

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE 25<sup>TH</sup> SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND**  
**SESSION (2002-2004) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD**  
**AT 2.00 P.M.**  
**ON MONDAY, 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2004**  
**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. J. Ronald Gajraj, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs (Absent)  
(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)

\* 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.

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

\*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 - Pomeroun/Supenaam)

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Deryck M.A. Bernard, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

Mr. C. Stanley Ming, M.P.

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

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

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.

Dr. Dagleish Joseph, M.D., M.P.

Miss Anna 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.

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)

Dr. Carl Max Hanoman, M.P.

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)

(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) (Absent - on leave)

(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 2.13 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

The Clerk read Prayers.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to Mrs. Shirley J. Melville for that day's sitting.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.**

(1) By the Minister of Finance:

(i) Financial Paper No. 6/2003 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totaling \$130,321,278 for the period 2003-11-18 to 2003-12-31.

(Circulated)

(ii) Financial Paper No. 7/2003 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totaling \$6,295,602,453 for the period ending 2003-12-31.

(Circulated)

(iii) Financial Paper No. 8/2003 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totaling \$1,048,407,320 for the period 2003-12-29 to 2003-12-31.

(Circulated)

(iv) The Constitutional Offices (Remuneration of Holders) (No. 39) Order 2003.

(Circulated)

(v) The Ministers, Members of the National Assembly and Special Offices (Emoluments) (No. 40) Order 2003.

(Circulated)

(vi) Confirmation of the Customs Duties (Amendment) (No. 1) Order 2004.

(Circulated)

(vii) Constitutional Offices (Remuneration of Holders) Order No. 3 of 2004.

(Circulated)

(viii) The Ministers, Members of the National Assembly and Special Offices (Emoluments) Order No. 5 of 2004.

(Circulated)

(2) By the Minister of Foreign Affairs:

(i) Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Guyana and the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil on Partial Abolition of Visa requirements.

(Circulated)

(ii) Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel.

(Circulated)

(iii) Exclusive Economic Zone Co-operation Treaty between the Republic of Guyana and the State of Barbados concerning the Exercise of Jurisdiction in their Exclusive Economic Zones in the Area of Bilateral Overlap within each of their Outer Limits and Beyond the Outer Limits of the Exclusive Economic Zones of Other States.

(Circulated)

(3) By the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce:

(i) Report of the Special Select Committee on the Investment Bill 2003 - Bill No. 17/2003.

(Circulated)

(ii) Report of the Special Select Committee on the Small Business Bill 2003 - Bill No. 18/2003.

(Circulated)

(4) By Mr. Winston Murray (Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee)

Report of the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly on the Public Accounts of Guyana for the year 1999.

(Circulated)

**QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS -**

**For Written replies**

**No. 1 - GOVERNMENT'S POLICY FOR THE ALLOCATION OF FREQUENCY BANDS**

Mrs. Sheila Holder asked the Prime Minister the following question:

Will the Prime Minister say what is the Government's policy for the allocation of frequency bands within the overall spectrum for television, data and voice communication?

**(Notice Paper No. 69 (Q40 Opp40) published on 2003-11-12)**

**Written reply submitted by the Prime Minister:**

With respect to the allocation of frequency bands for television, the Government's policy has evolved over the past 20 years.

In the 1980s, the then government granted permission to a few operators to transmit television signals on dedicated frequency bands. During the 1990s permission was granted, on a 'first come first served' basis, to several more operators to broadcast television signals. Today, we have as many as twenty one (21) such television stations in the very high frequency (vhf) and ultra high frequency (uhf) bands, making Guyana the most open with regard to television broadcasting in the Caribbean, both respect to allocation of frequencies and broadcast programming content.

While this is so, the Government is very much aware that regulation in this sector is essential for its orderly growth and to ensure that the sector best contributes to the social and other development of our country. We are aware that at present there exist some abuse of the airwaves in the name of freedom of expression, while in some instances, citizens' rights are violated and trampled upon and social disorder is encouraged.

