

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 29TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2006-2007) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON FRIDAY, 27TH JULY, 2007
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN.

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 (Absent)

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 (Absent)

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) (Absent)

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 (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. (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 Anna 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 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. (Absent – on leave)

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

5.

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

Mr. David Patterson, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

(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 2:12 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

By the Speaker of the National Assembly (Chairman of the Committee of Selection):

Minutes of Proceedings of the 5th Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on Thursday, 12th July, 2007.

(Circulated)

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Oral Reply

INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL OF THE LAW OF THE SEA ON THE GUYANA/SURINAME DISPUTE

By reason of the absence of Mr. Aubrey Norton, M.P., the following question was not asked:

*Could the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs tell this National Assembly what the Government plans to do to prepare the people of Guyana for the announcement of the decision of the International Tribunal of the Law of the Sea on the Guyana/Suriname dispute?

(Notice Paper No. 166 (Q 127 Opp 126) published on 2007-06-27)

(i) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

ITEM 1 - AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE AND SLAVERY

The Assembly resumed the debate on 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;

7.

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)

8.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

- Mr. Everall Franklin
- Mr. Odinga Lumumba
- Mr. Raphael Trotman
- Mr. James McAllister

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 3.55 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4.41 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

- Mr. Moses Nagamootoo,
- Mr. Basil Williams

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

While Ms Gail Teixeira was speaking to the motion, the Speaker withdrew from the Chamber and Mrs. Clarissa Riehl, Deputy Speaker took the Chair temporarily.

Return of Speaker

While Ms Gail Teixeira was speaking, the Speaker returned and resumed the Chair.

Ms Gail Teixeira continued and concluded her speech.

Thereafter, Mrs. Deborah Backer replied.

The following amendments moved by Mrs. Deborah Backer and seconded by Mr. James McAllister were put and negatived:

“Delete the words ‘British Government to enact measures to effect reparation to’ and insert the words ‘Government of Guyana to vigorously pursue the issue of reparation, with the British Government and all other relevant Governments and International Institutions for’

At 8:18 p.m., the Members of the Peoples National Congress Reform One Guyana withdrew from the Chamber.

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

“After first **Whereas** clause add:

WHEREAS this National Assembly acknowledges the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and the 173rd anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the British colonies;

After the second **WHEREAS** Clause add:

AND WHEREAS our ancestors who were brought here as slaves rebelled on many occasions over the more than 200 years of subjugation and oppression and seized control of a large portion of the then Dutch colony for almost a year making the 1763 revolution the precursor of the Haitian Revolution of 1801 in the region;

Replace the fourth **WHEREAS** clause with the following:

AND WHEREAS we the descendents of slavery and indentureship unanimously condemn slavery as the most abominable crime against humanity as no other in the annals of history which was of global proportions perpetuated constantly and consistently for over 300 years on millions of people of and from Africa;

Add as a fifth WHEREAS clause:

AND WHEREAS our forefathers as Freedmen and women of August 1st dedicated themselves to building a better society based on the principles of democracy, equality and freedom;

Add as a sixth WHEREAS clause:

AND WHEREAS this National Assembly recognizes that these ancestors laid the foundation for the transformation of this land and together with other peoples built the social, economic, political and cultural infrastructure of modern Guyana;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly joins the Caribbean Community call on February 14, 2007 at its 18th Inter-Sessional meeting in St. Vincent for both an apology and reparations from ex-European powers for profiting from the abominable crime of African slavery;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the University of Guyana and all research institutions to support the call of the CARICOM Heads of Government to Universities in the Region to conduct research to support the demands for both an apology and compensation;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly unanimously agrees that the 1763 Revolution by our forefathers be given its rightful recognition both in Guyana and in this hemisphere;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That we the Members of the National Assembly commit ourselves to make vigorous efforts to educate future generations on the contributions of our forefathers and to uphold their principles of freedom and equality and to ensure that due recognition is given in all efforts to build this cultural diversity as a unifying force in developing this nation, Guyana.”

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

At 8:26 p.m., the Members of the Peoples National Congress Reform One Guyana returned to the Chamber.

ITEM 2 - NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE

At a request by Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P., the following motion was withdrawn:

WHEREAS all national stakeholders including, the Government, and Opposition parties, have all expressed a desire to work together to address the threats and challenges of crime and security in Guyana;

AND WHEREAS various studies and reports including the Border/National Security Committee Report; the Disciplined Forces Commission Report and the CARICOM Task Force on Crime and Security Report have all recommended the establishment of a Standing Parliamentary Committee on National Security to provide an oversight function to review all aspects of security and national security including, but not limited to, review of policies and reforms, budgetary allocations and expenditures and a national security strategy and doctrine,

12.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. The National Assembly agrees to the establishment of a Standing Committee on National Security to review all aspects of national security including, but not limited to, the review of policies and reforms, budgetary allocations and expenditures and the implementation of a national security strategy and doctrine;
- 2. The Standing Committee on National Security deliver to the National Assembly bi-annual reports of its work including progress made in the implementation of policies and reforms;
- 3. The Members of the National Assembly identified to be Members of the National Security Committee be subject to and be bound by the provisions of the Official Secrets Act.

(Notice Paper No.170 (M39 Opp12) published on 2007-07-03)

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

MOTION

ITEM 3 - NOMINATION OF FOUR MEMBERS TO THE POLICE SERVICE

COMMISSION

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P., Chairperson of the Committee on Appointments moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the Standing Committee, to address matters relating to the appointment of members of Commissions established under the Constitution appointed by the Committee of Selection on 14th December, 2006 and pursuant to article 119C of the Constitution, met on

13.

eleven (11) consecutive occasions for the purpose of identifying such bodies, as appear to it to “represent the majority of the members of the Police Force and any other such body it deems fit” for consultation in the nominations of four Members to the Police Service Commission to be appointed in accordance with article 210 (1) (c) of the Constitution;

AND WHEREAS the majority of the members of the Committee of Appointments, comprising of the PPP/C and AFC members, are of the view that the National Commission on Law and Order and the National Executive of the Community Policing Groups appear as bodies it deems fit to submit nominees for consideration on the Police Service Commission by the Standing Committee of Appointments of Members of Commissions;

AND WHEREAS the People’s National Congress Reform-One Guyana does not accept that the Terms of Reference of the National Commission of Law and Order allow for their inclusion in the consultative process nor does it agree to the inclusion of the National Executive of the Community Policing Groups;

AND WHEREAS the Committee in its Special Report to the National Assembly has reported on the differences of views on the matter of the inclusion of these two bodies in addition to the Police Association and the Association of Former Police Officers in the consultation process to submit nominees for the consideration of the Committee of Appointments to the Police Service Commission;

AND WHEREAS the Committee has referred the matter for consideration and guidance to include the National Commission of Law and Order and the National Executive of the Community Policing Groups to the National Assembly,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly determines whether the National Commission on Law and Order and the National Executive of the Community Policing Groups are among the bodies that appear as bodies it deems fit to submit nominees to the Police Service Commission.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Deborah Backer
The Minister of Health
Mr. Winston Murray
Mr. E. Lance Carberry

Thereafter, Ms Gail Teixeira replied.

The following amendment moved by Ms Gail Teixeira was put and carried:

“In the RESOLVED clause delete the word ‘whether’ and insert the word ‘that’. Also, delete the word ‘are’ and insert the word ‘be’.”

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

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:30 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, 2nd August, 2007.



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

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.

27th July, 2007.