

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 2ND SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND
SESSION (2002-2003) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON WEDNESDAY, 19TH FEBRUARY, 2003
IN THE CONVENTION CENTRE, OCEAN VIEW INTERNATIONAL HOTEL,
LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (68)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government (37)

(i) People's Progressive Party/Civic (34)

(ii) Non-elected Ministers (2)

(iii) The United Force (1)

The Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, M.P., Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works
and Communications

The Hon. Reepu Daman Persaud, O.R., J.P., M.P., Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation

The Hon. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

The Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P., Minister of Education

The Hon. Saisnarine Kowlessar, M.P., Minister of Finance

The Hon. Shaik K.Z. Baksh, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water

The Hon. Navindranauth O. Chandarpal, M.P., Minister of Agriculture

(Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

The Hon. J. Ronald Gajraj, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

(Region No. 3 -Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

The Hon. Rev. Dr. Ramnauth D.A. Bisnauth, M.P., Minister of Labour, Human Services and
Social Security

The Hon. Clinton C. Collymore, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and
Regional Development

The Hon. Satyadeow Sawh, M.P., Minister of Fisheries, Other Crops and Livestock
(Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice) (Absent)

* The Hon. S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H., M.P., Minister in the Office of the
President with responsibility for Foreign Affairs

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

The Hon. Dr. Jennifer R.A. Westford, M.P., Minister of the Public Service

The Hon. C. Anthony Xavier, M.P., Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

The Hon. Bibi S. Shadick, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and
Social Security (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

** The Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P., Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs

The Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P., Minister of Health

Mr. S. Feroze Mohamed, M.P., Chief Whip

Mr. Cyril C.L. Belgrave, C.C.H., J.P., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Donald R. Ramotar, M.P.

Mr. Husman Alli, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Mr. Komal Chand, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P.

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

Mrs. Shirley V. Edwards, J.P., M.P.

Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P.

Mr. Heeralall Mohan, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)

Mr. Ramesh C. Rajkumar, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)

Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.D., M.P.

Mrs. Philomena Sahoye-Shury, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Water

Mrs. Pauline R. Sukhai, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)

Mr. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P.

*Non-Elected Minister

**Elected Member from The United Force

Members of the Opposition (30)**(i) People's National Congress/Reform (27)**

Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, M.P.

Mr. Winston S. 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

Mr. Ivor Allen, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomereroon/Supenaam)

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Deryck M.A. Bernard, M.P.

Mr. C. Stanley Ming, M.P.

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

Mr. Vincent L. Alexander, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Andy Goveia, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.

Dr. Dalgleish Joseph, M.D., M.P.

Miss Amna Ally, M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)

Miss Sandra M. Adams, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Mr. Jerome Khan, M.P. (Absent)

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

Miss Myrna E.N. Peterkin, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent)

Mr. James K. McAllister, M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

Miss Lurlene A. Nestor, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Abdul Kadir, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Mr. Ricky Khan, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)

Mrs. Rajcoomarie Bancroft, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni)

Mr. Nasir Ally, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)

Miss Judith David, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Miss Genevieve Allen, M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

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(ii) **Guyana Action Party/Working People's Alliance (2)**

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

Mrs. Shirley J. Melville, M.P. (Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)

(iii) **Rise, Organise and Rebuild Party (1)**

Mr. Ravindra Dev, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

Mrs. Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 2.00 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

OATH OF A NEW MEMBER

(i) **Resignation of Mr. Kumkaran Ramdas**

(ii) **Election of Mr. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P.**

The Speaker informed Members that Mr. Kumkaran Ramdas had resigned as a Member of the National Assembly, with effect from 7th February, 2003, and that following his call upon the representative of the list of candidates in which Mr. Ramdas' name was included, he was informed that the name of Mr. Zulfikar Mustapha had been extracted from the said list and that Mr. Mustapha was, on the 18th February, 2003, declared to be an elected Member of the National Assembly to fill the vacancy.

5.

The Speaker stated that before Mr. Mustapha could take part in the proceedings of the Assembly, he would have, as required by Article 167 of the Constitution, to make and subscribe the oath of Office.