It was for this reason that we have introduced interim regulations and created the Advisory Committee on Broadcasting to advise the Minister of Communications on content matters and have also drafted a Broadcasting Bill, which will enable the establishment of a Broadcast Authority and will constructively address issues of programming, licensing and content regulation etc. - so that a fair and reasonable *modus operandi* can be established and maintained in the broadcasting sector. This draft legislation is at this time being considered by the major political parties and other stakeholders. Until this Broadcasting legislation is passed by Parliament, no new permissions for broadcasting will be granted.

At this time the policy regarding allocation of frequency bands for television is currently being reviewed as part of the overall review and revision of the policies and laws that relate to the broadcast sector. The Government proposes that the allocation of frequency bands for television will be undertaken by the National Frequency Management Unit based on certain key considerations, including the availability of frequencies and the recommendations of the Broadcasting Authority.

With respect to the Government's policy for allocation of frequency bands for data and voice communication, it should be noted that the operating licence granted to Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Co. Ltd. (GT&T) in December, 1990 by the then government, is of some relevance. By that licence, GT&T was given the exclusive permission to provide "national and international voice and data transmissions". Over the years since the grant of that licence there has been much debate on the interpretation of that clause, in particular and the legality of the GT&T monopoly, in general. In fact, as we speak, there are two legal challenges on these very issues pending before our courts.

It is a well known fact that the Government has commenced efforts to bring an end to the GT&T monopoly and to establish a legislative framework that would foster and regulate a competitive telecommunications sector. These efforts have encountered many difficulties that have resulted in significant delays lasting approximately 18 months. However, within the past two months there have been some positive movements in our liberalisation efforts.



However, even, as the Government's liberalization efforts continue and the legal challenges are being determined, the Government has adopted certain policy positions that have resulted in the licensing of many spectrum users for private voice services (nationally) using two way radios (e.g Taxi, Trucking, Mining, Security services etc) as well as a few users for national data services (e.g Corporate Offices sharing files amongst Branches, distributing Internet communication, accessed via a licensed Telecommunications provider, nationally and via terrestrial means). Permission has also been granted for call and data center activity, whereby direct linkages of such centers to communications satellites are permitted provided that such linkages are dedicated to the work at the site and there are no other linkage into the system of any other telecommunications provider.

At present, the Government's policy on spectrum assignment for these services has been to assign on a 'first come first served' basis and also to generally follow the recommendations and regulations as set out by the ITU, namely bands allocated for the Fixed and Land Mobile services.

Frequency spectrum allocation policy is also guided by international, regional and industry developments and trends. One example of this is the assignment of spectrum for data communication in the 2.4 GHz and 5.8 GHz bands, commonly referred to as the Industrial, Scientific and Medical Bands (ISM).

**No. 2 - IMPORTATION OF SATELLITE DISH**

Mrs. Sheila Holder asked the Prime Minister the following question:

What is the approval process for the importation of a Satellite Dish?

**(Notice Paper No. 70 (Q41 Opp41) published on 2003-11-12)**

**Written reply submitted by the Prime Minister:**

An import licence issued by the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce is required for the importation of a satellite dish. The administrative procedure involved in obtaining the import licence required that the filled in application form for the licence be submitted by the applicant to the National

Frequency Management Unit for the Unit's technical and objective consideration. The matters that will be considered by the Unit include:

1. Whether the applicant is in possession of a licence for the operation of the dish;
2. Whether the specifications of the dish are compatible with the standards in effect; and
3. The proposed use of the dish and whether such use is permitted by law of policy.

The Unit may then affix its "no objection to importation" stamp and remit the application form to the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce for further processing.

It may be noted here that there have been some instances of abuse of these procedures by applicants. In one case, a group of prominent businessmen failed to meet the criteria for grant of an import licence but pleaded for the Government's permission to clear the dish from the wharf so as to prevent damage to the equipment. They gave the commitment that they will not put the dish into use. The Government agreed to the request on the condition that the dish was not to be put to use and that was to be stored until it was re-exported or until the intended use of the dish was permitted. Unfortunately, they have completely violated the agreement and have since been operating the dish without the requisite licence.

**No. 3 - RADIO SERVICE LICENCE IN GUYANA**

Mrs. Sheila Holder asked the Prime Minister the following question:

What is the procedure for acquiring a licence to provide a radio service in Guyana?

