

National Assembly Debates

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND SESSION (2002-2003) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE CONVENTION CENTER OCEAN VIEW INTERNATIONAL HOTEL LILIENDAAL

7TH SITTING

2.00 PM

MONDAY 14 APRIL 2003

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 - People's Progressive Party/Civic (34)

The Hon. Samuel A. A. Hinds, M.P.	- <i>Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications</i>
The Hon. Rzepu Daman Persaud, O.R., J.P., M.P.	- <i>Minister of Parliamentary Affairs</i>
The Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation</i>
The Hon. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Local Government and Regional Development</i>
The Hon. Gail Teixeira, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport</i>
The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Education</i>
The Hon. Saisnarine Kowlessar, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Finance</i>
The Hon. Shaik K. Z. Baksh, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Housing and Water</i>
The Hon. Navindranath O. Chundupal, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Agriculture; Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica</i>
The Hon. J. Ronald Gajraj, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Home Affairs; Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/ West Demerara (Absent)</i>
The Hon. Rev. Dr. Ramnath D.A. Bisnath, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security</i>
The Hon. Clinton C. Collymore, M.P.	- <i>Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development</i>
The Hon. Satyadeow Sawh, M.P.	- <i>Minister of Fisheries, Other Crops and Livestock (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Parbice)</i>

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- *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. Belgrave, C.C.H., J.P., M.P. - *(Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica) Mr. Donald R. Ramotar, M.P.*
- Mr Husman Alli, 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, 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) (Absent)*
- 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. - (AOL)
Mr. Winston S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P. - (AOL)
Mrs. Clarissa S. Riehl, M.P. - Deputy Speaker of the N.A. (AOL)
Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P. - Chief Whip (AOL)
Mr. Ivor Allen, M.P. - (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Siparuni) (AOL)
Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P. - (AOL)
Mr. Deryck M.A. Bernard, M.P. - (AOL)
Mr. C. Stanley Ming, M.P. - (AOL)
Mr. Raphael G. C. Trotman, M.P. - (AOL)
Mr. Vincent L. Alexander, M.P. - (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica) (AOL)
Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P. - (AOL)
Dr. Dalgleish Joseph, M.D., M.P. - (AOL)
Miss Anna Ally, M.P. - (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice) (AOL)
Miss Sandra M. Adams, M.P. - (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice) (AOL)

Mr. Jerome Khan, M.P. - (AOL)
Dr. George A. Norton, M.P. - (AOL)
Miss Myrna E. N. Peterkin, M.P. - (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica) (AOL)
Mr. James K. McAllister, M.P. - (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands West Demerara) (AOL)

Dr. Carl Max Hanoman, M.P. - (AOL)
Miss Lurline A. Nestor, M.P. - (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica) (AOL)
Mr. Abdul Kadir, J.P., M.P. - (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice) (AOL)
Mr. Ricky Khan, M.P. - (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini) (AOL)
Mrs. R. Bancroft, M.P. - (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni) (AOL)
Mr. Nasir Ally, J.P., M.P. - (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne) (AOL)
Miss Judith David, M.P. - (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni) (AOL)
Miss Genevieve Allen, M.P. - (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica) (AOL)
(One Vacancy)

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

- Mrs. Sheila V.A. Holder, M.P.
Mrs. Shirley J. Melville, M.P. - (Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo) (AOL)

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

- Mr. Ravindra Dev, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

Mrs. Ulawie Cronjsh, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

PRAYERS

The Clerk reads the Prayer

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER

Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy: Mr Speaker, I respectfully ask your leave, once again, to draw your attention, and that of this House, to another breach of privilege by the Honourable Member of Parliament of the People's National Congress/Reform, Mr Vincent Alexander.

I refer, Mr Speaker, to a letter published in the *Stabroek News* and the *Kaieteur News* of 10 April 2003, written by Mr Vincent Alexander.

In that letter, Mr Speaker, Mr Alexander stated that, in the face of what he described as the country's downward path, yourself and some erstwhile Members of the National Assembly engaged in a calculated distraction in focusing on the events of 28 March. Mr Alexander was referring to our criticisms and your criticisms of their actions on 28 March 2003, within the National Assembly, and within the precincts of the National Assembly. Actions in this House, on 7 April were referred to the Committee of Privileges. None of us here, Mr Speaker, are erstwhile, since the words refer to *former*. I certainly am not a former Member of this House. I know Mr Alexander would like to render us all as former, but the people elected us, and only the people could make that decision at the appropriate time.

In one of the paragraphs, Mr Alexander accused the PPP/Civic in the person of you, Mr Speaker, and some other Members of the National Assembly, of engaging in a propaganda blitz in lieu of good governance. In his letter, he dismissed the March 28 action as just a short interruption, thus seeing nothing wrong in interfering with the work of this House.

Classifying you as one of *these people*, Mr Speaker, Mr Alexander cited a litany of alleged wrong-doings, and accused all of us of

grandstanding. Mr Speaker, Mr Alexander sought to implicate us, the Members of this House, and yourself, in the killing of protestors in the compound of the Presidential Secretariat, and sought to defend those protestors who invaded the compound of the Presidential Secretariat.

In the same letter, he accused Minister Teixeira of lying. I was one who was critical of the attempts of the PNC/R Members to disrupt Parliament on 28 March. I was one who named certain Members of Parliament of being part of the illegal activities within the Halls of Parliament, and within the precincts of Parliament. Mr Alexander was one of those Members who not only participated in illegal action within the precincts of Parliament, but also entered this House during the suspension. I reiterate that Mr Alexander was part of the exercise. Mr Alexander was not at work during the disgraceful attack of Parliament; Mr Alexander was part of that exercise, yet he described me as pious in my stating that fact.

He concluded by referring to us all, Mr Speaker, to you and to the Members of this House as demons. As an elected Member, trying to do my job, I object to you being called a demon; and to any one of us being called a demon. I object to any Member being called a demon.

I request an apology from Mr Alexander, and I suggest this House demands an apology. Using my privilege as an elected Member of this House, I ask again that this matter be referred to a Committee of Privilege.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member. I find a prima facie case has been made out. The matter is referred to the Committee of Privileges.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ECT.

