

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 46TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE SECOND
SESSION (2002-2004) OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD

AT 2.00 P.M.

ON WEDNESDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY, 2005
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS,
BRICKDAM, 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 - performing the functions of the Office of the 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 (Absent)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* The Hon. S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H., M.P., Minister in the Office of the
President with responsibility for Foreign Affairs (Absent)

* 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 (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. (Absent)

Mr. Heeralall Mohan, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)

Mr. Ramesh C. Rajkumar, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)

Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.D., M.P.

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

Mrs. Pauline R. Sukhai, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)

Mr. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P.

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

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

*Non-Elected Minister

**Elected Member from The United Force

Members of the Opposition (30)**(i) People's National Congress/Reform (27)**

Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, M.P.

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

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

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

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

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

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

Mr. C. Stanley Ming, M.P.

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

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

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.

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

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

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

Mr. Jerome Khan, M.P. (Absent - on Leave)

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

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

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

Dr. Carl Max Hanoman, M.P.

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)

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. (Absent - on Leave)

OFFICERS

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

Ms. Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 2.11p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) **Welcome back to Public Buildings**

The Speaker welcomed Members back to the Public Buildings and informed them that repairs to the Public Buildings were ongoing.

(ii) **Congratulation to Speaker of Kuwait**

The Speaker informed Members that he had received a letter of congratulation from the Speaker of the Parliament of Kuwait.

(iii) Leave:

The Speaker announced that leave had been granted to:-

Mr. Winston Murray, up to 28th February, 2005,

Mr. E. Lance Carberry,

Mr. Jerome Khan,

Ms Lurlene Nestor

and

Ms Sandra Adams for that day's sitting

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

1. By the Speaker (Chairman of the Committee of Selection):

- (i) Minutes of Proceedings of the 12th Meeting of the Committee of Selection which was held on Thursday, 30th December, 2004.

(Circulated)

- (ii) Report of the Auditor General on the Public Accounts of Guyana and on the Accounts of Ministries, Departments and Regions for the fiscal year ended 31st December, 2003.

(Circulated)

2. By the Minister of Finance:

- (i) The Customs Duties (Amendment) Order 2004.

(Circulated)

- (ii) The Customs Duties (Amendment) Order No. 6 of 2005.

(Circulated)

- (iii) Financial Paper No. 4/2004 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$1,458,826,253 for the period ending 2004-12-31.

(Circulated)

- (iv) Financial Paper No. 5/2004 - Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$4,748,096,251 for the period ending 2004-12-31.

(Circulated)

3. By the Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security:

Recommendation adopted at its 86th Session of the International Labour Conference held in June 1998.

- Job creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998.

(Circulated)

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS-

For Written replies

1. THE GOVERNMENT'S STRATEGY TO FIGHT CRIME

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

Is the Government's strategy to fight crime one of providing more firearms to affected citizens, or to restrict the total number of firearms available to civilians?

(Notice Paper No. 121 (Q58 Opp57) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs(a.g.)

The Government's strategy is more multifaceted. It has to do with crime prevention, crime detection, effective patrolling, both in the hinterland and rural areas, intelligence gathering, public and

media relations, improving the capacity of the Police Force to execute its Law Enforcement mandate which includes gaining public confidence and trust through community based policing and good community relations.

The Government alone cannot fight crimes, it requires the involvement of entire communities in cooperating with law and order efforts. This includes the Business Sector which has a responsibility to invest in security measures to protect their assets.

2. TOTAL NUMBER OF FIREARM LICENCES

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

What is the total number of firearm licences issued for the years 2003 and 2004?

(Notice Paper No. 122 (Q59 Opp58) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

2003	2004
2,154	732 up to November, 2004

3. CRITERIA USED BY LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES FOR THE GRANT/REFUSAL OF FIREARM LICENCES

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

What are the criteria used by the law enforcement authorities, and approved by the Government, for the grant or refusal of a firearm licence, and for various calibres of weapons?

(Notice Paper No. 123 (Q60 Opp59) published on 2004-10-26)

8.