**(Notice Paper No. 71 (Q42 Opp42) published on 2003-11-12)**

**Written reply submitted by the Prime Minister:**

For over two decades, the only licensed radio (audio) stations in Guyana have been Government owned. As such, at present there are no established procedures for issuance of radio station licences.

However, it may be observed that the draft Broadcasting Bill sets out the criteria for licensing as well as the procedures involved in obtaining broadcasting stations (including radio stations) licences. It is expected that once the new law is in force, applications for radio station licences will be considered by the Broadcasting Authority in accordance with the provisions of the law.

**No. 4 - LICENCE TO OPERATE CELLULAR SERVICE**

Mrs. Sheila Holder asked the Prime Minister the following question:

What is the procedure for acquiring a licence to operate a cellular service in Guyana?

**(Notice Paper No. 72 (Q43 Opp43) published on 2003-11-12)**

**Written reply submitted by the Prime Minister:**

Applications for licences to establish and operate cellular systems and provide cellular service in Guyana may be made to the Minister responsible for Communications. The procedures for issuance of cellular licences are set out in the Telecommunications Act, 1990 (No. 27 of 1990), particularly sections 7 and 8.

Following receipt of the application, the Minister and the National Frequency Management Unit consider the application. Among the matters considered are: the financial and technical capability of the applicant to build out (in a timely manner) and operate the system; the availability of frequencies; intended coverage area; type of technology to be employed.

The provisions of the Act are fully complied with, including the issuance of a public notice indicating the Minister's intention to grant the licence.

Over the years we have discovered a need for revision and harmonisation of the various legislation that impact the telecommunications sector. This will be accomplished in the course of reforming and modernizing the telecommunications sector policies and laws so as to foster and regulate an open, competitive sector. We have observed that many countries including the United Kingdom and Canada have approached reform of their Telecommunications sectors in a staged manner. In Guyana's case, to date we have issued four cellular licences and have decided to put a hold on considering applications for further cellular licences until we have implemented the new telecommunications legislation.

**No. 5 - GUYANA TELEPHONE & TELEGRAPH COMPANY Ltd. (G.T.&T.)**

Mrs. Sheila Holder asked the Prime Minister the following question:

How much is the Guyana Telephone & Telegraph Company Ltd. (G.T.&T.) paying the National Frequency Management Unit (NFMU) for the cellular frequency which (G.T.&T.) is utilizing?

**(Notice Paper No. 73 (Q44 Opp44) published on 2003-11-12)**

**Written reply submitted by the Prime Minister:**

GT&T pays fees for utilizing cellular frequencies based on the formula \$1944 x 60 per RF channel. This formula has its genesis in international spectrum pricing models based on exclusivity, usage, coverage and bandwidth. This formula is applicable for all cellular operators.

Essentially, GT&T has exclusive usage of the particular cellular band (Block B, 800 MHz band), with an estimated average radial coverage per cell site varying from 12 km to 23km and with a bandwidth of 30 KHz per radio frequency (RF) channel.

**No.6 - CEL \*STAR GUYANA Ltd.**

Mrs. Sheila Holder asked the Prime Minister the following question:

How much has Cel \*Star Guyana Ltd. been requested to pay for the Global System for Mobile Communications (GSM) frequency which they have been allocated?

**(Notice Paper No. 74 (Q45 Opp45) published on 2003-11-12)**

**Written reply submitted by the Prime Minister:**

Cel\*Star Guyana Inc. and all other Cellular Operators, within the 800 MHz/900 MHz bands would be required to pay fees based on the same formula applied for GT&T, which is \$1944 x 60 per RF channel. A similar formula is applicable for all Cellular Operators in bands over the 900 MHz range.

**No. 7 - INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS UNION (I.T.U.)**

Mrs. Sheila Holder asked the Prime Minister the following question:

Is Guyana a signatory to the International Telecommunications Union (I.T.U.)? If so, is the NFMU adhering to the protocol that the Industrial, Scientific and Medical (ISM) bands should be free, unlicensed to potential users and utilized for developmental purposes? If so, please state what is the NFMU's executing policy in this regard?