(1) *By The Speaker (Chairman of the Committee of Selection)*

Minutes of the Proceedings of the 3rd Meeting of the Committee of

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Selection of the Second Session held on 8 April 2003

(2) By the *Minister of Labour, Human Services and Special Security*

State Paper No. 2003 on the following Convention and Recommendation, which were *adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 89th Session held in June 2001*:

- (i) Safety and Health in Agriculture, Convention 2001, No. 184.
- (ii) Safety and Health in Agriculture, Recommendation 2001, No. 192

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Presentation and First Reading

By the *Minister of Finance*

**FISCAL ENACTMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2003 - Bill
No. 3/2003**

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

1. CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 1/2003

The Speaker: Under this item we will consider the Financial Paper No. 1/2003. The Assembly will resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider this Financial Paper.

Assembly in Committee

The Chairman: The Honourable Minister of Finance

Hon Saisnarine Kowlessar: Mr Chairman, in accordance with Article 171(2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recom-

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mended, for consideration by the Assembly, the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/2003, Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totaling \$4,917,393,445, for the period ended 31 December 2002, and I now move the Motion.

The Chairman: The next item is the Consideration of Financial Paper No. 2/2003 [*Pause*]

Thank you, Honourable Members, for your patience.

Motion proposed.

Honourable Members, we will now consider the Paper as usual, that is, the item will be taken from both the Current and the Capital Estimates in the order for which the Minister is responsible. If you would not look at the Financial Paper:

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SECTION A - CURRENT ESTIMATES

ITEM 1 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$3,756,538,445 for Agency Code 03/1 - Ministry of Finance, COA 231 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 03/1 - Ministry of Finance, COA 231 - Ministry Administration - \$3,756,538,445 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

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SECTION B - CAPITAL ESTIMATES

On the second page there is the Capital Estimates I will put them one by one.

ITEM 1 - DIVISION CODE 519 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS - SEA DEFENCES (Subhead 15004)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$37,782,000 for Division Code 519 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Sea Defences (Subhead 15004) - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 519 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Sea Defences (Subhead 15004) - \$37,782,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 2 - DIVISION CODE 521 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS (Subhead 14002)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$ 4,983,000 for Division Code 521 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications (Subhead 14002) - stands part of the Estimates

Division Code 521 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications (Subhead 14002) - \$4,983,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 2 - DIVISION CODE 521 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS (Subhead 14011)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$5,110,000 for Division Code 521 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications (Subhead 14011) - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 521 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications (Subhead 14011) - \$5,110,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 - DIVISION CODE 524 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND WATER (Subhead 28001)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$108,797,000 for Division Code 524 - Ministry of Housing and Water (Subhead 28001) - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 524 - Ministry of Housing and Water (Subhead 28001) - \$108,797,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 4 - DIVISION CODE 543 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (Subhead 26002)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$15,683,000 for Division Code 543 - Ministry of Education (Subhead 26002) - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 543 - Ministry of Education (Subhead 26002) - \$15,683,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 5 - DIVISION CODE 547 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (Subhead 26001)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$490,500,000 for Division Code 547 - Ministry of Education (Subhead 26001) - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 547 - Ministry of Education (Subhead 26001) - \$490,500,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 6 - DIVISION CODE 548 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS - BRIDGES/ROADS (Subhead 12001).

Question is proposed that the sum of \$498,000,000 for Division Code 548 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Bridges/Roads (Subhead 12001) - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 548 - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - Bridges/Roads (Subhead 12001) - \$498,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

We will now proceed to the next Financial Paper.

2. CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 2/2003

Hon Saisnarine Kowlessar: Mr Chairman, in accordance with Article 171(2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the Assembly, the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 2/2003 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$1,293,396,680, for the period 11 October 2002 to 31 December 2002, advances made from the Contingencies Fund, and I now move the Motion.

The Chairman: Thank you, Honourable Minister.

Motion proposed.

We will consider the Financial Paper as usual.

SECTION A - CURRENT ESTIMATES

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ITEM 1 - OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT - Head Office Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$20,000, 000 for Agency Code 01/1 - Office of the President, COA 172 - Head Office Administration - stands part of the Estimates

The Chairman: Honourable Member, Mrs Sheila Holder

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: I would like to ask the Minister what portion of this amount relates to what is owed for electricity charges for the Office of the President? Is this the full amount, or is it a partial amount?

Hon Samuel AA Hinds: Mr Chairman, I think it is the full amount owing at that time.

The Chairman: Thank you.

Agency Code 01/1 - Office of the President, COA 172 - Head Office Administration - \$20,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 2 - OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT - Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and other Services)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$5,500,000 for Agency 01/2 - Office of the President, COA 194 - Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and other Services) - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 01/2 - Office of the President, COA 194 - Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and other Services) - \$5,500,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$150,000,000 for Agency Code 03/1 - Ministry of Finance, COA 172 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 03/1 - Ministry of Finance, COA 172 - Ministry Administration - \$150,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$10,000,000 for Agency Code 03/1 - Ministry of Finance, COA 194 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 03/1 - Ministry of Finance, COA 194 - Ministry Administration - \$10,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand

part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$135,000,000 for Agency Code 03/1 - Ministry of Finance, COA 271 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 03/1 - Ministry of Finance, COA 271 - Ministry Administration - \$135,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 4 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE - Accountant General's Department

Question is proposed that the sum of \$24,073,027 for Agency Code 03/02 - Ministry of Finance, COA 252 - Accountant General's Department - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 03/02 - Ministry of Finance, COA 252 - Accountant General's Department - \$24,073,027 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 5 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - Foreign Relations

Question is proposed that the sum of \$753,000 for Agency Code 04/02 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, COA 171 - Foreign Relations - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 04/02 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, COA 171 - Foreign Relations - \$753,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 5 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - Foreign Relations

Question is proposed that the sum of \$236,000 for Agency Code

04/02 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, COA 184 - Foreign Relations - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 04/02 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, COA 184 - Foreign Relations - \$236,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 5 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS - Foreign Relations

Question is proposed that the sum of \$14,886,000 for Agency Code 04/02 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, COA 194 - Foreign Relations - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 04/02 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, COA 194 - Foreign Relations - \$14,886,000 - agreed to, an ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 6 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM, INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,925,000 for Agency 23/02 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, COA 181 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates

Agency Code 23/02 - Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce, COA 181 - Ministry Administration - \$1,925,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 7 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION - Ministry Administration

Question is proposed that the sum of \$35,000,000 for Agency 41/3 - Ministry of Education, COA 192 - Ministry Administration - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: The Honourable Member, Mrs Sheila Holder.