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

There are two (2) basic premises upon which a firearm approval is granted:-

- (a) Suitability and
- (b) Need of the Applicant

These two premises are coupled with a prescribed form of identification:-

- (a) National Identification Card
- (b) Government of Guyana Passport

Suitability

Suitability is determined by:-

- (a) Whether or not the person has a criminal record against his name;
- (b) Whether he is of intemperate habits or of unsound mind or is he is found unsuited to be entrusted with a firearm.

The person's good character must be attested to be two (2) persons of good repute and standing in the Society.

Need - The need is determined by the circumstances as assessed by the nature of the applicant's employment or business.

4. TRAINING IN THE USE, CARRIAGE AND STORAGE OF FIREARMS

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

Will the Government be providing training in the use, carriage and storage of firearms authorized to be used by civilians and members of the Community Policing Groups?

(Notice Paper No. 124 (Q61 Opp60) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

Yes, all persons who have been permitted to obtain firearm licences with respect to handguns, shot-guns or rifles received appropriate training by personnel from the Tactical Services Unit at a nominal fee. The licences are granted upon satisfactory completion of that training. Community Policing Groups enjoy a treatment that is no less favourable. However, such persons must be members of Community Policing Groups who are sworn rural constables.

5. **COMMUNITY POLICING GROUPS ON THE EAST COAST OF DEMERARA**

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

Can the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) say whether, and to what extent, the Commissioner of Police and the Divisional Commander of the "C" Division are involved in any plan to issue firearm licences to members of Community Policing Groups on the East Coast of Demerara?

(Notice Paper No. 129 (Q66 Opp65) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

The Commissioner of Police and Divisional Commander contribute to the implementation of the standard procedures for providing firearm licences to members of the public and the procedures remain unaltered even for Community Policing Group members.

The Divisional Commander of 'C' Division has been involved in the formation, resuscitation and strengthening of a number of Community Policing Groups on the East Coast of Demerara.

In this regard, the Divisional Commander ensures the following:

- The processes of identification and screening of suitable persons to become Rural Constables;

- The Rural Constables are then trained in the use, safety and custody of firearms before deployment in the groups;
- Firearms are only issued to bonafide Community Policing Groups and must be lodged on a daily basis at the Police Station after patrol duties by the Rural Constables in their communities;
- Once official approval is given to use firearms, the relevant licences would then be issued to the Community Policing Groups with the names of rural constables trained and found suitable to use a firearm endorsed on the licence.

6. **WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAMME IN GUYANA**

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

What measures are in place to provide a Witness Protection Programme in Guyana for persons required to give evidence before Courts, Tribunals and Commissions in Guyana?

(Notice Paper No. 131 (Q68 Opp67) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

The possible measures have been studied and the recommendations of the Guyana Police Force have been accepted e.g. Police protection during exposure.

Additionally, the Government of Guyana in its regional consultations remains committed to a regional component of measures.

7. **SMUGGLING OF ILLEGAL FIREARMS**

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

What measures will the Government introduce to prevent the smuggling of illegal firearms into Guyana?

(Notice Paper No. 133 (Q70 Opp69) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

This is quite a difficult question. The borders are wide open, and it is suspected that illegal firearms are entering Guyana by that medium. So far stop and search and road block methodology have been implemented. There is a regular check point supported from Georgetown to Mabura.

The weaknesses at our Borders and Atlantic Coast have to be reduced so that interdiction of persons entering the country with illicit firearms can be detected. To do so requires an investment in massive and expensive surveillance capabilities by air, sea/river and on the ground, to deal effectively with the threat along our borders.

One must recognised that this requires a heavy outlay to provide the Police and Coastguard with the requisite vessels and equipment to enable the services to develop the capacity to interdict the illegal entry of firearms into the country from the sea, land and air.

While every effort has been made to enhance the capabilities of these Services, one has to be realistic in one's expectations as to what resources could be provided in the immediate and long term medium.

In the meantime, the Police is committed to interdict illegal firearms on land using its patrols, road blocks and intelligence gathering facilities.