**(Notice Paper No. 75 (Q46 Opp46) published on 2003-11-12)**

**Written reply submitted by the Prime Minister:**

Guyana became a member of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on March 8, 1967. The ITU currently has 189 member Administrations and approximately 650 sector members.

Guyana's representative to the ITU is the National Frequency Management Unit.

I am advised by the NFMU that they are not aware of the existence of the protocol to which Mrs. Holder refers. In which case, I would appreciate further information from Mrs. Holder, as to the citation of the protocol, its date of adoption and other relevant information that would assist the NFMU and its contacts in the ITU to locate the said protocol.

However, we are aware that traditionally, the ISM bands were used for in-building and system applications such as barcode scanners, industrial microwave ovens and wireless local area networks (LANs). Such wide and general public use of these bands, might have influenced countries like the USA and Canada to designate these bands as licence free bands, users must not cause harmful interference to other users and they must accept any interference that they might receive, including interference that may cause undesired operation. This is particularly one of the main reasons why there is widespread use of spread spectrum technology in these bands, since this brand of modulation is a lot more tolerant to interference than the traditional frequency and amplitude modulation types.

Primarily because the spread spectrum equipment is relatively cheap, we find that many spectrum users in countries like Guyana use same for commercial purposes (not just developmental purposes) to build networks (wireless backbones and wireless wide area networks) using ISM frequencies.

Guyana has not adopted a similar position as USA and Canada. We have revised (lowered) the fee structure to accommodate the commercial use of spread spectrum equipment in the ISM bands to provide Internet connectivity, wirelessly.

Guyana is not alone in charging fees for the use of the ISM bands; many other Caribbean Countries do likewise.

**No. 8 - SALE PRICES OF MMA/ADA HOUSES**

Mrs. Sheila Holder asked the Minister of Agriculture the following question:

What was the criteria applied by the Mahaica Mahaicony Abary/Agricultural Development Authority (MMA/ADA) in arriving at the sale prices of MMA/ADA houses offered for sale to ex-employees and current employees at Onverwagt, West Coast Berbice who occupy those houses?

*(Notice Paper No. 76 (Q47 Opp47) published on 2003-11-12)*

**Written reply submitted by the Minister of Agriculture:**

The Chief Valuation Officer of the Ministry of Finance was requested to do a Valuation of the properties - land and buildings - for their sale. The said valuation was done.

It was agreed that occupants would be given first preference to purchase the properties.

In view of the fact that the occupants were/are employees of the Authority, the MMA sought and received on their behalf from Government the following concessions with regards to the sale prices:

- Reduction of the price of the land by half (50%);
- Reduction of the price for the building by an amount which represents the accumulated depreciation for a period of three (3) years at the rate of 10% per year.

The occupants were offered the properties at the reduced prices.

These prices represent, on average, 35 - 40% of current independent valuations in relation to those that have already been sold.

**No. 9 - DISPARITY IN THE CURRENT ASKING PRICES OF MMA/ADA EMPLOYEE HOUSES**

Mrs. Sheila Holder asked the Minister of Agriculture the following question:

How has the Minister resolved the issue of claims of disparity in the current asking prices of MMA/ADA employee houses brought to his attention in a letter of July 22, 2003 by the MMA/ADA ex-employees Association of Onverwagt, West Coast Berbice?

*(Notice Paper No. 77 (Q48 Opp48) published on 2003-11-12)*

**Written reply submitted by the Minister of Agriculture:**

There is no merit in the claims of disparity with regards to the asking prices for the properties:

- **Alleged disparity with regards to house sold by MMA/previously**  
These were buildings at different locations (not in the senior staff compound) which were to be demolished. They were valued, and sold for demolition and removal at the buyer's expense. Varied sale prices were based on the valuations.
- **Alleged disparity with prices for houses sold by other Agencies**  
As it relates to the other agencies, we understand that the sale prices were arrived at in a similar manner having regard to the value of those properties and the considerations relating to their employees/occupants.



