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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 25TH 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, 7TH JUNE, 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 (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

*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**

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

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

*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

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**

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. (Absent – on leave)

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 (Absent – on leave)

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.

***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)

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

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 Kisson, 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 2:27 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Repairs to the Mezzanine Floor of Public Buildings

The Speaker announced that repairs to the Mezzanine floor (M.P.'s Lounge) had been completed.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Oral Replies

In accordance with Standing Order No. 22(5), the Minister of Amerindian Affairs, being duly authorized, answered the following questions on behalf of the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

1. **CARICOM CHARTER OF CIVIL RIGHTS**

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

Minister Answering: The Minister of Amerindian 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)

Thereafter, the Minister of Amerindian Affairs replied.

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

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

Minister Answering: The Minister of Amerindian Affairs

- (i) *Can the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly when last a Conference/Retreat of Heads of Overseas Diplomatic Mission was convened?

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- (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)

Thereafter, the Minister of Amerindian Affairs replied.

3. HEAD OF A DIPLOMATIC MISSION

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

Minister Answering: The Minister of Amerindian 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)

Thereafter, the Minister of Amerindian Affairs replied.

For Written Reply

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)

Answers:

- (i) The funds expended by the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport in hosting of ICC WI Cricket World Cup 2007 Super Eight Matches relates primarily to overlay, that is:-

- The staffing and running costs as outlined in Section 10(3)(1) of the HVA.
- Match operations costs as outlined in Section 10(4) of the HVA.
- Miscellaneous Costs as outlined in Section 10(5) of the HVA.

The cost breakdowns are currently being audited by the Auditor General, and his report would be made available upon completion.

- (ii) It is estimated that the amount recoverable would be \$976,209,120 Guyana dollars (nine hundred and seventy six million, two hundred and nine thousand, one hundred and twenty dollars).

To date we have recovered \$207,235,750 Guyana dollars (two hundred and seven million, two hundred and thirty five thousand, seven hundred and fifty dollars).

These sums are also currently being audited by the Auditor General and the final numbers made available in his report.

- (iii) The LOC in collaboration with CWC and other stakeholders is preparing a comprehensive report. This report when completed would be laid in Parliament.

REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON A DEFINITE MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE-

Allegation of a Terrorist Plot targeting the facilities of the John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, United States of America

A request by Mr. Raphael Trotman to move the adjournment of the Assembly to discuss an Allegation of a Terrorist Plot targeting the facilities of the John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, United States of America, was disallowed by the Speaker.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-

Presentation and First Reading

ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND COUNTERING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM BILL 2007 – Bill No. 18/2007

On a motion by the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs the following Bill was read a first time and, thereafter, in accordance with Standing Order No. 54(1) (c), was referred by the Assembly to a Special Select Committee for consideration and report:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the establishment and management of a Financial Intelligence Unit; to provide for unlawful proceeds of all serious offences to be identified, traced, frozen, seized and eventually forfeited; to provide for comprehensive powers for the prosecution of money laundering, terrorist financing and other financial crimes; and the forfeiture of the proceeds of crime and terrorist property; to require reporting entities to take preventive measures to help combat money laundering and terrorist financing; to provide for civil forfeiture of assets and for matters connected therewith.

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

ITEM 1 THE PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA MANUAL OF RULES OF PROCEDURE AND OPERATIONS OF COMMITTEES

The Assembly resumed the debate on 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)

At the request of the Prime Minister, and with approval of the Assembly, the Parliament of Guyana Manual of Rules of Procedure and Operations of Committees, was referred to a Special Select Committee:

The motion was then put and carried.

(ii) **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

MOTIONS

ITEM 2 - AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY

At the request of Mrs. Deborah Backer 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;

12.

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 3 - CRICKET WORLD CUP

The Assembly resumed the debate on 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

13.

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)

Mr. David Patterson spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Mr. Raphael Trotman replied.

The following amendments moved by the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport were put and carried:

Second Be It Resolved Clause substitute the phrase:

“to consider a review of all processes and aspects of preparation and hosting of the games and to make recommendation thereafter” with, “consider the government’s report on the hosting of the ICC CWC WI 2007 in Guyana and its recommendations and to consider these and””.

The motion was then put and carried.

ITEM 4 - THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Ms Chantelle Smith, M.P., moved the following motion:

WHEREAS in 1991 Guyana signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;

AND WHEREAS Article 19 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child";

AND WHEREAS the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child has consistently proposed the abolition of corporal punishment when the reporting process under the convention has revealed the continued existence of school corporal punishment;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana's report to the Committee of the Convention of the Rights of the Child of July 29, 2002 states: "Enhanced legislation is an integral element in this country's efforts to give tangible effect to the provisions of the Constitution Reform Commission";

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana's report to the Committee on the Convention on the Rights of the Child of July 29, 2002 further states "The Constitutional Reform Commission acknowledged that the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child should inform constitutional provisions to protect children's rights. The Oversight Select Committee of the Revised Guyana Constitution subsequently accepted the above recommendations and in 2001 these rights were accorded the status of fundamental and human rights in the amended Constitution",

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly declares the continued use of corporal punishment in schools in Guyana a violation of Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;

15.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly declares the continued use of corporal punishment in schools in Guyana a violation of the Constitution;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly recommends the abolition of corporal punishment under the new Education Act.

(Notice Paper No. 22 (M3 Opp2) published on 2006-11-22)

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan spoke to the motion.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 3:51 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4:42 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Minister of Education

Ms Amna Ally

Thereafter, Ms Chantalle Smith replied.

The following amendments moved by Ms Amna Ally were put and carried:

Insert after the last AND WHEREAS clause the two following WHEREAS clauses:

“AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Education has established a Task Force to hold the broadest possible consultations for the comprehensive reform of the Education Act;

AND WHEREAS the Task Force had held and continues to hold consultations with all stake holders including Political Parties on all issues concerning education reform including the issue of Corporal Punishment”.

Delete the three (3) RESOLVED clauses in the motion and insert the following clause:

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls upon the Task Force to solicit the views of the various stakeholders in Guyana on the issue of Corporal Punishment and to make specific recommendations on the issue of corporal punishment in submitting proposals for the reform of the Education Act.”

The following amendments moved by Ms Chantalle Smith were put and negatived:

Replace the first RESOLVED clause with the following:

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly declare the continued use of corporal punishment in schools a violation of Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child”;

With the following:

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly recommends that the government of Guyana through its Education Task Force and other agencies make every

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reasonable effort to take into account and uphold the tenets of Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in the administration of the education system in Guyana”;

Delete the following second RESOLVED clause:

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly declare the continued use of corporal punishment in schools in Guyana a violation of the Constitution”;

Delete the following third RESOLVED clause:

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly recommends the abolition of corporal punishment under the new Education Act”;

Replace the third RESOLVED clause with the following:

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That a Select Committee be established to examine ways in which Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child can be recognized and implemented, having regard to the maintenance of discipline in schools.”

The motion, as amended, was then put and carried.

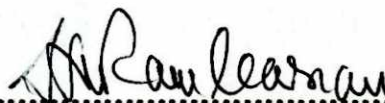
SYMPATHY TO MR. DAVE DANNY, M.P.

The Speaker informed the Assembly of the death of the mother of Mr. Dave Danny, M.P.

On behalf of the Members of the Assembly and himself, the speaker extended sympathy to Mr. Dave Danny.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:47 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, 28th June, 2007.



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HON. HARI N. RAMKARRAN, S.C., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.

7th June, 2007.