

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 43RD SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND
SESSION (2002-2004) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY, 16TH DECEMBER, 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
(Region No. 3 -Essequibo Islands/West Demerara) (Absent - on Leave)

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 (Absent - on leave)

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)

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)

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

*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 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Deryck M.A. Bernard, M.P. (Absent)

Mr. C. Stanley Ming, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

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

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P. (Absent)

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

Dr. Dalglish 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.

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

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

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

Dr. Carl Max Hanoman, M.P.

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

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. (Absent - on Leave)

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

Ms. Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 2.05 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) **Leave:**

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to:

Mr. Stanley Ming, up to 23rd December, 2004,

Mr. Volda Lawrence,

and

Mrs. Shirley Melville for that day's sitting

(ii) **Welcome back to Mrs. Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly**

The Speaker informed the Assembly that Mrs. Lilawtie Coonjah had successfully completed a seven - week training course in Parliamentary Administration at the Lok Sabha (Parliament of India) and the Sikkim State Legislature in India.

On behalf of Members of the Assembly and himself, the Speaker congratulated Mrs. Coonjah and welcomed her back to the Parliament of Guyana.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS -

For Written reply

APPOINTMENT OF AN AMBASSADOR TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs the following question:

Will the Government appoint an Ambassador to the People's Republic of China, and if so, when?

(Notice Paper No. 157 (Q94 Opp93) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Yes, the Government of Guyana is committed to appointing a new Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. The matter is currently under consideration and an announcement will be made in due course.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Presentation and First Reading

CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2004 - Bill No. 25/2004

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 amend the Customs Act.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILL - Second Reading

ITEM 1 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH BILL 2004 - Bill No. 24/2004 published on 2004-12-02

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to continue the Ministry with responsibility for Health
and for matters connected therewith.

(Read a first time on 2004-12-09)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Dr. Dalgleish Joseph

Dr. Bheri Ramsaran

Dr. Carl Max Hanoman

Mr. Winston Murray

and

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

Thereafter, the Minister of Health replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

On a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the Ministry of Health Bill 2004 - Bill No. 24/2004, was referred to a Special Select Committee.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.14p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4.55p.m., the sitting was resumed.

MOTIONS

ITEM 2 - INCREASE IN GEOGRAPHICAL CONSTITUENCIES

Mr. Donald Ramotar moved the following motion:

WHEREAS amendments were made to the Representation Act pursuant to the Report of the Constitution Reform Commission of July 17, 1999 making recommendations on changes to the electoral system;

AND WHEREAS section 11 of the said Act was amended to provide that Guyana be divided into ten geographical constituencies for the purpose of electing Members of the National Assembly from each geographical constituency;

AND WHEREAS section 11 A of the Representation Act provides that the ten geographical constituencies shall elect twenty five Members of the National Assembly as follows: two Members for Region 1, two Members for Region 2, three Members for Region 3, seven Members for Region 4, two Members for Region 5, three Members for Region 6, two Members for Region 7, one Member for Region 8, one Member for Region 9 and two Members for Region 10;

AND WHEREAS in order to complete the reforms proposed by the Constitution Reform Commission and to consider expanding reforms already made-

RESOLVED,

That the National Assembly establishes a Special Select Committee to recommend to the National Assembly whether the twenty five seats provided for by section 11 of the Representation of the People Act should be increased and if so, by how many;

8.

FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the Special Select Committee reports to the National Assembly within two months or by such earlier date as the Elections Commission may deem necessary in order to complete preparations for the 2006 General and Regional elections.

(Notice Paper No. 164 (M61 PPP/C Private Member No. 1) published on 2004-11-22)

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs seconded the motion.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Vincent Alexander

The Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation

Mr. Ravindra Dev

and

Mr. Robert Corbin

Thereafter, Mr. Donald Ramotar replied.

The following amendment by Mr. Vincent Alexander was put and negatived.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly directs the Standing Committee on Constitutional Reform to expedite its work on the determination of the electoral system, including the number of additional seats that shall be apart for geographical constituencies;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Constitution Reform Committee reports to the National Assembly within two months or by such date by which this National Assembly may deem necessary.

The motion was then put and carried.

ITEM 3 - AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDER NO. 73(5)

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs moved the following motion:

WHEREAS Standing Order 73(5) provides that the deliberations of a Select Committee shall be held in private;

AND WHEREAS the said Standing Order also applies to Standing and Sectoral Committees;

AND WHEREAS it is desirable that the deliberations of some Committees be held in public or in private if they so decide.

RESOLVED that,

1. Standing Order 73(5) be amended to provide that meetings of the Sectoral Committees and the Public Accounts Committee be held in public except where the said Committees determine otherwise;
2. The said amendment be effected by:

(a) deleting the fullstop at the end of Standing Order 73(5) and replacing it by a colon;

(b) adding the following at the sentence as a new paragraph:

“Provided that (a) the deliberations of the Sectoral Committees and the Public Accounts Committee shall be held in public except where these Committees determine otherwise; (b) meetings of the Parliamentary Management Committee shall not be held in public”.

3. The amended Standing Order will read after the amendment as follows:

“The deliberations of a Select Committee shall be in private and shall be confined to the matter referred to it by the Assembly and any extension or limitation thereof made by the Assembly and, in the case of a Select Committee on a Bill to the Bill committed to it and relevant amendments”;

Provided that:

- (a) the deliberations of the Sectoral Committees and the Public Accounts Committee shall be held in public except where these Committees determine otherwise;**
- (b) deliberations of the Parliamentary Management Committee shall not be held in public.**

(Notice Paper No. 170 (M65 Govt60) published on 2004-12-10)

Mr. E. Lance Carberry spoke to the motion:

The motion was forthwith, without any question being put thereon, referred to the Standing Orders Committee.

**ITEM 4 - CONFIRMATION OF THE CONSUMPTION TAX (AMENDMENT) ORDER
2004**

The Minister of Finance moved the following motion:

RESOLVED,

That this National Assembly, in accordance with section 4 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, confirms the Consumption Tax (Amendment) Order 2004 which was made on 22nd November, 2004, under section 4 of the Consumption Tax Act, Chapter 80:02, and published in the Official Gazette dated 26th November, 2004.

(Notice Paper No. 167 (M64 Govt59) published on 2004-11-30)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Winston Murray

and

The Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Thereafter, the Minister of Finance replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7.53p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the sitting was adjourned to a date to be fixed.



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

Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,

Public Business,

Georgetown.

16th December, 2004.