

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE 4<sup>TH</sup> SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND**  
**SESSION (2002-2003) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD**  
**AT 2.00 P.M.**  
**ON MONDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2003**  
**IN THE CONVENTION CENTRE, OCEAN VIEW INTERNATIONAL HOTEL,**  
**LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN**

**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (68)**

**Speaker (1)**

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

**Members of the Government (37)**

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

**(ii) Non-elected Ministers (2)**

**(iii) The United Force (1)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Navindranauth O. Chandarpal, M.P., Minister of Agriculture  
(Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)

The Hon. J. Ronald Gajraj, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs  
(Region No. 3 -Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

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

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

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

\* 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) (Absent)

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. (Absent)

Mr. Winston S. Murray, C.C.H., M.P. (Absent)

Mrs. Clarissa S. Riehl, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly (Absent)

Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P., Chief Whip (Absent)

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

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P. (Absent)

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

Mr. C. Stanley Ming, M.P. (Absent)

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

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

Mr. Andy Goveia, M.P. (Absent)

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P. (Absent)

Dr. Dagleish Joseph, M.D., M.P. (Absent)

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

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

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

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P. (Absent)

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) (Absent)

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) (Absent)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mr. Ravindra Dev, M.P.

**OFFICERS**

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

Mrs. Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

**COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING**

The Sitting commenced at 2. 10p.m.

**PRAYERS**

The Clerk read Prayers.

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS -**

**POTABLE WATER SUPPLY SITUATION IN LINDEN**

The Minister of Housing and Water made the following statement:-

“As a result of the inability of the Linden Power Company to supply electricity to Linden over the past week, the supply of potable water by the Guyana Water Inc., to the Linden population has come to a halt. The Linden Water Supply Scheme is designed to provide approximately 31,000 inhabitants with potable water and depends on five water treatment plants to pump water into the transmission and distribution system. The five water treatment plants are located at Wisroc, West

Watooka, Wismar, McKenzie and Amelia's Ward. These plants are all dependent on electric power to become operational. The Ministry of Housing and Water and Guyana Water Inc., is very concerned about the situation and is putting in place emergency measures to enable the residents of Linden to receive supplies of water.

Firstly, efforts are underway to put into operation the Amelia's Ward Plant. A Generating Set has been sent to provide power. If all goes well, we are hoping that the Amelia's Ward Plant will be in operation today. From this plant, GWI will truck in supplies of water to various locations in Linden.

Secondly, the Ministry is trying to source at least two 250-300KVA generating sets to be used to independently power two of the remaining water treatment plants. It is expected that once these are in operation the water situation will be much relieved. The Ministry and GWI will be working round the clock to effect emergency solutions to bring relief to the much-pressed residents of Linden.

I wish to bring to the attention of the National Assembly that GWI has a plan for the rehabilitation of the Linden Water Supply System. When GWI took over the Linden Water Supply in October, 2001, it was in a state of collapse. In year 2002 nearly \$50m was spent in upgrading the water supply system. Only last Thursday, GWI signed an Agreement with the European Union for nearly \$200m to further rehabilitate the water system. This will be done in three phases. Phase 1 will commence immediately and will target the Wisroc Water Treatment Plant, refurbishment of the Wisroc Elevated Tank, install transmission lines and rehabilitate internal storage and pipe network at Wismar Hospital. This phase will also construct a new aerator at the Amelia's Ward Treatment Plant. Phases 2 and 3 will further upgrade the Water Supply System.

Finally, I wish to assure this Honourable House, that the Government is taking the necessary measures to bring relief to the residents of Linden to restore electricity supply to Linden, and Mr. Speaker, as I speak now, I have been informed by Linmine and GWI that one of the generating sets

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is now operational and supplying power to the Water Treatment Plants. It is expected that the other set will also be in operation later today. The Government is also taking measures in providing access to supplies of potable water and to continue the programme to rehabilitate the Linden Water Supply System.”

**PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS -**

**(i) MARCH 28, 2003, DEMONSTRATION BY THE PNC/R**

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport gave the following personal explanation:-

“Hon Members, I wish to raise a point of privilege with reference to the March 28, 2003, demonstration by the PNC/R. On that occasion the demonstrators blocked the egress and ingress of other Ministers of the Government, Members of Parliament and myself to the Ocean View International Hotel where Parliament was sitting.

