

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 24TH 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, 24TH MAY, 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 (Absent)

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

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 (Absent)

*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 (Absent – on leave)

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

***Non-elected Minister**

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

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 (Absent – on leave)

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

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

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 (Absent – on leave)

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. (Absent)

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. (Absent – on leave)

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.

***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)

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

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. Lilawttie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The sitting commenced at 2:09 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Congratulations to Mr. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P. - 31 years of Parliamentary Service

The Speaker announced that that day was the 31st anniversary of the Honourable Member, Mr. Harripersaud Nokta as a Member of Parliament.

The Speaker, on behalf of the Members of the Assembly and himself, extended congratulations and best wishes to Mr. Nokta.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

Suspension of Standing Order No. 22 (9)

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications, with the leave of the Speaker, moved a motion for the Suspension of Standing Order No. 22 (9) to allow the following questions on Notice Papers numbered 67, 68 and 69 to remain on the Order Paper until they are answered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

For Oral Replies

1. **CARICOM CHARTER OF CIVIL RIGHTS**

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

Minister Answering: The Minister of Foreign Affairs

- (i) *Can the Hon. Minister say whether his Government has established “the mechanism at the national level to monitor the recommendations of the Caricom Charter of Civil Rights?
- (ii) *If such a mechanism has been established can the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly what results have been obtained to date?
- (iii) *If the mechanism has not been established can the Hon. Minister say when this mechanism will be established?

(Notice Paper No. 67 (Q49 Opp49) published on 2007-01-23)

2. **CONFERENCE/RETREAT OF HEADS OF OVERSEAS DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS**

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

Minister Answering: The Minister of Foreign Affairs

- (i) *Can the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly when last a Conference/Retreat of Heads of Overseas Diplomatic Mission was convened?
- (ii) *Could the Hon. Minister say what is the date and venue for the next Heads of Overseas Diplomatic Missions Conference/Retreat?

(Notice Paper No. 68 (Q50 Opp50) published on 2007-01-23)

3. **HEAD OF A DIPLOMATIC MISSION**

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

Minister Answering: The Minister of Foreign Affairs

- (i) *Could the Hon. Minister indicate if the disadvantages of having the Head of a Diplomatic Mission for more than five (5) years in one post outweighs the advantages?
- (ii) *Is such an approach useful in the present international situation?
(Notice Paper No. 69 (Q51 Opp51) published on 2007-01-23)

4. **EMPLOYMENT OF PANDIT GOSSAI**

Member Asking: Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition

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

* Is it true that Pandit Gossai has been appointed to a position in the Office of the President?

If so:

- (i) What is the specific nature of the appointment?
- (ii) What are his functions and duties?
- (iii) What are the terms and conditions of his employment, including his emoluments and the duration of the appointment?
- (iv) What are the qualifications of the Pandit for the office?
(Notice Paper No. 140 (Q 108 Opp 107) published on 2007-04-17)

Answers:

- (i) Yes, he assists His Excellency, the President in his dealings with the public.
- (ii) He handles meetings, appointments and attends to engagements for and on behalf of the President.
- (iii) He serves at the President's leisure.
- (iv) He enjoys the confidence of the President.

For Written Replies

5. **TAXES PAID BY MR. BUDDY SHIVRAJ – 1999-2006**

Member Asking: Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Finance

Could the Minister of Finance tell this National Assembly how much taxes Mr. Buddy Shivraj has paid to the Guyana Revenue Authority for 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006?

(Notice Paper No. 129 (Q101 Opp100) published on 2007-02-28)

Answer:

I am advised that, under the provisions of the Income Tax Act, Chapter 81:01 of the Laws of Guyana, the requested information cannot be disclosed.

6. PROGRAMMES FOR PRISON OFFICERS**Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.****Minister Answering: The Minister of Home Affairs**

Could the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs inform this Honourable House of the programmes, other than security, that Prison Officers are exposed to?