It might be appropriate to advise this House that at the recently convened 6th Hemispheric Conference of Ministers of Defence, (November 16-21, 2004, Ecuador) this issue of the proliferation of illicit trafficking in arms was a key concern for all countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America due to porous, long borders and open seas with inadequate equipment and vessels. Countries manufacturing and selling arms were asked to intensify their control measures. An appeal was also made to Hemispheric financial institutions to assist our countries to be better equipped to reduce/prevent this dangerous threat to national and Hemispheric security.

8. **TOTAL NUMBER OF NARCOTICS SEIZURES**

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

What is the total number of narcotics seizures per region, per narcotic, per port of exit, and/or entry, for the period 2000 – 2004?

(Notice Paper No. 137 (Q74 Opp73) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

Division	Type (per Narcotic)	Year 2000 - 2004 Amount Seized
A	Cannabis	788Kg 997.25g
	Cocaine	4Kg 262.75g
B	Cannabis	504Kg 397g
	Cocaine	70Kg 637.75g
C	Cannabis	166Kg 571.75g
	Cocaine	38Kg 652.75g
D	Cannabis	89Kg 595.50g
	Cocaine	558.75g

Division	Type (per Narcotic)	Year 2000 - 2004 Amount Seized
'E' & 'F' 'G' Narcotics Branch (H/Q) CANU	Cannabis	5325Kg 254.9g
	Cocaine	3Kg 493g
	Cannabis	3Kg 376.5g
	Cocaine	4Kg 100.5g
	Cannabis	53.629Kg 637g
	Cocaine	358Kg 142g
	Cannabis	385Kg 718g
	Cocaine	347Kg 958g

Year	Type of Drug	Ports	No. of Seizure	Amount Seized
2000	Cocaine	Air	9	25Kg 094g
	Cannabis	Sea	2	99Kg 851g
2001	Cocaine	Air	14	39Kg 364g
	Cannabis	Sea	1	15Kg 250g
2002	Cocaine	Air	9	20Kg 118g
	Cannabis	Sea	1	1,871Kg
2003	Cocaine	Air	27	226Kg 241.25g
	Cannabis	Sea	1	5g
2004	Cocaine	Air	18	138Kg 116g
	Cannabis	Sea	1	3Kg 025g

9. **NUMBER OF SUCCESSFUL NARCOTIC PROSECUTIONS**

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

What is the number of successful prosecutions per Region, for narcotic offences for the period 2000 – 2004?

(Notice Paper No. 138 (Q76 Opp75) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

Year 2000 - 2004

Division	Type (per Narcotic)	No. of Convictions
A	Cocaine	7
	Cannabis	70
B	Cocaine	17
	Cannabis	165
C	Cocaine	11
	Cannabis	73
D	Cocaine	9
	Cannabis	72
'E' & 'F'	Cocaine	7
	Cannabis	105
'G'	Cocaine	2
	Cannabis	16
Narcotics Branch (H/Q)	Cocaine	113
	Cannabis	276
CANU	Cocaine	10
	Cannabis	10
	TOTAL	963

10. **CUSTOMS ANTI NARCOTIC UNIT (CANU)**

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

What efforts are in place to boost the capacity of the Customs Anti-Narcotic Unit (CANU) to investigate and prosecute drug related crimes in Guyana?

(Notice Paper No. 139 (Q76 Opp75) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

The short term objective and strategy of CANU focuses on enhancing operational ability at selected sites and specific circumstances.

Prosecution will remain a collaborative function of allied law-enforcement agencies and bodies and the D.P.P.

11. **SEIZURE OF NARCOTICS AT THE CHEDDI JAGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT**

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.) the following question:

Can the Minister say why larger quantities of narcotics are being seized at the Cheddi Jagan International Airport, and not elsewhere within Guyana?

(Notice Paper No. 140 (Q77 Opp76) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Home Affairs (a.g.)

Cheddi Jagan International Airport is the only International Airport in Guyana. There are also direct links to countries where the demand is high for these narcotics.

In addition, enhanced available resources have heightened the security measures implemented by the Police and Customs Anti-Narcotic Unit which affect these seizures.

In addition, law enforcement is developing improved methods and strategies to more effectively interdict the flow of narcotics throughout the country.