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

**Allegations of the Existence of State Sponsored Death Squad(s) in Guyana**

A request by Mr. Robert Corbin to seek leave to move the adjournment of the Assembly to discuss a matter concerning allegations of the existence of State Sponsored Death Squad(s) in Guyana, was disallowed by the Speaker.

At 2.44p.m., the Members of the Peoples National Congress/Reform withdrew from the Chamber.

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-**

**Presentation and First Readings**

**ITEM 1 - CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) ORDER 2003] VALIDATION  
BILL 2004 - Bill No. 1/2004 published on 2004-03-04**

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to validate the Customs Duties (Amendment)  
(No. 2) Order 2003 (No. 29 of 2003) published in the Gazette on  
1<sup>st</sup> September, 2003.

**ITEM 2 - PUBLIC PROCUREMENT COMMISSION TRIBUNAL BILL 2004 - Bill No. 2/2004  
published on 2004-03-04**

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the establishment of the Public Procurement Commission Tribunal and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

**ITEM 3 - RIGHTS COMMISSIONS TRIBUNAL BILL 2004 - Bill No. 3/2004 published on 2004-03-04**

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the establishment of the Rights Commissions Tribunal and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto.

**ITEM 4 - PENSIONS (PRESIDENT) BILL 2004 - Bill No. 4/2004 published on 2004-03-04**

The Minister of Finance, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to make provision for the payment of superannuation benefits in respect of service in the Office of the President.

**ITEM 5 - AUDIT BILL 2004 - Bill No. 5/2004 published on 2004-03-11**

The Minister of Finance, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to set out the responsibilities and authority of the Auditor General; to strengthen parliamentary oversight of the working of the Auditor General; to provide for the establishment and administration of an independent Audit Office; and to regulate such other matters connected with or incidental to the independent auditing of the finances of Guyana.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**BILL - Second and Third Readings**

**ITEM 6 - GUYANA ENERGY AGENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL 2003 - Bill No. 22/2003 published on 2003-12-08**

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Guyana Energy Act 1997 to increase the powers of the Agency to grant petroleum and petroleum products import, wholesale, retail and other licences; to empower the Agency to mark petroleum and petroleum products and to apply an approved standard or specification thereto; to increase the Agency's regulation making powers and to increase penalties.

**(Read a first time on 2003-12-11)**

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Sheila Holder

The Minister in the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security

Mr. Odinga Lumumba

Thereafter, the Prime Minister replied.

The Bill was read a second time.

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

**In Committee**

Clauses 1 to 3 were passed as printed.

**Clause 4**

The Prime Minister moved the following amendment:

Section 5B(1) - Insert immediately after the words "import licence" the words "or import wholesale licence."

The amendment was put and carried.

Clauses 5 to 7 were passed as printed.

**Assembly resumed**

On a motion by the Prime Minister the Guyana Energy Agency (Amendment) Bill was read the third time and passed as amended.

**BILLS - Report from Select Committee and Third Reading**

**ITEM 7 - INVESTMENT BILL 2003 - Bill No. 17/2003 published on 2003-07-30**

On a motion by the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce:

- (i) The report of the Special Select Committee on the Investment Bill 2003, was adopted, and
- (ii) The Investment Bill 2003 was read a third time and passed as amended.

**ITEM 8 - SMALL BUSINESS BILL 2003 - Bill No. 18/2003 published on 2003-07-30**

On a motion by the Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce:

- (i) The report of the Special Select Committee on the Small Business Bill 2003, was adopted, and
- (ii) The Small Business Bill 2003 was read a third time and passed as amended.

**MOTION**

**ITEM 9 - CONFIRMATION OF THE CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT) (No. 1)**

**ORDER 2004**

The Minister of Finance moved the following motion:

RESOLVED,

That this National Assembly, in accordance with section 9 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, confirms the Customs Duties (Amendment) (No.1) Order No. 2 of 2004, which was made on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2004, under section 8 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, and published in the Official Gazette dated 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2004.

*(Notice Paper No. 93 (M35 Govt 32) published on 2004-02-10)*

The motion was put and carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 3.39 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the sitting was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Friday, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.



**HARI N. RAMKARRAN**

**Speaker of the National Assembly**

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

**15<sup>th</sup> March, 2004.**