(Notice Paper No. 132 (Q104 Opp103) published on 2007-02-28)

Answer:

Prison Officers are exposed to several other programmes that have improved their general work performances/competencies as well as meeting the several challenges associated with the department's administrative and operational posture. The framework "training for competencies" embodies such programmes as hereunder stated:

- Public Administration
- Sociology
- Social Work
- Industrial Relations
- Prison Management Courses
- Supervisory Management
- Government Accountancy
- Financial Procedures and Budgeting
- Procurement and Store Management
- Information Technology
- Vocational Skills
- Catering Services
- Nursing
- First Aid
- Secretarial Duties

- Agriculture
- Communication Skills
- Statistics
- Photography
- Emotional Intelligence
- Basic English Course
- Driving Courses
- Workplace Safety
- Conflict Resolution
- Customer Care & Work Place Ethics
- Managing Stress in the work place
- Domestic violence
- Disaster Management
- Fire safety

At the request of the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, and with the approval of the Assembly, the answer to the following question was deferred:

7. **HOSTING OF CRICKET WORLD CUP SUPER EIGHT GAMES**

Member Asking: Mr. Raphael Trotman, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

- (i) Can the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of the total sum spent by the Government of Guyana for the hosting of Cricket World Cup Super Eight Games?
- (ii) How much of the amount spent is recoverable, and how much has to date been recovered?

- (iii) Will the government be preparing and publishing a comprehensive report on all matters pertaining to the hosting of Cricket World Cup Super Eight Games?

(Notice Paper No. 142 (Q 109 Opp 108) published on 2007-04-25)

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS – Second Readings

ITEM 1 - THE FIREARMS (AMENDMENT) BILL – Bill No. 14/2007 published on 2007-05-04

The Minister of Home Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Firearms Act.

(Read a first time on 2007-05-10)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Deborah Backer

Mr. Everall Franklin

Mr. Anil Nandlall

Mr. Raphael Trotman

Mr. Bernard DeSantos

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4:00 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5:08 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Mr. Basil Williams also spoke to the motion.

Thereafter the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

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

In Committee

Clause 1

The following amendment moved by the Minister of Home Affairs was put and carried:

Substitute the following as Clause 1:-

“This Act, which amends the Firearms Act, may be cited as the Firearms (Amendment) Act 2007 and shall come into operation on the date the Minister may, by order, appoint.”

Clause 1 was then passed as amended.

Clauses 2 – 6 were passed as printed.

Clause 7

The following amendments moved by Mrs. Deborah Backer were put and negatived:

- (i) “Renumber section 44A Section 44A (1).
- (ii) Delete from section 44A (1) as renumbered the words “unless the prosecution has had an opportunity to intervene and”
- (iii) Insert new section 44A (2) –
44A (2) Special reasons in relations to persons arrested for an offence under section 16 shall include the quantity and type of ammunition.”

Clause 7 was then passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Firearms (Amendment) Bill 2007 was read a third time and passed as amended.

ITEM 2 - JUVENILE OFFENDERS (AMENDMENT) BILL – Bill No. 15/2007 published on 2007-05-04

The Minister of Home Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Juvenile Offenders Act.

(Read a first time on 2007-05-10)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Clarissa Riehl

Mr. Raphael Trotman

Mrs. Volda Lawrence

The Minister of Human Services and Social Security

Thereafter the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

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

In Committee

Clauses 1 – 8 were passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Juvenile Offenders (Amendment) Bill 2007 was read a third time and passed as printed.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 7:00 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 7:35 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

ITEM 3 - SUMMARY JURISDICTION (OFFENCES) (AMENDMENT) BILL – Bill No. 16/2007 published on 2007-05-04

The Minister of Home Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act.

(Read a first time on 2007-05-10)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Deborah Backer

Mr. Raphael Trotman

Mr. Everall Franklin

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

Mr. Basil Williams

Thereafter the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

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

In Committee

Clause 1 was passed as printed.

