissolution of the Eighth Parliament on the 2nd May, 2006, to present that interim report;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approve of a Special Select Committee being established to conclude the examination of the Report and recommendations of the Disciplined Forces Commission and report to the National Assembly;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the newly established Special Select Committee of the Ninth Parliament take cognizance of the work done by the Special Select Committee of the Eighth Parliament that considered the Report and its recommendations.

(Notice Paper No. 173 (M 41 Govt 24) published on 2007-07-13)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Clarissa Riehl

Mr. Everall Franklin

Mr. Raphael Trotman

Ms Gail Teixeira

Mr. Basil Williams

Thereafter, the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications replied.

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16.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications moved the following amendment which was put and carried:

“At the end of the first RESOLVED clause delete the ‘semi-colon’ and insert the words ‘six months from the date of establishment;’

The motion as amended was then put and carried.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 7:15 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 7:47 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

(ii) PRIVATE MEMBERS’ BUSINESS

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

ITEM 3 - AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY

Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the 25th day of March, 2007 marked the bicentenary of the abolition of the Slave Trade Act between Africa and the British Empire;

AND WHEREAS scholars estimate that between 50 and 100 million Africans were either killed or abducted during the existence of European slavery and the slave trade;

AND WHEREAS it is universally accepted that slavery and the transatlantic slave trade were the most inhumane tragedies in the history of mankind;

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17.

AND WHEREAS our African fore parents, first as slaves and then as free men and women built the infrastructure of modern Guyana and made unparalleled contributions to the development of Guyana,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly unequivocally acknowledges the immense debt that all Guyanese owe to our African ancestors and recognizes the outstanding contribution they have made to the development of Guyana;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That an African Land Commission be established, similar in status to the Rights Commissions established under Article 212G of the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, to determine the issue of ancestral land rights of African Guyanese;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly urges the British Government to enact measures to effect reparation to the descendants of the victims of the African Slave Trade and slavery.

(Notice Paper No.141 (M32 Opp 10) published on 2007-04-17)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

Mr. Robert Corbin

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Mr. David Patterson

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS NO. 10(1)

At 10:00 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications moved that Standing Orders No. 10(1) be suspended to enable Mr. David Patterson to continue and conclude his speech.

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18.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:04 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications, the Assembly was adjourned to 2:00 p.m. on Friday, 27th July, 2007.

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HON. HARI N. RAMKARRAN, S.C., M.P.,

Speaker of the National Assembly

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.**

26th July, 2007.