
Conclusion

Our conclusion arrived at in the light of our observations was that, taking the country as a whole, the organisation and conduct of the poll were properly and impartially carried out. This conclusion was based on detailed observation of the run-up to and of the conduct of the elections themselves.

In the process of examining all aspects of the election process, we met the Elections Commission, political parties, including the PNC and PPP/Civic, police and security officials, election officials and other interested parties, as well as voters. We learnt of certain errors on the ballot papers shortly after our arrival in Georgetown, and promptly took up the matter with the Elections Commission with a view to seeing what steps were being taken to satisfactorily deal with the matter. In all the circumstances, we felt that the Commission took a pragmatic approach which enabled the elections to be held on the appointed day.

On polling day for the disciplined forces we observed the polling at several stations and, despite delays and some confusion at a few of them, we found no evidence of attempts to manipulate the process, and concluded that the procedures were conducted in a free and fair manner.

We visited several polling stations on 5 October at the opening of the polls in order to satisfy ourselves that the proper procedures for the opening were followed. We made random visits to polling stations throughout the day, observing the conduct of the poll, examining the performance of the election officers, making contact with party agents on duty at the stations and speaking to voters outside polling stations. Although we encountered a significant number of persons who could not find their names on the voters' lists used at the polling stations, there were only a few complaints of intimidation of voters by party officials. At the conclusion of voting, we observed the count in a number of polling stations.

The majority of election officers demonstrated their commitment to observing that the prescribed procedures were followed in respect of every voter. The problems which we noted were, in our view, largely due to lack of insufficient training and ordinary human error.

In all our visits, election officers and party agents were, in the main, ready

to be helpful, and to give information and access to their documents. The process at the polling stations was open, but the voting was secret.

Having accomplished our mission in accordance with our mandate, the majority of us left Guyana on the morning of Friday, 9 October as originally scheduled. Some had left the previous night after we issued a Departure Statement announcing the end of our stay in Guyana. The text of that Statement is at *Annex XII*.

The organisation and conduct of these elections provided the people of Guyana with an opportunity to freely choose the political party of their choice. The results should therefore be seen as a reflection of the genuine will of the Guyanese people. The election process as a whole has shown that the restoration of the democratic process in Guyana is possible and indeed that there is a basis for the strengthening of multi-party democracy in that country.