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Mrs Sheila VA Holder: I would like to ask what is the nature of this additional expenditure for the School-Feeding Programme?

The Chairman: The Honourable Member, Dr Jeffrey

Hon Dr Henry B Jeffrey: Mr Speaker in, 2002 the Government decided to rationalize the school-feeding programme for providing blanket coverage for the Hinterland, every child in the Hinterland Region from nursery to primary, and ten percent coverage for the coastland. As a result, the cost of the school feeding programme went up and, therefore, the result is what we have here at this point of time.

Agency Code 41/3 - Ministry of Education, COA 192 - Ministry Administration - \$35,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 8 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS - Guyana Police Force

Question is proposed that the sum of \$18,500,000 for Agency 51/2 - Ministry of Home Affairs, COA 124 - Guyana Police Force - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 51/2 - Ministry of Home Affairs, COA 124 - Guyana Police Force - \$18,500,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 8 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS - Guyana Police Force

Question is proposed that the sum of \$14,550,000 for Agency 51/2 - Ministry of Home Affairs, COA 184 - Guyana Police Force - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 51/2 - Ministry of Home Affairs, COA 184 - Guyana Police Force - \$14,550,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

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ITEM 9 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE - Defence Headquarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$24,000,000 for Agency 53/1 - Guyana Defence Force, COA 165 - Defence Headquarters - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 53/1 - Guyana Defence Force, COA 165 - Defence Headquarters - \$24,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 9 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE - Defence Headquarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$5,900,000 for Agency 53/1 - Guyana Defence Force, COA 171 - Defence Headquarters - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 53/1 - Guyana Defence Force, COA 171 - Defence Headquarters - \$5,900,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 9 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE - Defence Headquarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$48,000,000 for Agency 53/1 - Guyana Defence Force, COA 192 - Defence Headquarters - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 53/1 - Guyana Defence Force, COA 192 - Defence Headquarters - \$48,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 9 - GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE - Defence Headquarters

Question is proposed that the sum of \$15,800,000 for Agency 53/

1 - Guyana Defence Force, COA 205 - Defence Headquarters - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency 53/1 - Guyana Defence Force, COA 205 - Defence Headquarters - \$15,800,000 – agreed, to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 10 - REGION 1: Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$229,674 for Agency Code 71/1 - Region 1: COA 181 - Regional Administration and Finance - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 71/1 - Region 1: COA 181 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$229,674 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 11 - REGION 1: Public Works

Question is proposed that the sum of \$4,034,371 for Agency 71/3 - Region 1: COA 181 - Public Works - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 71/3 - Region 1: COA 181 - Public Works - \$4,034,371 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 12 - REGION 1: Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$3,099,000 for Agency 71/4 - Region 1: COA 181 - Education Delivery - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Are you on Item 12, Mrs Holder?

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: I would like to ask the subject Minister ...

The Chairman: ... on Item 12?

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: Yes!

The Chairman: Proceed.

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: ... how prudent it is to spend this quantity of money in repairing a vehicle? It seems an inordinately large sum to spend on repairing a vehicle, given the fact that reconditioned vehicles could be had for this price.

The Chairman: Honourable Member, are you talking about Item 13?

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: Yes.

The Chairman: Could you just give us a moment? I have not completed Item 12.

Agency Code 71/4 - Region 1: COA 181 - Education Delivery - \$3,099,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 13 - REGION 3: Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$400,000 for Agency 73/1 - Region 3: COA 111 - Regional Administration and Finance - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Now we can take Mrs Holder's question.

Hon Harripersaud Nokta: The amounts sought here are to defray expenses for the Regional Chairman, Councillors' travel and subsistence, and also repairs to the Chairman's vehicle.

The Chairman: Thank you. *[Pause]* I gather that is not what you were asking, Mrs Holder.

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: No, Mr Chairman. I see a specific provision for \$400,000. I thought this was related to the repairs of the vehicle.

Hon Harripersaud Nokta: Mr Chairman, at all times the Regional

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Administrations, not only Region 3, exercise prudence in travelling, but here is where the Regions have to have meetings of the various committees and sub-committees and, as the legend says here, the amount is not only to repair the Chairman's vehicle, but also to defray expenses for the Chairman and Councillors' subsistence.

Now, Head No 161 - Local Travel and Expenses - To meet local travel and subsistence for staff of Region 3 Administration, including travel to Leguan, Wakenaam, Hogg Island, Fort Island, and to other areas in the Essequibo River. As you know, travelling by river with speed boats, fast boats, consume more fuel than travelling on the road way.

Agency Code 73/1 - Region 3: COA 111 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$400,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 13 - REGION 3: Regional Administration and Finance

Question is proposed that the sum of \$100,000 for Agency Code 73/1 - Region 3: COA 161 - Regional Administration and Finance - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 73/1 - Region 3: COA 161 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$100,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 14 - REGION 3: Agriculture

Question is proposed that the sum of \$250,000 for Agency Code 73/2 - Region 3: COA 131 - Agriculture - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 73/2 - Region 3: COA 131 - Agriculture - \$250,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

ITEM 14 - REGION 3: Agriculture

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,500,000 for Agency Code 73/2 - Region 3: COA 153 - Agriculture - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 73/2 - Region 3: COA 153 - Agriculture - \$1,500,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 14 - REGION 3: Agriculture

Question is proposed that the sum of \$2,000,000 for Agency Code 73/2 - Region 3: COA 155 - Agriculture - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 73/2 - Region 3: COA 155 - Agriculture - \$2,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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ITEM 15 - REGION 3: Public Works

Question is proposed that the sum of \$200,000 for Agency Code 73/3 - Region 3: COA 131 - Public Works - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 73/3 - Region 3: COA 131 - Public Works - \$200,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 15 - REGION 3: Public Works

Question is proposed that the sum of \$513,000 for Agency Code 73/3 - Region 3: COA 142 - Public Works - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 73/3 - Region 3: COA 142 - Public Works - \$513,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 15 - REGION 3: Public Works

Question is proposed that the sum of \$420,000 for Agency Code

73/3 - Region 3: COA 152 - Public Works - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 75/4 - Region 5: COA 181 - Education Delivery - \$850,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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ITEM 23 - REGION 5: Health Services

Question is proposed that the sum of \$695,000 for Agency Code 75/5 - Region 5: COA 181 - Health Services - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 75/5 - Region 5: COA 181 - Health Services - \$695,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 24 - REGION 6: Public Works

