

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE 11<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 FRIDAY, 16<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 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(Absent-on leave) performing the functions of the Office of President)

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 (Absent)

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 (Absent)

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

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 (Absent)

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 (Absent - on leave)

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

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) (Absent)

Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.D., M.P. (Absent - on leave)

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

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. (Absent - on leave)

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) (Absent)

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Andy Goveia, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.

Dr. Dalglish Joseph, M.D., M.P. (Absent - on leave)

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) (Absent)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(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 2.10 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

The Clerk read Prayers.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

**Leave**

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to the following Members:

Mr. Robert Corbin, for that day's sitting, and  
Miss Lurlene Nester up to the 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2003.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**MOTIONS**

**ITEM 1 - FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST GENERAL ELECTIONS HELD IN  
BRITISH GUIANA**

The Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation moved the following motion:

**WHEREAS** the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2003, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the first general elections held in British Guiana under universal adult suffrage; and

**WHEREAS** the 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2003 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the first sitting of the House of Assembly after the aforesaid general elections.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the National Assembly

- (i) Commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the first general elections held under universal adult suffrage on the 27<sup>th</sup> April, 1953, the winning of those elections by the People's Progressive Party and the election of the Executive Council on the 18<sup>th</sup> May, 1953 as historic events of national importance; and
- (ii) Pays tribute to all those who played a role in the achievement of the foregoing and particularly to the people of British Guiana united across ethnic and class lines who were mainly responsible for making the momentous achievements possible which eventually led to the independence of Guyana.

**(Notice Paper No. 41(M14Govt13) published 2003-05-06)**

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Vincent L. Alexander

The Minister of Fisheries, Other Crops and Livestock

Mrs. Sheila V.A Holder

Mr. Cyril C.L. Belgrave

Mr. Ravindra Dev

Mr. Donald R. Ramotar

Mr. Winston Murray

Mrs. Shirley J. Melville

Mr. Lance Carberry

Thereafter, the Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

**ITEM 2 - TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE DISCIPLINED FORCES COMMISSION**  
**SUBSTITUTED**

The Minister of Education moved the following motion:

**WHEREAS** article 197A (5) of the Constitution states:

“(5) Disciplined forces commissions may be constituted by the National Assembly from time to time, as may be necessary, with power to examine any matter relating to the public welfare, public safety, public order, defence or security, including the structure and composition of the disciplined forces and make recommendations generally with a view to promoting their greater efficiency, and giving effect to the need in the public interest that the composition of the disciplined forces take account of the ethnic constituents of the population.”

**AND WHEREAS** the Agreement by the President and the Leader of the Opposition as reflected in the Communique dated 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2003, provides for the establishment of a Disciplined Forces Commission.

**BE IT RESOLVED** that,

That the National Assembly approves the establishment of a Disciplined Forces Commission.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that with respect to the Commission, the National Assembly agrees to the following:-

1. The Commission shall comprise five (5) persons, drawn from qualified and competent persons with senior level experience and expertise in any of the following areas: the Judiciary, the legal profession, the Police Forces, other Disciplined Forces, Human Rights organisations, management, or any other relevant discipline or area of expertise, and shall be both investigatory and advisory.
2. The President shall appoint the Chairperson after consultation with the Leader of the Opposition.
3. The President shall also nominate two (2) Commissioners and the Leader of the Opposition shall also nominate two (2), taking account of the need to consult broadly with human right and other organisations.
4. The Commission shall be appointed within two (2) weeks of the meeting between the President and the Leader of the Opposition, held on May 5<sup>th</sup> 2003 and will complete its task within six (6) months.

8.

5. The Commission shall, in accordance with article 197A(6) of the Constitution, have all the powers and authority of a Commission of Inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act, Cap. 19:03 and shall as far as practicable adopt the procedures set out therein.
6. The Commission shall present its report and findings, recommendations and implementation time table to the National Assembly within six (6) months save that the Commission shall give priority to its Inquiry into the Guyana Police Force and shall present an Interim Report thereon to the National Assembly within three (3) months.
7. The Report and Interim Report of the Commission shall be subject to an affirmative resolution of the National Assembly.
8. The findings and recommendations of the Commission that are accepted by the National Assembly shall be implemented within a specified time frame and monitored by the Sector Committee determined by the National Assembly.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the National Assembly approves,

1. That the Commission shall inquire into the Disciplined Forces, i.e. the Guyana Police Force, the Guyana Defence Force, the Guyana Prison and the Guyana Fire Services, and all their branches, departments and units, focusing and making recommendations for their reform, sustained professional development and structure in so doing, the Commission shall pay particular attention to:
  - The changing context of the operations of the Disciplined Forces, taking into consideration national and international developments.
  - Their relationship with and responsibility to the civilian authorities.



- The methods and processes of achieving greater ethnic balance.
- Operational efficiency and effectiveness including inter service co-operation and collaboration
- Financial and public accountability.

**AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the National Assembly hereby mandate the Commission shall give priority to its enquiry into the Guyana Police Force and, within three (3) months of the establishment of the Commission, shall examine and, where necessary, make recommendations on the following:

1. The composition, structure, functions and operations of the Guyana Police Force, bearing in mind:
  - (a) The changing nature of crime and influence of the traffic in illicit drugs and fire arms, back-tracking and money laundering.
  - (b) The relevance of the recommendations of the International Commission of Jurists, particularly with regard to racial imbalance in the Force, to today's reality.
  - (c) Terms and conditions of employment, remuneration, training, accommodation, criteria for promotion, discipline, equipment and logistical needs.
  - (d) The rules of engagement, including manuals of procedure of operation.
  - (e) The rules, regulations, criteria for granting and controls regarding issuance of firearm licenses.
  - (f) Powers of arrest and detention.
  - (g) Concerns about the adequacy and application of the Coroner's Act.

- (h) The origin, course and development of allegations of:
    - (a) Extra judicial killings, summary executions and the involvement of sections of the Guyana Police Force in illegal activities.
    - (b) Political interference in the administration, management and conduct of the GPF with reference to the Constitution, The Police Act Chapter 16:01 and all other relevant laws.
  - (i) Attacks on the Police Force and the shooting and killings of members of the GPF.
2. Ways in which increased public support and confidence can be achieved. For example, examine ways of improving:
- (a) Police/community relations.
  - (b) The functions and operation of Office of Professional Responsibility and Public Relations.
  - (c) The establishment and functioning of Community Policing Groups.
3. The introduction of best practices from elsewhere based on their applicability to Guyana.
4. The location and staffing of police stations and outposts, particularly in the hinterland, within the context of changed and changing demographic and other relevant considerations.

**(Notice Paper No. 45(M18 Govt17) published 2003-05-13)**

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Vincent Allexander

Mr. Ravindra Dev.

Thereafter, the Minister of Education replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 5.35 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2003.



**HARI N. RAMKARRAN**

**Speaker of the National Assembly**

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

**16<sup>th</sup> May, 2003.**