12. **FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS (FTAA)**

Mr. Raphael Trotman asked the Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation the following question:

Can the Honourable Minister provide an update on the establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)?

(Notice Paper No. 156 (Q93 Opp92) published on 2004-10-26)

Written reply submitted by the Minister of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation

Update on the FTAA Negotiations

Introduction

The FTAA negotiations are at a critical stage given the fact that the January, 2005 deadline for the conclusion of the negotiation has not been realized and the negotiation itself remains stalled since February, 2004, a situation not unrelated to the post-Cancun gridlock which prevailed in the WTO until the end of July, 2004.

The objective of the WTO discussions in Cancun in September, 2003 was to move the multilateral negotiations forward so as to meet the proposed time frame and conclude the WTO Doha Round by a January, 2005 deadline also. The breakdown of the talks, however, halted the process. Two months later, in November, 2003, FTAA Trade Ministers met in Miami with the intention of commencing the final year of the FTAA negotiations to lead up to the January, 2005 deadline. This meeting was an extremely critical one primarily because of the potential impact of the WTO failure in Cancun and the determination of the hemisphere's leaders to avoid a similar fate to the FTAA process.

In Miami the trade ministers agreed, as a compromise, to scale down the original scope and content of the FTAA negotiations in order to preserve the negotiations and safeguard the political integrity of the hemispheric process. In this regard the key mandates to the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC) were to:

- Develop a *Common and Balance set of rights and obligations applicable to all countries* in the following negotiating areas; market access; agriculture; services; investment; government procurement; intellectual property; competition policy; subsidies, antidumping, and countervailing duties; and dispute settlement.
- Establish procedures for *plurilateral negotiations of additional liberalization and disciplines* (in the identified areas) within the FTAA.

The drafting or formulating of the “common set of rights and obligations” has proven to be difficult in terms of detailed proposals etc. Commencing with the 17th Meeting of the TNC in February, 2004 the FTAA Co-chairs - USA and Brazil - held several consultations with delegations to resolve the differences.

Key issues/areas of disagreement relate to the “common set of rights and obligations”, the treatment of agriculture and disciplines on subsidies and other supports, and the scope of negotiations on services and investment. The difficulties with agriculture (as well as services and investment) are largely specific, though not exclusively, to the opposite views of the US and Canada on the one hand and the Mercosur Group, led by Brazil, on the other. The US has defined services, investment, government procurement and IPR as its *offensive* issues - areas in which the US is pressing for real concessions from other delegations. Agriculture and Subsidies could be described as the US *defensive* issues - in which the US is being pressed to make concessions or trade-offs.

Resumption of the negotiations

In June, 2004 CARICOM, through its Ministerial spokesperson on FTAA matters, suggested to the FTAA Co-Chairs, USA and Brazil, to convene a ministerial level (mini-ministerial) meeting to break

the deadlock and restart the FTAA negotiations. There was no enthusiastic response to this call by CARICOM, primarily because of the prevailing preoccupation with the WTO discussions in Geneva.

Following the “successful” conclusion of the WTO General Council Meeting in July, 2004 to move ahead with the WTO negotiations, several delegations (in Latin America) called on the FTAA Co-Chairs to set out a strategy to restart the FTAA negotiations. In August, 2004 Chile, Mexico and the Andean Community submitted to the Co-Chairs that: “We believe that we must take advantage of this new atmosphere at the WTO to also move forward with the FTAA negotiation process.”

On August 26, 2004 CARICOM’s ministerial spokesperson on FTAA matters issued a letter to the FTAA Co-Chairs in which he also called for “a formal update on the status of these efforts, including the prospects for re-launch and proposed schedules of negotiations”. In his correspondence he also reiterated that “CARICOM remains committed to participating in the FTAA negotiations, and bringing them to fruition.”

The call for a restart of the negotiations is timely and fits the expressed interests of most delegations, including CARICOM. In an exchange of letters between the Brazilian Foreign Minister and the United States Trade Representative (USTR) in early November, 2004, it was agreed that the TNC Co-Chairs would meet in late January, 2005 to resume informal consultations aimed at breaking the impasse over the scope of the negotiations and eventual agreement.