Question is proposed that the sum of \$9,203,158 for Agency Code 76/3 - Region 6: COA 181 - Public Works - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 76/3 - Region 6: COA 181 - Public Works - \$9,203,158 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 25 - REGION 6: Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$7,793,577 for Agency Code 76/4 - Region 6: COA 181 - Education Delivery - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 76/4 - Region 6: COA 181 - Education Delivery - \$7,793,577 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 26 - REGION 7: Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$5,000,000 for Agency Code

77/4 - Region 7: COA 192 - Education Delivery - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 77/4 - Region 7: COA 192 - Education Delivery - \$ 5,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 27 - REGION 9: Public Works

Question is proposed that the sum of \$1,022,000 for Agency Code 79/3 - Region 9: COA 131 - Public Works - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 79/3 - Region 9: COA 131 - Public Works - \$1,022,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 28 - REGION 10: Education Delivery

Question is proposed that the sum of \$14,887,000 for Agency Code 80/4 - Region 10: COA 181 - Education Delivery - stands part of the Estimates.

Agency Code 80/4 - Region 10: COA 181 - Education Delivery - \$14,887,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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SECTION B - CAPITAL ESTIMATES

ITEM 1 - DIVISION CODE 501 - OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT (Subhead 17001)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$3,500,000 for Division Code 501 - Office of the President (Subhead 17001) - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 501 - Office of the President (Subhead 17001) - \$3,500,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 2 - DIVISION CODE 507 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (Subhead 24001)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$8,500,000 for Division Code 507 (Subhead 24001) - Ministry of Home Affairs - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 507 - Ministry of Home Affairs (Subhead 24001) - \$8,500,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 2 - DIVISION CODE 507 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (Subhead 26001)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$30,500,000 for Division Code 507 (Subhead 26001) - Ministry of Home Affairs - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 507 - Ministry of Home Affairs (Subhead 26001) - \$30,500,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 - DIVISION CODE 526 -MINISTRY OF FINANCE (Subhead 45008)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$584,443,067 for Division Code 526 (Subhead 45008) - Ministry of Home Affairs - stands part of the Estimates.

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: I would like to ask the Honourable Minister:

1. How he envisages recouping this loan?
2. On the Youth Initiative Programme, could he say which programmes, specifically, are being referred to?

Hon Saisnarine Kowlessar: Mr Chairman, the funds there reflect a number of things -working capital for the operations of Linmine and Bermine on the payment for community power, as well as severance

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payments made to the workers when they were severed at that time.

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: Mr Chairman, I was attempting to ascertain from the Minister how he anticipated that this loan would be repaid with respect to the Linmine Bauxite Industry. And the second query was with regard to the programmes of the Youth Choice Initiative.

Hon Samuel AA Hinds: Mr Chairman, this money advanced to Linmine is taken as a loan and it would come up for consideration at such time as one may have privatization arrangement as to how to handle it.

Hon Saisnarine Kowlessar: Mr Chairman, in relation to the Youth Choice Initiative Programme, the expenditures there involved a number of things including construction of a fence, pavilion, multi-purpose centre and repairs at various locations which included Soesdyke, Grove, Beterverwagting, Lusignan, Albouystown (Boxing Gym), New Amsterdam as well as the purchase of equipment and materials.

The Chairman: Thank you, Honourable Members.

Division Code 526 - Ministry of Home Affairs (Subhead 45008) - \$584,443,067 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 3 - DIVISION CODE 526 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE (Sub Head 45009)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$50,000,000 for Division Code 526 (Subhead 45009) - Ministry of Finance - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 526 - Ministry of Finance (Subhead 45009) - \$50,000,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

ITEM 4 - DIVISION CODE 540 - REGION 10 (Subhead 25003)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$4,500,000 for Division Code 540 - Region 10 (Subhead 25003) - stands part of the Estimates.

Division Code 540 - Region 10 (Subhead 25003) - \$4,500,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3. CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 3

The Chairman: The Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon Saisnarine Kowlessar: Mr Chairman, in accordance with Article 171(2) of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended, for consideration by the Assembly, the Motion for the approval of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 3/2003 - Supplementary Estimates for Capital for the period ended 31 December 2002, totalling \$3,827,000, and I now move the motion.

Question proposed.

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SECTION B - CAPITAL ESTIMATES

ITEM 1 - DIVISION 521 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND COMMUNICATIONS (Subhead 14002)

Question is proposed that the sum of \$3,827,000 for Division Code 521 (Subhead 14002) - Ministry of Public Works and Communications - stands part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: The Honourable Member, Mrs Sheila Holder.

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: Would the Honourable Minister please indicate to me to whom these disbursements will be made, whether or not, after these disbursements, there will still be an outstanding amount or will this complete what is owing in respect to these highways?

Hon C Anthony Xavier: Mr Chairman, this amount was sought to

bring to account specific expenditures - those are expenditures of a foreign nature for 2001. The need for additional disbursements is due to the fact that there were foreign inflows on the project in excess of the amount budgeted. Once this supplementary provision is approved then these expenditures will be brought into account in 2002 and that will square off that expenditure.

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: The other part of my question was not answered: To whom would these disbursements be paid?

Hon C Anthony Xavier: These disbursements would be paid to the contractor on the Georgetown/Soesdyke contract.

The Chairman: Do you wish to name that person?

Hon C Anthony Xavier: If she wishes.

The Chairman: I think this is what Mrs Holder wants.

Hon C Anthony Xavier: Seeram Brothers Ltd.

The Chairman: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Division Code 521- Ministry of Public Works and Communications (Subhead 14002) - \$3,827,000 - agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

I think this completes consideration of all the items.

Question -

That the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Papers Nos. 1, 2 and 3/2003 - Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totaling \$4,917,393,445 for the period ended 31 December 2002; \$1,293,396,680 for the period 11 October 2002 to 31 December 2002; and \$3,827,000 for the period ending 31 December 2002.

Put and agreed to.

Assembly Resumes

Hon Saisnarine Kowlessar: Mr Speaker, I have to report to the Assembly that the Committee of Supply has considered Financial Paper No. 1, 2 and 3/2003 and passed them without amendment. I now move that this Assembly doth agree with the Committee's Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

4. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE TO REVIEW PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves of the establishment of the 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

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

Hon Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr Speaker, this Motion seeks to establish a Special Select Committee to review the public holidays appointed under the Public Holidays Act. This Motion was passed before, but since the prorogation of the Parliament the time, or lapse - which of the two is a better word, consequently, it has to be re-introduced so that we can have this Committee of Selection appointed to look at the entire holiday structure. I propose the Motion, Mr Speaker.

