

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 83RD SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2015-2018) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON WEDNESDAY, 10TH JANUARY, 2018,
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS,
BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN.
MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (69)

Speaker (1)

*Hon Dr. Barton U.A. Scotland, O.R., C.C.H., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (36)

(i) **A Partnership For National Unity/Alliance For Change (36)**

First Vice-President and Prime Minister (1)

+ Hon. Moses V. Nagamootoo, J.P., M.P., First Vice-President and Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents (3)

+ Hon. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P., Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs

+Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P., Vice-President and Minister of Public Security

+*Hon. Sydney Allicock, M.S., M.P., Vice-President and Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (1)

+ Hon. Basil Williams, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

Senior Ministers (15)

+ Hon. Amna Ally, M.P., Minister of Social Protection and Government Chief Whip

+ Hon. Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph F. Harmon, M.S.M., M.P., Minister of State

/...2

+ Cabinet Member

*Non-Elected Member

2.

- + Hon. Dr. Rupert Roopnaraine, M.P., Minister of the Public Service
- + Hon. Ronald A. Bulkan, M.P., Minister of Communities
- + Hon. Dr. George A. Norton, M.P., Minister of Social Cohesion with responsibility for Culture, Youth and Sport
- + Hon. Winston D. Jordan, M.P., Minister of Finance
- + Hon. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P., Minister of Natural Resources
- + Hon. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister of Public Health
- + Hon. David A. Patterson, M.P., Minister of Public Infrastructure
- + Hon. Catherine A. Hughes, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister of Public Telecommunications
- +*Hon. Winston G. Felix, D.S.M., M.P., Minister of Citizenship
- + Hon. Hans Dominic Gaskin, M.P., Minister of Business
- +Hon. Noel L. Holder, M.P., Minister of Agriculture
- +Hon. Dawn Hastings-Williams, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni), Minister of Public Affairs
- +Hon. Nicolette O. Henry, M.P., Minister of Education

Ministers (7)

*Hon. Keith Scott, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection

Hon. Annette N. Ferguson, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Public Infrastructure

Hon. Valerie Garrido-Lowe, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs

Hon. Jaipaul Sharma, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister within the Ministry of Finance

/...3

+ Cabinet Member

*Non-Elected Member

3.

Hon. Dr. Karen Cummings, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Minister within the Ministry of Public Health

Hon. Simona Charles-Broomes, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Natural Resources

Hon. Valarie Patterson-Yearwood, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice), Minister within the Ministry of Communities

Other Members (9)

Ms. Jennifer J. Wade, M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

Ms. Rajcoomarie Bancroft, M.P. (Region No. 8 –Potaro/Siparuni) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. John Adams, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

Mr. Richard Allen, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

Mr. Michael Carrington, M.P.

Mr. Jermaine Figueira, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice)

Mr. Charrandas Persaud, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Haimraj Rajkumar, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Audwin Rutherford, M.P.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION (32)

(i) People’s Progressive Party (32)

Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, M.P., Leader of the Opposition (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Clement J. Rohee, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Ms. Gail Teixeira, M.P., Opposition Chief Whip

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent – on leave)

Ms. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

4.

Dr. Frank C.S. Anthony, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Ms. Pauline Campbell-Sukhai, M.P.

Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P.

Bishop Juan A. Edghill, M.S., J.P., M.P., (Suspended for four (4) Sittings, that is, from the 80th Sitting to the 83rd Sitting)

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Dr. Vindhya V. Persaud, M.S., M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Ms. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Joseph L.F. Hamilton, M.P.

Mr. Collin D. Croal, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini) (Absent – on leave)

Ms. Gillian R. Burton-Persaud, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

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

Dr. Jennifer Westford, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Ms. Africo Selman, M.P.

Mr. Zulfikar Mustapha, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Ganga Persaud, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Ms. Yvonne Pearson- Fredericks, M.P.

Mr. Neendkumar, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Komal Chand, C.C.H., J.P., M.P. (Region No.3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Cornel Damon, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Alister S. Charlie, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)

Mr. Nigel D. Dharamlall, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

/...5

5.

Mr. Adrian V. Anamayah, M.P.

Mr. Harry Gill, M.P.

Ms. Bhagmattie Veerasammy, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Vickram O. Bharrat, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Officers (2)

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

Ms. Hermina Gilgeours, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 2.15 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT-

The Payment of Workers of the Guyana Sugar Corporation

The First Vice-President and Prime Minister read a message from the President re. the Payment of the workers of the Guyana Sugar Corporation.

Thereafter, the Speaker thanked the First Vice-President and Prime Minister for reading the message.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker made the following announcements:

(1) **Welcome Members to the 1st Sitting of the New Year**

The Speaker welcomed Members to the 1st Sitting of the New Year and extended New Year's Greetings.