As Mr. Mustapha was present, the oath was administered to him by the Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) **Best Wishes to Former Member**

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

(ii) **Congratulations to new Member**

The Speaker also, on behalf of Members of the Assembly and himself, congratulated Mr. Mustapha on his election to the Assembly and extended best wishes to him.

(iii) **Death of Mr. Hugh Desmond Hoyte, S.C.**

The Speaker made the following announcement:

“Hon. Members, as you are aware, Mr. Hugh Desmond Hoyte, S.C., died on 22nd December, 2002, after rendering thirty-four years of dedicated and distinguished service to Guyana and its Parliament as a Minister of the Government, President of the Republic of Guyana and a Member of Parliament and Leader of the Opposition from 30th December, 1968 to 21st December, 2002.

On 30th December, 1968, Hugh Desmond Hoyte was declared an elected Member of the National Assembly and remained so until he acceded to the Presidency on 6th August, 1985.

6.

Between and inclusive of those years, he held several ministerial positions and of course the office of Prime Minister.

He was Minister of Home Affairs from 1969 to the end of 1970.

The records of the 57th Sitting of the 1st Session of the National Assembly of the 2nd Parliament of Guyana, held on 5th January, 1970, shows that Hugh Desmond Hoyte was congratulated by the then Speaker, Rahman Gajraj, on his appointment as a Queen's Counsel (QC), which under the Republic of Guyana became Senior Counsel (SC).

He then held the portfolio of Minister of Finance from January, 1971 to mid 1973, when he moved on to the Ministry of Works and Communications. This was followed by his being designated a Senior Minister on 24th July, 1973.

By the beginning of September, 1974, he became Minister of Economic Development and was re-designated Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives in April, 1977, and remained so until the end of December, 1980.

On 1st January, 1981, Hugh Desmond Hoyte was one of four Vice Presidents appointed under the new Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

As Vice President he held the following portfolios:

- (i) Economic Planning and Finance: from 1st January, 1981 to 30th April, 1983;
- (ii) Administration: from 1st May, 1983 to 16th October, 1983; and
- (iii) Production: from 17th October, 1983 to 15th August, 1984.

7.

On the resignation of Dr. Ptolemy A. Reid, as Prime Minister, Hugh Desmond Hoyte was appointed Prime Minister from 16th August, 1984.

On 6th August, 1985, he acceded to the Office of President and thus vacated his seat in the National Assembly and office of Prime Minister.

After the General Elections of October, 1992, Hugh Desmond Hoyte returned as an elected Member of the National Assembly and was in due course appointed Minority Leader and held that office until the 8th April, 1998.

In accordance with the recent constitutional revisions, he was elected Leader of the Opposition on 19th April, 2000, by the non-Governmental Members of the National Assembly, and held that office until his demise on Sunday, 22nd December, 2002.

Honourable Members, please let us stand and observe one minute's silence as a mark of respect for the late Leader of the Opposition".

(iv) **Congratulations to Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, M.P.**

The Speaker informed Members that Mr. Robert Herman Orlando Corbin was elected Leader of the People's National Congress following the death of Mr. Hugh Desmond Hoyte.

The Speaker, on behalf of the Members of the Assembly and himself, congratulated Mr. Corbin on his election as Leader of the People's National Congress.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

(1) By the Speaker (Chairman of the Committee of Selection):

- (i) Minutes of the Proceedings of the 1st Meeting of the Committee of Selection of the Second Session held on 16th December, 2002.

(Circulated)

- (ii) Report of the Clerk of the National Assembly on the Selection of Nominees for Membership of the Ethnic Relations Commission.

(Circulated)

(2) By the Minister of Education:

Annual Report of the Ministry of Education for the year 2001.

(Circulated)

(3) By the Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security:

- (i) Annual Report of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee for the year 2001.

(Circulated)

- (ii) The Labour (Conditions of Employment of Certain Workers) (Minimum Rate of Wages) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 32 of 2002).

(Circulated)

- (iii) The Minimum Wages (Employees at Petrol Filling Stations) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 34 of 2002).

(Circulated)

- (iv) The Minimum Wages (Watchmen) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 35 of 2002).