Question proposed.

The Speaker: Are there any speakers, Honourable Minister, [Pause] I do not suppose that there will be anybody speaking on the Motion.

Hon Reepu Daman Persaud: No

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

5. THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CO- OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA CONCERNING CO-OPERATION TO SUPPRESS ILLICIT TRAFFIC BY SEA AND AIR 2001

WHEREAS the Agreement between the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Government of the United States of America concerning co-operation to Suppress Illicit Traffic by Sea and Air 2001 was concluded in April 2001;

AND WHEREAS the Agreement has, as its principal objective, the suppression and eradication of the illicit trafficking in narcotics by sea;

AND WHEREAS the Agreement seeks to reduce the ability of illicit narcotics traffickers to elude maritime law enforcement agencies within and outside the territorial waters of Guyana, as well as to strengthen Guyana's maritime law enforcement capabilities in this areas;

AND WHEREAS the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs and its 1972 Protocol, the 1971 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea recognize that effective measures against abuse of narcotic drugs require coordinated and universal

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action through international co-operation;

AND WHEREAS the Agreement seeks to further international co-operation in the fight against the illegal narcotics trade, as well as to strengthen and enhance legal measures for international co-operation in criminal matters for suppressing illicit traffic by sea;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves of the decision of the Government of Guyana to become party to the aforementioned Agreement.

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Foreign Affairs.

Hon S Rudolph Insanally: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I take the floor to submit to this Assembly for ratification the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Guyana and the United States of America concerning co-operation to suppress illicit traffic by sea and air.

Mr Speaker, the vulnerability of small Caribbean States to external threats has long been recognized.

Guyana's position on the South American mainland is no different and, in some cases, it can be said to be more pronounced. The country, being located as it is on an extensive land mass bordered by long stretches of heavily-forested territory, is not easily policed.

Our security is frequently challenged by existing emerging activities, such as trafficking in illegal drugs and firearms, money laundering, corruption and transnational organized crime, to name but a few. With limited resources, both human and financial, it has become difficult, if not impossible, to cope with these growing threats.

In these circumstances, it is desirable to enter into co-operative agreements with friendly States in order to enhance our capacity to address our security concerns. In this scheme of arrangements we continue to work closely with CARICOM and neighbouring countries in order to mount common defences against encroachment on our sovereignty.

Mr Speaker, the preservation of our Region's safety and stability demands an all-embracing partnership for security in our hemisphere. This is based on the recognition of the inter-dependence of our island and mainland States, and the need for a coordinated approach to addressing new and changing security threats.

CARICOM States have expressed support for a multi-dimensional approach to hemispheric security at several fora, including the OAS General Assembly last year in Barbados, and the second high-level meeting on the special security concerns of small States in St Vincent and the Grenadines. They have also favoured the inclusiveness of such a strategy in the special conference on security, which is to be held later this year in Mexico.

The need for international co-operation in suppressing illicit traffic has been recognized in the 1961 single convention on narcotic drugs, the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, the 1982 United Nations Convention in the Law of the Sea, and the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

The 1988 Convention itself requires parties to consider entering into bilateral agreements to enhance the effectiveness and to carry out its provisions. Guyana, along with its Caribbean and South American neighbours, such as Antigua, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Trinidad, Suriname and Venezuela, have all signed such agreements.

Mr Speaker, the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Guyana and the United States of America concerning co-operation to suppress illicit traffic by sea and air, often referred to as the

Ship-rider Agreement, is an example of this increased co-operation with the United States through a bilateral mechanism to increase the effectiveness of this country's efforts to counter illicit trafficking.

The Agreement covers activities in areas such as ship-boarding, entry to investigate, over-flight co-operation and assistance. The combined programmes contemplated by the agreement is designed to provide qualified law enforcement officers to act as ship-riders, and it provides a focal point for the approval of the embarkation of such officers on US law enforcement vessels - the pursuit by such vessels of suspect vessels or aircraft that may flee into Guyana's waters or airspace, and generally for the enforcement of the laws of Guyana in accordance with international law.

The Agreement further seeks to reduce the ability of illicit narcotics traffickers to elude maritime law-enforcement agencies, both within and outside of Guyana's territorial waters, as well as to strengthen the capacity of Guyana to enforce its territorial and extra-territorial maritime jurisdictions.

Apart from its preamble and definition of its terms, Mr Speaker, the Agreement provides explicitly for its *modus operandi* the various articles specified, for example, the rights and obligations of the Parties, rules for maritime and over-flight exercises, the authority of the law enforcement officials of both countries, procedures for consultation and notification, jurisdiction, the disposition of seized assets, the entry into force, and the duration of the agreement.

It is safe to say, Mr Speaker, that Article 3 of the Agreement that states operations in and over the territory and waters of either Party are the responsibility of, and subject to the authority, of that Party. There is therefore no question of sovereignty and jurisdiction.

Mr Speaker, subsumed within this instant Agreement is an over-flight procedure, which provides for planned bilateral and multilateral enforced operations, as well as the exchange of information between the

law enforcement and aviation authorities of the respective parties.

The 1996 Memorandum of Agreement on over-flight, previously concluded between the Parties, is accordingly superseded and replaced. Once ratified, Mr Speaker, the Agreement will constitute a legal basis for co-operation between the law enforcement agencies of Guyana and the United States of America in the areas specified.

Mr Speaker, finally I may remark the fact that individual States within CARICOM examining and signing bilateral, as opposed to multi-lateral, agreements relating to maritime law enforcement, should not see this as divisive or derogating from their sovereignty, but rather as complementing and strengthening the agreements to which these countries may already have been a Party. Each territory has its own peculiar security concerns and should explore all opportunities for addressing them. This in no way diminishes the commitment to the eradication of a common threat to the peace and security of the Region.

Mr Speaker, within this context, and in recognition of the need for Guyana to strengthen and enhance its response to the illicit traffic of illegal narcotics through coordinated universal action and international co-operation, the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Guyana and the United States of America concerning co-operation to suppress illicit traffic by sea and air is now commended to this House for ratification. I thank you. *[Applause]*

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

6. THE CONVENTION ON THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFERRING OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND THEIR DESTRUCTION

WHEREAS the Convention on the prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction was concluded at Oslo on

September 18, 1987, and opened for signature in Ottawa, Canada on 2 December, 1997;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana signed the Convention on December 4, 1997;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana supports the international effort to put an end to the use of landmines, a practice which not only contradicts the provisions of international humanitarian law, but also causes serious and unnecessary suffering to non-combatants, particularly children.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly hereby agrees to the Secretary General of the United Nations being informed of Guyana's intention to ratify the Government on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction by the deposit of an appropriate Instrument of Ratification.