Whilst recognising people’s right to demonstrate, I have to point out that there are norms governing the lawful expression of one’s concerns. The March 28, 2003, demonstration did not follow the norms and behaviour, I therefore request that the unbecoming behaviour of the PNC/R M.P.s be referred to the Committee of Privileges for examination , advice and action where necessary.”

**(ii) PICKETING EXERCISE BY PNC/R MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT ON 28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2003**

The Minister of Health gave the following personal explanation:-

“I stand regrettably to raise an issue that not only all Guyana observed, but was displayed for people internationally to observe. I refer to the actions of a small group of people on March 28<sup>th</sup> that lead to you having to adjourn Parliament and then for the adjournment to become protracted due to

the invasion of the halls of Parliament by Members of Parliament from the People's National Congress.

Mr. Speaker, this House, the Government of Guyana and the Constitution uphold the rights of all citizens to peacefully picket. The picketing exercise which was led by Members of Parliament from the People's National Congress was not a peaceful one. Members of Parliament who belong to the PNC were seen not only as part of the small group of protestors, but giving encouragement to others to block vehicles and impeding the entry of other Members of Parliament. The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs had to abandon his vehicle and walk through the threatening protestors in order to get to the Parliament and discharge his duty as an elected Member. The Honourable Member Deborah Backer decided to stand in front of my vehicle preventing me access to Parliament. Other Members of Parliament from the PPP/C suffered the same faith.

These same Members encouraged the small crowd to break down police barriers to invade the precinct of Parliament, ignoring police instructions. This behaviour in no way constitute peaceful picketing. The small crowd, including women and children came with sticks and threaten to break the windows of the building as they beat on the floor and walls of the building, threatening the police and others.

The commotion, noise and threatening sounds coming from just outside of the building and within the precinct of Parliament forced the Parliament to recess and the Minister to stop his presentation.

The invasion of Parliament by the Members Jerome Khan and Abdul Kadir with pickets in hand and the entrance into the hall of protestors Vincent Alexander and Deborah Backer are a violation of the decorum to which all of us subscribe. This behaviour should be roundly condemned in the most unequivocal way.

Mr. Speaker, this House functions within a democracy. All the Members of this House were elected in free and fair elections. While it is a privilege, it is also a serious obligation. We were elected to serve the people of Guyana. While we disagree on many things, our mandate is to serve in this House to protect and promote the people's interest.

Nothing is gained by staying out of Parliament. Certainly nothing can be gained by Members who indulge in holliganism and in criminal activities. We have been privileged to be elected and we are paid for the privilege of serving people in this House. While there is a constituency that may have elected each one of us, we all serve all the people of Guyana.

Our history is one in which for more than two decades after independence we lived in a dictatorial environment. Our history is that we had to fight against the most sordid attempts at destroying all democratic institutions in this country, including the symbol of a democracy, Parliament. That era spawned the worst examples of dictatorial behaviour and practices. The most brutal actions were taken to deal with those who dared to stand up against the dictatorship.

People were beaten and locked up. People were charged with the worst kind of trump-up charges. And yes, Mr. Speaker people were killed for standing up to the dictatorship.

That era served to incubate proponents of anarchy and brutal dictatorship. That era served to incubate leaders bent on challenging democratic processes and institutions.

At a time we talk about inclusiveness and shared governance, we need to appreciate what these hallowed terms mean. Shared governance obligates each one of us in this House to perform certain duties. The work of this House is not about any one of us having our own way. It is about debating the issues and participating in the work of the committees. It is not about just receiving duty free cars and getting a monthly salary."



**Referral of conduct of PNC/R Members of Parliament to the Committee of Privileges**

On a proposal by the Hon. Dr. Leslie Ramsammy, Minister of Health, the Speaker of the National Assembly referred the conduct of the Members of the PNC/R on March 28, 2003, to the Committee of Privileges for consideration, and to report thereon to the Assembly.

The Speaker also stated that the behaviour of Mr. Jerome Khan and Mr. Abdul Kadir on March 28, 2003, were in contempt of Parliament, and that he hoped that those two Members will purge the contempt soon.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**MOTION**

**MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2003 (2003 BUDGET)**

Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2003.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Sheila Holder

The Prime Minister

The Minister of Fisheries, Other Crops and Livestock

The Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security

**SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

At 4.45 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

**RESUMPTION OF SITTING**

At 5.40 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Ravindra Dev

Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce

Mr. Heeralall Mohan

Mr. Husman Alli

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 7.38 p.m., an a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the sitting was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2003.



**HARI N. RAMKARRAN**

**Speaker of the National Assembly**

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

**7<sup>th</sup> April, 2003.**