(Circulated)

- (v) The Minimum Wages (Cinema Employees) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 36 of 2002).

(Circulated)

- (vi) **The Minimum Wages (Shirt and Garment Workers) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 37 of 2002).**
(Circulated)
- (vii) **The Minimum Wages (Employees in Hardware Stores) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 38 of 2002).**
(Circulated)
- (viii) **The Minimum Wages (Employees in Groceries) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 39 of 2002).**
(Circulated)
- (ix) **The Minimum Wages (Employees in Dry Goods Stores) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 40 of 2002).**
(Circulated)
- (x) **The Minimum Wages (Employees in Drug Stores) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 41 of 2002).**
(Circulated)
- (xi) **The Minimum Wages (Mechanical Transport Employees) (Amendment) Order 2002 (No. 43 of 2002).**
(Circulated)
- (4) **By the Minister of Health:**
Resolution by the Parliament of Guyana on the 100th Anniversary of the Formation of the Pan American Health Organisation.
(Circulated)
- (5) **By the Minister of Finance:**
- (i) **Ministers, Members of the National Assembly and Special Offices (Emoluments) Order 2002.**
(Circulated)
- (ii) **Financial Paper No. 1/2003 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$4,917,393,445, for the period ended 31st December, 2002.**
(Circulated)

- (iii) Financial Paper No. 2/2003 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$1,293,396,680, for the period 11th October, 2002 to 31st December, 2002 - Advances made from the Contingencies Fund.

(Circulated)

- (iv) Financial Paper No. 3/2003 - Supplementary Estimates (Capital) totalling \$3,827,000, for the period ended 31st December, 2002.

(Circulated)

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS -

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS -

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS -

**REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY
ON DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE -**

**MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY
AND MOVED BY A MINISTER -**

Suspension of Standing Order No. 23(3)

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 23(3) be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its sitting on Wednesday, 19th February, 2003, with the motion submitted by Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, and published on 2003-02-17, on Notice Paper No. 36 (M9 Opp 1).

(Notice Paper No. 37(M10 Govt 9) published 2003-02-17)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS -

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

ITEM 1 - NATIONAL CRISIS

Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the economy of Guyana is in crisis as evidenced by the steep decline of the bauxite industry, serious difficulties in the rice industry, an uncertain future for the sugar industry, a decline of output in other productive sectors and the dearth of new major investments in the economy;

AND WHEREAS the Guyana Power and Light Inc., has announced steep hikes in electricity rates which citizens and businesses have complained are beyond their ability to pay and the Government is in discussion with Guyana Power and Light Inc., to arrive at an agreement which may not alleviate the burden;

AND WHEREAS the crime and security situation has continued to deteriorate;

AND WHEREAS the issues of good governance and the effective management of the economy have been of deep concern to all citizens;

AND WHEREAS the agreements for the effective functioning of the National Assembly and commitments made by the Government to the Parliamentary Opposition Parties and to the people of Guyana need to be implemented;

12.

AND WHEREAS it appears that the PPP/C has not participated in a national debate on an adjusted system of governance;

AND WHEREAS the cumulative effect of all of the above factors has contributed to a national crisis which if not addressed could lead to a national disaster with catastrophic effects for citizen and country alike:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls upon the Government to take the following actions urgently within clearly defined time frames:-

- (i) support the freeze in electricity rates at their present levels until all agreements, memoranda and commitments made by the government and or proposed agreements with respect to electricity generation, supply, and management by Guyana Power and Light have been made public and presented to the National Assembly for approval by a two-thirds majority in the Parliament;
- (ii) present, to the Parties in the National Assembly for consideration and approval, an emergency plan to lift Guyana out of its current economic crisis;
- (iii) establish a Select Committee of the National Assembly to mount a public enquiry into the functioning of the Guyana Police Force and to make recommendations for the increased efficiency and efficacy of the Force, including recommendations for improved conditions of service;
- (iv) set up an emergency fund and a rescue programme to be managed with the full involvement of the Parliamentary Opposition Parties to address the plight of the unemployed and, in particular, the unemployed youth in the many villages throughout Guyana;
- (v) establish the Parliamentary Management Committee as provided for in the St. Lucia Statement of 1998 to bring about meaningful change in the conduct of the business of the National Assembly within the spirit and letter of the said agreement;