Clause 2

The following amendments moved by Mrs. Deborah Backer were put and negatived:

New Section 151A –

“(1) Insert a full stop after the word “years” in line 7 of the section

(2) Delete the words “and the Court may in addition to the penalty order to be forfeited to the State any assets derived by the commission of the offence or property, including immovable property, owned and used directly by the person in connection with the lodging or harbouring of the wanted person”.”

Clause 2 was then passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) (Amendment) Bill 2007 was read a third time and passed as printed.

ITEM 4 - CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL – Bill No. 17/2007 published on 2007-05-04

At the request of the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications the second reading of the following Bill was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to alter the Constitution in accordance with Articles 66 and 164.

(Read a first time on 2007-05-10)

MOTION

**ITEM 5 - THE PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA MANUAL OF RULES OF PROCEDURE
AND OPERATIONS OF COMMITTEES**

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

WHEREAS on the 10th May, 2007 the Parliament of Guyana Manual of Rules of Procedure and Operations of Committees was laid in the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the said Manual contains the rules, procedure and operations of Committees functioning in the National Assembly,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly accepts in general the rules, procedure and operations of the said Manual;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That a Select Committee be appointed to make recommendations to the National Assembly on the adoption of the said rules, procedure and operations.

(Notice Paper No. 147 (M37 Govt23) published on 2007-05-09)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Clarissa Riehl

Mr. David Patterson

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

The Assembly to decide whether the Manual of Rules of Procedures and Operations of Committees should be sent to a Select Committee or the Standing Orders Committee.

(ii) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

ITEM 6 - AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDER NO. 10

Mr. Raphael Trotman, M.P., moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the hours of Parliament are prescribed by Standing Order No. 10 of the Standing Orders of the National Assembly to be 2.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. with suspensions at 4.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. respectively;

AND WHEREAS Members of the National Assembly have expressed varying views on the times for sittings of the Assembly with some Members favouring the commencement of sessions at an earlier time whilst others appear to prefer the strict observance of the prescribed times;

AND WHEREAS it would be desirable for a compromise to be found so as to allow for the hours of sittings to be varied from time to time by the Parliamentary Management Committee depending on the business to be disposed of,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Standing Orders Committee examines the issue of the times at which the Assembly shall meet including, the right of the Speaker to suspend the Standing Orders to allow the time to be abridged or varied and to report to the National Assembly its finding and recommendations within three months.

(Notice Paper No.92 (M23 Opp 7) published on 2007-01-30)

In accordance with Standing Order No. 110 (3) the motion was referred forthwith, without question put, to the Standing Orders Committee.

ITEM 7 - AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY

At the request of Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., the consideration of the following motion was deferred:

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;

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)

ITEM 8 - CRICKET WORLD CUP

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P., moved the following motion:

WHEREAS Guyana played host to Cricket World Cup Super Eight matches in March and April, 2007, and the overall hosting of the event can be categorized as successful;

AND WHEREAS notwithstanding the overall success of the event, there are the issues of the future viability of the National Stadium including the means of recovering the financial outlay, and the servicing of the loan agreements and other facilities which were entered into to ensure the construction of the National Stadium and appurtenant facilities such as bridges, roads and car parks;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly expresses its appreciation and extends congratulations to all the organizations and persons which were instrumental in making preparations for the successful hosting of the event including the Local Organising Committee, the Disciplined Forces and Private Security firms, the Private Sector, the Georgetown Municipality and other Local Government Organs, the Guyana Scouts Association, volunteers, and others; and

That this National Assembly directs the Economic Services Committee to conduct a review of all processes and aspects of the preparation and hosting of the games and to make recommendations thereafter for future events and for the viability of the stadium.

(Notice Paper No.143 (M33 Opp 11) published on 2007-04-25)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

The Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

At 9:58 p.m., the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications moved a motion for the suspension of Standing Order No. 10(1) for the Assembly to continue the debate on the motion until 10:15 p.m.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Mervyn Williams

At 10:15 p.m., the Assembly decided to resume debate on the above motion at its next sitting.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:15 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 Thursday, 7th June, 2007.



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

Speaker of the National Assembly

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

24th May, 2007.