(1) **LEAVE:**

Honourable Members, leave has been granted for today's Sitting to:

Ms. Rajcoomarie Bancroft

Mr. Charrandass Persaud

Mr. Haimraj Rajkumar

Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo

Mr. Clement Rohee

Mr. Mohamed Ali

Mr. Mohabir Nandlall

Dr. Frank Anthony

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj

Dr. Vindhiya Persaud

Ms. Indranie Chandarpal

Mr. Collin Croal

Dr. Bheri Ramsaran

Mr. Zulfikar Mustapha

Mr. Ganga Persaud

Mr. Neend Kumar

Dr. Vishwa Mahadeo

Mr. Cornel Damon

Mr. Nigel Dharamlall

Ms. Bhagmattie Veerasammy and

Mr. Vickram Bharrat

(2) **DEATH OF MS. SANDRA MICHELLE ADAMS**

“Honourable Members, you are all aware of the death of Ms. Sandra Michelle Adams, a former Member of Parliament who died on the 2nd January, 2018, on her arrival at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation of a sudden heart attack. She was 47 years old, having born on the 14th November, 1970.

Ms. Adams came from the People's National Congress. Following the General and Regional Elections which were held on the 15th December, 1997, the Seventh Parliament of Guyana commenced when the National Assembly first met on 26th February, 1998. On the 16th February, 1998, Ms Adams was elected by the Regional Democratic Council to have become an elected Member of the National Assembly. Members from the PNC did not attend the first and subsequent Sittings of the Assembly. Their names were again extracted from the lists and they were again declared elected on the 13th July, 1998. They attended and made and subscribed the Oath of Office on the 15th July, 1998. The Seventh Parliament was dissolved on the 15th February, 2001. Elections were again held on the 19th March, 2001.

The Eighth Parliament of Guyana commenced when the National Assembly first met on the 4th May, 2001. Ms. Adams was again elected a Member of the National Assembly on the 17th April, 2001. Ms. Adams ceased to be a Member of the National Assembly on the 2nd May, 2006, when the National Assembly was dissolved on that date.

Minute of Silence

A minute of silence was observed to mark respect for the late Ms. Sandra Adams.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES -

By the Speaker of the National Assembly (Chairman of the Statutory Instruments Committee):

Third Report of the Statutory Instruments Committee on the Excise Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2017 – No. 2 of 2017 and the Value-Added Tax (Amendment of Schedules) Order 2017 – No. 40 of 2017.

(Circulated)

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

- (1) By the Vice-President and Minister of Public Security:
Annual Report of the Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking in Persons for the year 2016.
(Circulated)
- (2) By the Minister of State:
Audited Financial Statements of the National Parks Commission for the year 2008.
(Circulated)
- (3) By the Minister of Finance:
(i) The Excise Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2017 – No. 2 of 2017.
(Circulated)
(ii) The Value-Added Tax (Amendment of Schedules) Order 2017 – No. 40 of 2017.
(Circulated)
- (4) By the Minister of Communities:
Audited Financial Statements of the Central Housing and Planning Authority for the year ended 31st December, 2016.
(Circulated)

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

MOTION

ITEM 1 - 2017 Georgetown Prison Fire and Jailbreak

Ms. Gail Teixeira, M.P., Opposition Chief Whip, on behalf of Bishop Juan Edghill, M.S., M.P., moved the following motion:

WHEREAS Sunday, July 9, 2017, will go down in the history of our country as the day when the worst Prison fire and jailbreak took place, destroying over 80% of the Georgetown Prison Camp Street, eight (8) prisoners escaped and the death of a prison officer and several others injured;

AND WHEREAS the first official communication on the said matter took place in the evening on the National Communications Network with the Heads of the Disciplined Services, followed by an interview with Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan, Minister of Public Security and a pre-recorded interview with the President;

AND WHEREAS the lack of information in the early hours after the jailbreak caused great anxiety and uncertainty to the general public and the families of the prisoners;

AND WHEREAS the Members of this House extend condolences to the family of the deceased prison officer, Odinga Wickham, who was killed during the events at the Georgetown Prison Camp Street on July 9, 2017 and send best wishes for the full recovery of those officers who were injured during the same incident and are currently hospitalised or recuperating at home;

AND WHEREAS on July 24, 2017, by way of a public announcement the nation became aware that thirteen (13) additional high risk prisoners had escaped from the walled area in the Lusignan Prison Pasture;

AND WHEREAS the public remains in the dark after the July 9 incident as to what led to the jailbreak and fire, and how the Government managed this situation as it unfolded and its aftermath;

AND WHEREAS the public was informed that many of their questions would be answered in the course of a Commission of Inquiry to be appointed by the President;

AND WHEREAS on July 20, 2017, the Minister was reported in the state media as saying there would be no Commission of Inquiry until the escapees were all captured;

AND WHEREAS as a result it appears that the questions of the public will remain unanswered for an indefinite time,

10.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly calls on the Government in accordance with Article 106(2) of the Guyana Constitution to accept collective responsibility to this House for these repeated events at the prisons of Guyana;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly calls on the Government to make full disclosure of all aspects of the tragedy at the Georgetown Prison on July 9, 2017, and to declare what actions have been and are being taken to reduce the opportunities for such situations from re-occurring;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly calls on the Government to make full disclosure with regard to the circumstances surrounding the most recent escape of prisoners on July 24, 2017; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly lends its support to the Disciplined Services in its efforts to ensure public safety and the protection of our citizens and the recapture of all the escapees.