- (vi) immediately implement the already agreed Constitutional Reforms including the establishment of the Sectoral Committees, the Standing Committee on Constitutional Reform and the Ethnic Relations Commission;
- (vii) grant permission and issue licences for the establishment of private radio stations,
- (viii) implement within a clearly defined schedule all decisions made in the Hoyte/Jagdeo dialogue process;
- (ix) end government's interference in the functioning of the Trade Union Movement by releasing the annual subventions to the Trade Union Congress; engaging the Guyana Public Service Union in proper wages and salaries negotiations; ending opposition to arbitration proceedings as a means of settling disputes in the Public Sector; and ending arbitrary government intervention to alter negotiated settlements between Trade Unions and state agencies.

(Notice Paper No. 36(M9 Opp 1) published 2003-02-17)

The motion was seconded by Mrs. Clarissa Riehl.

The Prime Minister was speaking to the motion when the time for the suspension of the sitting was reached.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.00 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4.30 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The Prime Minister continued and concluded his speech.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Winston Murray

The Minister of Housing and Water

Mrs. Sheila Holder

The Minister of Agriculture

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 7.33 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.22 p.m., the sitting was resumed..

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Abdul Kadir

Mr. Odinga Lumumba

Mr. Revi Dev

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

At 9.55 p.m., the Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation moved a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders No. 9(1) for the Assembly to continue the debate on the motion uninterrupted until its conclusion.

The motion was put and carried.

The following Members also spoke to the motion by Mr. Corbin on National Crisis:

The Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation

Mrs. Deborah Backer

The Minister of Home Affairs

Mrs. Shirley Melville

The Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Mr. Lance Carberry

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

Thereafter, Mr. Robert Corbin replied.

The motion was put and negatived on the following division:

FOR

Mr. Dev

Mrs. Melville
Mrs. Holder

Miss Allen
Miss David
Mr. Ally
Mrs. Bancroft
Mr. R. Khan
Mr. Kadir
Miss Nestor
Mr. Mc Allister

Dr. Norton

Miss Ally
Dr. Joseph
Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. Alexander
Mr. Trotman

AGAINST

Mrs. Sukhai
Mrs. Sahoye-Shury
Dr. Ramsarran
Mr. Ramjattan
Mr. Zulfikar
Mr. Rajkumar
Mr. Mohan
Mr. Lumumba
Mrs. Edwards
Mr. De Santos
Mrs. Chandarpal

Mr. Alli
Mr. Ramotar
Mr. Belgrave
Mr. Mohamed
Dr. Ramsammy
Miss Rodrigues
Mr. Nadir
Miss Shadick
Mr. Xavier
Dr. Westford

Mr. Collymore
Dr. Bisnauth

Mr. Ming
 Mr. Bernard
 Mrs. Backer
 Mr. Allen
 Mr. Carberry
 Mrs. Riehl
 Mr. Murray

Mr. Corbin

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Mr. Gajraj
 Mr. Chandarpal
 Mr. Baksh
 Mr. Kowlessar
 Dr. Jeffrey
 Miss Teixeira
 Mr. Nokta
 Mr. Rohee
 Mr. Persaud
 Mr. Hinds

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ITEM 2 - ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE TO REVIEW PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

At the request of the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, following motion was deferred:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves of the establishment of a Special Select Committee to review the public holidays appointed by the Public Holidays Act, Chapter 19:07, with a view to including as public holidays, the following days, namely:

Independence Day, that is to say, the 26th May, or, if that day is a Sunday, the following day, and

Arrival Day, that is to say, the 5th May, or, if that day is a Sunday, the following day.

(Notice Paper No. 7(M7 Govt7) published 2003-02-17)

ADJOURNMENT

At 1.45 a.m., on Thursday, 20th February, 2003, on a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the Assembly was adjourned to a date to be fixed.



NARI N. RAMKARRAN
Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.

20th February, 2003.