The Speaker: The Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Foreign Affairs.

Hon S Rudolph Insanally: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I have the honour to place before this House the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction for consideration and early ratification by the Government of Guyana.

Mr Speaker, the use of widespread anti-personnel mines, both in international wars and in domestic upheavals, has left us all a legacy of these deadly munitions, thousands upon thousands of which remain unexploded. Their uncertain locations in the earth and detonation upon contact have caused great harm to humanity. Here there is a legacy of purposeful death or severe injury occurring by chance, and often totally

unrelated to any current political choice or agenda. Their original purpose may even have been entirely forgotten.

Happily, Mr Speaker, this category of weapons was outlawed by the international community with the entry into force of the Ottawa Land Mines Treaty on 1 March, 1999. Guyana became a signatory to the convention on 4 December 1997, and is one of only two CARICOM member States of the United Nations yet to ratify. The other, I may mention in passing, is Haiti. As at the end of November 2001, there were 130 states/parties, while three more countries have submitted their ratification instruments. It may be noted, in passing, that all of Guyana's immediate neighbours - Brazil, Suriname and Venezuela, and indeed all the countries of South America - have now ratified the Convention. There is, therefore, no other consideration.

Mr Speaker, the purpose of the Convention is well-stated in the preamble, which I quote:

...determine to put an end to the suffering in casualties caused by anti-personnel mines that kill or maim hundreds of people every week, mostly innocent and defenceless civilians, and especially children; hinder economic development and reconstruction, inhibit the repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons, and have, often, severe consequences for years after encasement.

Mr Speaker, by becoming a Party to the Convention under Article 1 - General Obligations, paragraph 1, each state/party undertakes never, under any circumstance:

- (a) to use anti-personnel mines;
- (b) to develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, anti-personnel mines; and
- (c) to assist, encourage, or induce in any way, anyone to

engage in any activity prohibited to a state/party under this Convention, and each State undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

Mr Speaker, although it is not practical here for me to recite all of our obligations under the Convention, I may highlight the two most important ones:

1. In Article 4 it states, *except as provided for in Article 3, each State party undertakes to destroy, or ensure the destruction, of all stockpile anti-personnel mines it owns or possesses, or that are under its jurisdiction or control (and here I emphasize) as soon as possible, but not later than four years after the entry into force of the Convention for that State party.*

2. Which relates to the destruction of the anti-personnel mines in the mine areas, the stipulation is that *each Party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mine areas under its jurisdiction, or control, as soon as possible, but not later than ten years after the entry into force of this Convention for that State party.*

Mr Speaker, reporting obligations under the Convention should also be noted, in respect of the transparency measures in Article 7 first paragraph, and I quote:

...each State party shall report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, as soon as practicable, and in any event, not later than 180 days after the entry into force of this Convention of that State party, on the national implementation measures referred to in Article 9 (2), the total of all stockpile anti-personnel mines owned or possessed by it, or under its jurisdiction or control, to include a breakdown of the type, quantity and, if possible, lot number of each type of anti-personnel land-mines stockpiled by it.

Mr Speaker, I may also usefully mention that there are provisions in

the Convention for international co-operation and assistance, under Article 6 of the Convention, which states that *in fulfilling its obligation under this Convention, each state/party has the right to seek and receive assistance, where feasible, from other states/parties to the extent possible.*

The Government of Guyana will therefore be able to draw on such assistance in order to honour its obligations under the agreement. Guyana, therefore, has nothing to lose and, indeed, has much to gain by ratifying this Convention. It adds luster to our foreign policy by projecting us as a country with continuing humanitarian concerns, and by providing a fillip to our initiatives (Dr Jagan's initiative) now before the UN General Assembly, namely, *The Proposed New Global Human Order*, which stresses humanitarian concerns.

Mr Speaker, to date, four meetings of the State parties have been held. The most recent is in Geneva from 16 to 20 September 2002.

In our case, and in accordance with Article 17, the Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the sixth month after the date on which we have deposited our instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

Mr Speaker, it is therefore my hope that this House could readily agree to the early ratification of the Anti-personnel Land-mines Treaty to allow us to join the vast majority of member States, which have now banned the use of these horrific weapons.

I thank you. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

7. THE KYOTO PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

WHEREAS Guyana ratified the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on 29 August, 1994;

AND WHEREAS the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was adopted at the Third Conference of the Parties (COP3) in 1997;

AND WHEREAS the said Protocol has, as its primary objective, the reduction of combined greenhouse gas emissions of industrialized countries by at least 5 percent (5%) of 1990 levels, by the period 2008-2012;

AND WHEREAS the said Protocol allows for developing countries to participate in the process of achieving sustainable development, through joint projects with developed countries, under the Clean Development Mechanism;

AND WHEREAS Guyana endorses the view, that existing levels of green house gas (GHG) emissions, if left unabated, will continue to render vulnerable, small island and low-lying coastal states:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly hereby agrees to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, being advised of Guyana's intention to sign and ratify the Kyoto Protocol by depositing an appropriate Instrument of Ratification.

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister in the Office of the President with responsibility for Foreign Affairs.

Hon S Rudolph Insanally: Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, I rise

again to put, for the consideration of this House, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which came into existence eleven years ago in 1992.

A Framework Convention is one in which the objectives are stated, but the precise manner in which they are to be attained is left for determination later by the parties, usually after a period of further study has been undertaken.

At a meeting of the Parties more precise prescriptions are undertaken, in accordance with scientific indicia. Deriving from the Framework Convention is a framework for action - in this case the Kyoto Protocol. This arrangement accords, Mr Speaker, with the precautionary principle, which is quite prominent in international environmental law. Citizens now universally believe that, in environmental matters, it is far better to err on the side of caution than to cause harm which might be irreparable and irreversible to the environment.