(Notice Paper No. 114 (M 86 Opp.17) published on 2017-08-04)

Mr. Joseph Hamilton spoke to the motion.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 3.55 p.m. the Sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.14 p.m. the Sitting was resumed.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Adrian Anamayah

11.

Ms. Pauline Campbell- Sukhai

Mr. Harry Gill

Mr. Alister Charlie

Ms. Yvonne Pearson-Fredericks

Ms. Gillian Burton-Persaud

Ms. Priya Manickchand

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 7.14 p.m., the Sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.06 p.m., the Sitting was resumed.

The Vice- President and Minister of Public Security also spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Ms. Gail Teixeira replied.

The motion was then put and negatived.

(ii) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS – Second Readings

ITEM 2 - MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2)

BILL 2017 – Bill No. 16/2017 published on 2017-12-11

The Vice-President and Minister of Public Security moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act.

(Read a first time on 2017-12-13)

12.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Joseph Hamilton

Ms. Pauline Campbell-Sukhai

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

At 10.00 p.m., the First Vice-President and Prime Minister moved that Standing Order No. 10(1) be suspended to enable the Assembly to continue and conclude consideration on the Bills and Motion.

Thereafter The Vice-President and Minister of Public Security replied.

The Bill was read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 were passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Vice-President and Minister of Public Security, the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2017 was read a third time and passed as printed.

ITEM 3 - VALUE-ADDED TAX (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 2017 – Bill No. 17/2017 published on 2017-12-11

The Minister of Finance moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Value-Added Tax Act.

(Read a first time on 2017-12-13)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Joseph Hamilton

Mr. Adrian Anamayah

13.

Presiding by Mr. John Adams, M.P.

At 10:35 p.m., the Speaker withdrew from the Chamber and Mr. John Adams, M.P., took the Chair.

Thereafter, the Minister of Finance replied.

Speaker's Return to the Chamber

At 10:38 p.m., the Speaker returned to the Chamber.

The Minister of Finance continued and concluded his speech.

The Bill was read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 9 were passed as printed

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Finance, Value-Added Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2017 – Bill No. 17 of 2017 was read a third time and passed as printed.

ITEM 4 - INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 2017- Bill No. 18/2017
published on 2017-12-11

The Minister of Finance moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Income Tax Act.

(Read a first time on 2017-12-13)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Odinga Lumumba

Ms. Priya Manickchand

14.

Thereafter, the Minister of Finance replied.

The Bill was read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

In Committee

Clauses 1 and 2 were passed as printed.

Clause 3

The Minister of Finance moved the following amendment which was put and carried:

Insert immediately after clause 3 the following –

“Amendment of section 20 of the Principal Act.	3A. “Section 20 of the Principle Act is amended by the deletion of the words “and such deduction shall be apportioned according to the individual’s earning period and allowed accordingly”.
---	--

Clause 3 was then passed as amended.

Clauses 4 to 12 were passed as printed

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Finance, Value-Added Tax (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2017 – Bill No. 18 of 2017 was read a third time and passed as amended.

ITEM 5 - CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) BILL 2017 – Bill No. 19/2017 published on 2017-12-13

The Minister of Finance moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Customs Act.

(Read a first time on 2017-12-13)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Ms. Priya Manickchand

Mr. Adrian Anamayah

Thereafter, the Minister of Finance replied.

The Bill was read a second time.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

In Committee

Clauses 1 and 2 were passed as printed

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Finance, the Customs (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2017 – Bill No. 19 of 2017 was read a third time and passed as printed.

MOTION

ITEM 6 - CONFIRMATION OF THE CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT OF SCHEDULE) ORDER 2017 – NO. 39 OF 2017

The Minister of Finance moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly, in accordance with Section 9 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01, confirms the Customs (Amendment of Schedule) Order 2017 (No. 39 of 2017) which was made on 11th December, 2017, under Section 8 of the Customs Act, Chapter 82:01 and published in the Official Gazette dated 11th December, 2017.

(Notice Paper No. 119 (M 90 Govt 51) published on 2017-12-13)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Joseph Hamilton

Ms. Gail Teixeira

Thereafter, the Minister of Finance replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 1.10 a.m., on a motion by the First Vice-President and Prime Minister, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m. on Thursday, 18th January, 2018.

.....
HON. DR. BARTON U.A. SCOTLAND, O.R., C.C.H., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

10th December, 2018.