It is the general expectation that the FTAA negotiations will be resumed early in 2005, though recent policy pronouncements by both the USA and Brazil seemed to place priority on advancing the multilateral negotiations at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

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

The Present Flood Disaster in Guyana

A request by Mr. Robert Corbin to seek leave to move the adjournment of the Assembly to discuss a matter concerning the present flood disaster in Guyana was disallowed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILL - Second Reading

**ITEM 1 - REGIONAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES BILL 2004 - Bill No. 26/2004 published
on 2004-12-16**

At the request of the Minister of Health the second reading of the following Bill was deferred.:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to establish regional health authorities with responsibility for providing for the delivery of and administering health services and health programmes in specified geographic areas and for matters incidental thereto or connected therewith.

(Read a first time on 2004-12-30)

MOTION

ITEM 2 - UNPRECEDENTED FLOODING OF THE COASTAL AREAS

The Minister of Transport and Hydraulics moved the following motion:

WHEREAS Guyana has recently witnessed an unprecedented amount of rainfall during the month of January with rainfall during the period December 24 to January 16 measuring in excess of 30 inches, the record amount for any similar period in the history of Guyana;

20.

AND WHEREAS large areas of the coast in Administrative Regions 3, 4 and 5 have been inundated with the East Coast being the most severely affected;

AND WHEREAS as a result there has been incalculable personal and commercial damages suffered by thousands of households with many members being confined to their homes;

AND WHEREAS many of these households have been unable to access food, potable water and have been exposed to public health hazards, a consequence of which has been evacuation of homes, hospitalisations and fatalities;

AND WHEREAS Guyana now faces the worst natural disaster in its history;

AND WHEREAS the Guyanese people have rallied to the victims of the disaster in their thousands offering help in many ways;

AND WHEREAS religious bodies, private sector entities and organisations, trade unions, businesses, individuals and many others in Guyana and outside of Guyana have contributed and are continuing to contribute resources of various kinds to the relief effort and have pledged additional resources;

AND WHEREAS Guyanese and non-Guyanese organisations and overseas residents from many countries have pledged and donated goods and materials and have raised funds and continue to do so;

AND WHEREAS many Governments and international organisations have allocated or sent resources and assistance in many forms;

AND WHEREAS assistance and offers of assistance are continually being pledged by all of the above;

AND WHEREAS the Government has committed itself in partnership with specialised international agencies, to a comprehensive assessment of the impact of the disaster on the socio-economic status of households, communities and national sectors devastated by the floods;

/...21

AND WHEREAS the Government intends to take action for the recovery and rehabilitation using the results of the assessment.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly:-

1. Expresses its deeply felt sadness and sympathy to the victims of the disaster;
2. Expresses its gratitude to the people and organisations in Guyana and out of Guyana for the assistance they have given and continue to give;
3. Expresses its thanks to those Governments and international organisations which have contributed to the relief effort;
4. Urges all Guyanese and friends of Guyana to continue their efforts on behalf of the victims;
5. Supports the efforts of the Government of Guyana, the Opposition and all other political organisations which have contributed to the relief efforts;
6. Urges the people of Guyana, including the victims of the flood, to continue their valiant and courageous struggle against this disaster.

(Notice Paper No. 176 (M71 Govt65) published on 2005-02-09)

Mr. Robert Corbin spoke to the motion.

Mr. Robert Corbin was speaking to the motion when the time for the suspension of the sitting was reached.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.00 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4.46 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Mr. Robert Corbin continued and concluded his speech.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

The Minister of Fisheries, Other Crops and Livestock
Dr. Dalglish Joseph

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 6.30 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

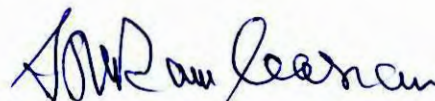
At 7.20 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Dr. Bheri Ramsaran
Miss Myrna Peterkin
Mr. James McAllister

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.45 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the sitting was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Thursday, 17th February, 2005.



**HON. HARI N. RAMKARRAN, S.C., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly**

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.
16th February, 2005.**