Mr Speaker, the Protocol exemplifies this approach, having been promulgated in 1998 by way of allocating the burdens of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases, which are the cause of global warming. Established in the Agreement are targets and timetables, and what are termed quantified emissions, limitations, and reduction objectives. The countries that have immediate responsibilities under the Protocol are the industrialized countries. This is stated in Appendices I and II of the Protocol. These are the countries that, historically and at present, are the largest producers of greenhouse emissions. It is universally felt that, since they are the greatest contributors to the problem, it is only fair and rational that they should be the ones required to exercise greatest restraint in those actions that contribute to greenhouse emissions. As it is now, Mr Speaker, under the Protocol, developing countries like ourselves are not required to take on legally-binding targets. We, of course, contribute to the production of greenhouse emissions, but obviously on a far lesser scale than the developed countries. A situation that is thought likely to change as our economic development proceeds.

It is hoped, Mr Speaker, that, through the transfer of technologies on favourable terms, and with the assistance of the global environmental facility, on whose Board we now sit, and other sources, the economic development of our country will proceed in an environmentally-friendly manner.

Mr Speaker, in this context I may note that, with effect from January of this year, Guyana has assumed the position of alternate representative to Cuba for the Caribbean Constituency on the Board of Global Environmental Facility for a period of two years, thereafter we will serve for a further two-year period as the Region's principal representative. Needless to say, this is a uniquely advantageous position from which to pursue our aspirations for sustainable development

In the case of Guyana, we have witnessed the disastrous effects which weather phenomenon like El Nino and La Nina have had on our landscape, and we are now well aware of the dangers of constant sea-level rise which has led to frequent breaches of our sea defences, and to severe flooding of our coastal areas. There could be no more compelling reason, therefore, for our full adherence to the Kyoto Protocol.

Mr Speaker, climate change is a phenomenon that potentially affects all countries deleteriously. It knows no boundaries and, therefore, international co-operation is imperative if disasters are to be avoided. The ultimate objective of the Convention is to achieve stabilization of atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases that would prevent dangerous anthropologic, that is, human-induced interference with the climate system. In concrete terms, Mr Speaker, the Protocol seeks to reduce the level of greenhouse gases below 1990 levels by 2012 through what is now known as the clean development mechanism, which is essentially a funding mechanism that will be available for funding things like adaptation to climate change, technology transfer and support in our energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry, waste management and other sectors.

Mr Speaker, as far as our direct responsibilities are concerned,

these involved mainly periodic reporting to the Conference of the Parties, which is the Convention's supreme Body, and our compliance with the provisions of the protocol, and should, therefore, not be too onerous.

Mr Speaker, it is therefore my recommendation that Guyana should proceed to the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and therefore make its own contribution to the relief of what is now universally perceived to be a threat to global security. At the same time, we should be vigilant for opportunities that will offer us financial and technological assistance in order to ensure that what must be done will be done with minimal sacrifice to our people.

I thank you. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Minister.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

The Speaker: The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. There is a Motion on the Supplementary Order Paper standing in your name.

8. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PARLIAMENTARY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

WHEREAS, after discussions, it has been agreed by the Political Parties represented in the National Assembly that a Parliamentary Management Committee shall be established by the National Assembly on certain terms and conditions.

BE IT RESOLVED:

- 1. That this National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana approves of the establishment of a Parliamentary Management Committee, (hereinafter referred to as*

'the Committee') which shall comprise representatives from the Parties represented in the National Assembly, to consider and decide on matters relating to:

- The business of the National Assembly;*
- Such other matters which the Committee may wish to consider; and*
- Such other matters referred to it by the National Assembly.*

2. That the Committee shall report to the National Assembly, from time to time, on such matters which it considers necessary to bring to the attention of the National Assembly or as the National Assembly may require.

3. In the event that the Committee is unable to arrive at a decision on an issue, the Chairman of the Committee shall so inform all Members of the Committee, and the Committee shall seek direction from the National Assembly on the resolution of that issue.

4. That the composition of the Committee shall be five (5) Members from the PPP/C, three (3) from the PNC/R, one (1) from the GAP/WPA and one (1) from ROAR.

5. That the Committee shall be chaired by the Speaker of the National Assembly and, in his or her absence, the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. The Chairperson of the Committee shall not have an original or a casting vote.

6. That the nomination of Members to the Parliamentary Management Committee, and the subsequent filling of vacancies, shall be made by the Committee of Selection.

7. That the National Assembly adopts and approves the decisions of the Committee of Selection at its meetings held on Friday, 4 April 2003

and Wednesday, 9 April 2003, relating to the composition, membership, and other matters relating of the Committee.

8. A quorum shall be four (4) Members, two (2) Members representing the PP/C and two (2) Members representing the PNC/R, together with the Speaker, or Deputy Speaker in the absence of the Speaker.

9. Except where the terms of this Motion provide otherwise, the procedure relating to Select Committees, as provided for by Standing Order 70A, shall apply to the Committee. The terms herein shall apply where there is conflict with the Standing Orders.

Hon Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr Speaker, we have been in consultation with the Opposition on this Motion, and I want to request that Motion be deferred to the next sitting of the National Assembly, which will be on Thursday.

The Speaker: Thank you very much.

Motion deferred.

9. **BILLS - Second Reading**
DEMERARA HARBOUR BRIDGE CORPORATION
BILL 2003 - Bill No. 2/2003, published 5 April 2003

A Bill intituled, an Act to establish the Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation

The Speaker: The Minister of Transport and Hydraulics.

Hon C Anthony Xavier: Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation Bill be now read a second time.

Mr Speaker, the Demerara Harbour Bridge was commissioned in July 1978, some 25 years ago. The bridge is 6,074 feet in length and is supported by floating pontoons, which are anchored on the river bed.

In 1988 these floating pontoons deteriorated to such a point where they sank resulting in the Bridge being put out of operation at that time. There were several such mishaps during the period 1988 to 1992. Since then emergency works were carried out and the rehabilitation of the bridge commenced in 1994. Financing was obtained from the European Union under the 7th EDF and the funding was to the tune of G\$1.5 billion, and this entailed the replacement of the pontoons and anchorage for the rehabilitation of the retractor span. The work of the rehabilitation of the pontoons was done by Damien Shipyard of the Netherlands, with Linnine and EC Vieira Investment Limited as the main sub-contractors while the retractor span was rehabilitated by EBR Technique, also of the Netherlands, with IEL Engineering as the sub-contractor.

As a condition of the financing agreement with the European Union, the Government of Guyana agreed to have the Demerara Harbour Bridge function as an autonomous Agency. Previously there were various arrangements, which were not so satisfactory. Since July 1998, the Demerara Harbour Bridge has been functioning as a semi-autonomous Agency under the Ministry of Works, and has been utilizing the toll revenue for operational and maintenance costs. The Ministry of Finance provides subvention for capital works as the toll revenue, at its present level, is inadequate to do this.

This step of corporatizing of this entity will now grant the management and monetary unit the necessary legal administrative and fiscal authority to effectively maintain and operate the Demerara Harbour Bridge.

The Bill seeks to establish Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation.

Clause 4 of the Bill provides that the functions of the Corporation, generally, are to levy, collect and receive revenue or other monies of the Corporation, and also to appropriate the same for defraying the expenses of the Corporation.

Clause 5 of the Bill provides for the General Manager being responsible for implementing the decisions of the Board and the efficient dis-

charge of the functions of the Corporation.

Clause 7 of the Bill provides for the constitution of the Board, which shall consist of the Chairman, Deputy Chairman, a representative nominated by the Minister responsible for Finance, a representative from the Trade Union representing the employees of the Corporation nominated by the Minister of Transport.

Clause 9 empowers the Minister to make subsidiary legislation that may be necessary for the administration of this Act.

The main responsibility of the Corporation would be:

- to provide a safe and reliable bridge;
- to have an improved retractor service for marine traffic passing through the bridge;
- to improve maintenance of the overall structure and superstructure of the bridge;
- to improve toll revenue;
- to maintain a competent workforce which is capable of managing and maintaining the Demerara Harbour Bridge.

They would also have the responsibility:

- to seek out other sources of revenue generation, using the assets of the Organization in order to make the Organization viable and successful.

So the movement towards having this entity corporatized is indeed one that is recommended to the House.

Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Question proposed.

The Honourable Member, Mrs Sheila Holder.

Mrs Sheila VA Holder: Mr Speaker, I rise to express my views on the Demerara Harbour Bridge Corporation Bill 2003 - Bill No. 2/2003, and to state, as is now customary, that little or no time was, in fact, given to those of us who sit on this side of the House to research, consult and scrutinize this Bill which is intended to create a Corporate Body for the management of the Demerara Harbour Bridge.

I must say this Bill was received by me last Thursday afternoon, and notice of its second reading was received the following day, that is Friday, in the Order Paper for today's sitting of the National Assembly. Mr Speaker, I trust that we will see an end to this sort of short notice with the coming into existence of the Parliamentary Management Committee.

However, I would like to put on record that the Demerara Harbour Bridge, as the Honourable Minister indicated to us, was opened in 1978 and continues to serve a very crucial purpose after 25 years. It serves as the connective link, not only between Georgetown and the West Bank, but further afield, in that it opens up the Essequibo Region to development. It was a very important developmental decision made by the former Prime Minister of the Forbes Burnham Government, and we should not fail to acknowledge that fact, given the propensity of this government to referring to the 28 year period of the PNC.

The Minister, however, should tell us the reason why the corporatization of the Demerara Harbour Bridge is not being done under the Corporation Act.

In the case of the Demerara Harbour Bridge, funding, as the Minister said, was received for its upkeep from the LOME I and II Programmes, which recommended, since then, the creation of an autonomous agency in the 1980s to manage this Entity to allow the toll col-

lected to be ploughed back into the Entity.

Undoubtedly, the formation of this Corporation is intended to serve not only that purpose, but another one, which we believe is intended to unburden the Government of this Entity, while maintaining some aspects of administrative control over the Entity. On the surface, that is par for the course. However, the Guyanese public will be justifiably suspicious that, following this process, they will be asked to pay higher tolls to access the same services provided by the Demerara Harbour Bridge. This is the pattern the public has come to expect once Government divests itself of an Entity, prices are inclined to go up but, be that as it may, there is a bigger issue before us where this Bill is concerned.

In the first instance, there has been, so far, no basis laid to the PUC for justification, other than the requirement for the loan.

Secondly, where are the studies to support the viability for creating this public body to manage the Bridge?

Thirdly, are the tolls currently being charged or collected adequate for the operations, maintenance and management of the bridge? Coming so soon after the 2003 Budget Presentation, and the intention declared by the Honourable Minister of Finance about prudent financial management by the Government, surely the budgetary estimates should have reflected the exclusion of revenues from the Demerara Harbour Bridge, in view of the intended incorporation, if, as the government would have us believe, they know what they are about.

Mr Speaker, the Bill omits to deal with the important matter of the payment of the directors' fees; omits to give guidance on the essential requirements for audits; omits to lay down appropriate and comprehensive financial arrangements for dealing with surpluses, deficits, liabilities and so on. On top of all else, the Bill provides no expressed provision for the employment of staff, other than the general manager, while Clause 7(1)(d) relating to the Trade Union Board representative, is rather vague.

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I therefore, recommend Mr Speaker, that this Bill be withdrawn, in view of the deficiencies highlighted, in order to allow for appropriate alterations to be made, and for a corrective drafting to be accomplished.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

Honourable Minister, there does not appear to be any other speakers... do you wish to reply?

Hon C Anthony Xavier: Just briefly, Mr Speaker. The Honourable Member, Mrs Holder mentioned that the corporatization is not coming under the Corporation's Act, and the reason for this is that there were regulations already in place that could have dealt with it, and have dealt with it, in this manner, and we were advised by the Attorney General's Chambers that it is not necessary to go that route.

As regards the inclusion of directors' fees and other various payments, the whole idea of moving this Harbour Bridge into a Corporation is to give them full autonomy, is for them to run the business as a business. There will be a competent Board of Directors that will make the decisions and deal with the day-to-day management of the Corporation. It is as simple as that. We would much prefer to maintain our policy decisions et cetera. We really and truly do not want to get involved in the actual running of the Bridge. This has to be done by competent people, and if they cannot fulfill that mandate, then certain things would have to be put in place to deal with that. That is what I would like to say at this time.

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time

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Bill considered and approved.

Assembly Resumes

Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed as printed.

The Speaker: Honourable Members, this brings us to the end of our business for today. Before I take your proposal, Honourable Minister, I would just like to inform you that refreshments and tea will be available in five minutes.

The Honourable Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

Hon Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr Speaker, I wish to move that this National Assembly stands adjourned to Thursday 17 April, 2003 at 2.00 pm.

The Speaker: The Assembly is adjourned until Thursday at 2.00 pm.

Adjourned accordingly at 15:40H

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