

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 86TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2012-2014) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON WEDNESDAY, 21ST MAY, 2014
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS,
BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN.

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (68)

Speaker (1)

The Hon Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly (Absent – on leave)

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (34)

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

Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, O.E., M.P., Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P., Minister of Agriculture (Absent – on leave)

Hon. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),
Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent – on leave)

Hon. Dr. Ashni K. Singh, M.P., Minister of Finance

Hon. Robert M. Persaud, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Minister of Natural Resources and Environment

Hon. Dr. Jennifer Westford, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni),
Minister of the Public Service

2.

Hon. Dr. Bheri S. Ramsarran, M.P., Minister of Health (Absent – on leave)

Hon. Mohamed I. Alli, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water (Absent – on leave)

Hon. Dr. Frank C.S. Anthony, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Hon. Brindley H.R. Benn, M.P., Minister of Public Works

Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice),
Minister of Education

Hon. Jennifer I.M. Webster, M.P., Minister of Human Services
and Social Security

Hon. Pauline Campbell-Sukhai, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs (Absent – on leave)

*Hon. Dr. Nanda K. Gopaul, M.P., Minister of Labour

Hon. Alli Baksh, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam),
Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture

Hon. Norman A. Whittaker, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini),
Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Hon. Bishop Juan A. Edghill, M.S., J.P., M.P., Minister in the
Ministry of Finance

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

Mr. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent – on leave)

Bibi S. Shadick, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Ganga Persaud, M.P.

***Non-Elected Minister**

3.

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

Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P.

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

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P.

Rev. Dr. Kwame A. Gilbert, M.P.

**Mr. Joseph Hamilton, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Health

Dr. Vindhya Vasini Persaud, M.S., M.P.

Mr. Cornel Damon, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam)

Mr. Faizal M. Jafarally, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

Members of the Opposition (33)

(ii) Members of A Partnership for National Unity(26)

Brigadier (Ret'd) David A. Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition

Dr. Rupert Roopnarine, M.P.

Ms Amna Ally, M.P., Opposition Chief Whip

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica), Deputy Speaker
of the National Assembly

Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Dr. George Norton, M.P.

****Non-Elected Member**

4.

Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P.

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Joseph F. Harmon, M.S.M., M.P.

Mr. Ronald A. Bulkan, M.P.

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

Ms Dawn Hastings-Williams, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Mr. Winston Felix, D.S.M., M.P.

Dr. Karen Cummings, M.P.

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

Mr. Sydney Allicock, M.S., M.P.

Ms Africo Selman, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Desmond Trotman, M.P.

Mr. James A. Bond, M.P.

Mr. Ernest Elliot, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Ms Vanessa Kissoon, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice)

Mrs. Mabel Baveghems, M.P.

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

Mr. Christopher A. Jones, M.P.

Mr. Renis Morian, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice)

Ms Rennita L. Williams, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

Miss Annette N. Ferguson, M.P.

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(iii)Members of The Alliance For Change (7)

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, J.P., M.P.

Mrs. Catherine Hughes, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mrs. Valerie Garrido-Lowe, M.P.

Dr. Veersammy Ramayya, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

Ms June Eula Marcello, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)

Mr. Trevor Williams, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

Ms Hermina Gilgeours, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (a.g.)

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 2.20 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read the prayers.

6.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

The Acting Speaker made the following announcements:-

1. **Presiding over the Assembly by the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly**

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, informed Members that, due to the unavailability of the Hon. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly, he would be the acting Speaker for that day's sitting.

2. **Leave**

The acting Speaker announced that leave had been granted to:-

Hon. Leslie Ramsammy, M.P., and Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P., for that day's sitting;
and

Hon. Dr. Bheri Ramsarran, M.P., up to the 26th May, 2014.

3. **Electronic Gate and Scanner**

The acting Speaker informed Members that a new electronic gate and scanner were installed at the entrance of the lower corridor of the Public Buildings to improve security and that Members would be issued with a Pass Card to gain access through the gate.

4. **Sympathy Motion on Death of Mr. Doodnauth Singh, S.C.**

The acting Speaker informed Members that the Sympathy motion on the Death of Mr. Doodnauth Singh, S.C., former Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs would not be proceeded with at the request of the wife of the late Mr. Doodnauth Singh. The Speaker therefore directed that the motion be removed from the Order Paper.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS-

Mr. Trevor Williams, M.P., presented a Petition on behalf of the retired employees of the

7.

Guyana Telecommunications Corporation and active servants of the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company and the Guyana Postal and Telecommunications Workers Union (GPWU) requesting that the former employees of the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation who continued in service with the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company and retired, be paid their just and due pension in accordance with the Pensions Act, as enshrined in the Constitution of Guyana. Also, for the Minister of Finance to kindly state the reason, preventing the responsible agency from affecting payment of the correct pension that is just and due to pensioners, and when would the payment to the pensioners be effected. Mr. Williams requested that it be read and referred to a Special Select Committee.

(Circulated)

Thereafter, the question that the Petition be read was put and carried.

The Clerk then read the Petition.

ORAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

1. Lester Generator at Kato

Mrs. Valarie Garrido-Lowe, M.P., asked the Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development the following question:

“Since parts of the Lester Generator at Kato were removed in 2012 on the instruction of the REO of Region 8, and were not replaced, the Kato Administrative Building, the Kato Police Station and Kato Guest House are without electricity to date. Most of the night the police station remains in darkness, except for a few hours when electricity is provided by a kind resident of Kato. The Solar Panel can only power the radio.

8.

Can the Hon. Minister say when the generator will be repaired, so that some of the main buildings in the Kato community would be supplied with electricity?”

Thereafter, the Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development indicated that he was not prepared to answer the question at that sitting, but will supply the written answer at the next sitting of the National Assembly.

2. Monies owed to the Mahdia Power and Light Company

Mrs. Valarie Garrido-Lowe, M.P., asked the Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development the following question:

“Whereas the Mahdia Community is receiving 10 and sometimes 12 hours of electricity, due to the Mahdia Power and Light Company being unable to purchase fuel because of the lack of funds.

And whereas the Region 8 Administration, owes Mahdia Power and Light Company monies for electricity supplied in 2013 and 2014 as follows:-

- a) March, 2013 - \$1.3M
- b) April, 2013 - \$1.3M
- c) May, 2013 - \$1.2M
- d) June, 2013 - \$1.1M
- e) July, 2013 - \$1.4M
- f) August, 2013 - \$1.3M
- g) January, 2014 - \$1.5M
- h) February, 2014 - \$1.1M
- i) March, 2014 - \$1.1M; a total of \$11.5 million dollars.

9.

And whereas only two million dollars was paid towards this account, and the people of Mahdia are still suffering because the Mahdia Power and Light Company cannot afford to purchase enough fuel.

Could the Hon. Minister say when the Regional Executive Officer intends to settle this account, so that the residents of Mahdia can enjoy more hours of much needed electricity?"

Thereafter, the Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development indicated that he was not prepared to answer the question at that sitting, but will supply the written answer at the next sitting of the National Assembly.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

For Written Replies

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIBRARY AT THE MADHIA SCHOOL DORMITORIES

The Minister of Education informed the Assembly that the following question was misdirected to her and that same should be forwarded to the Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development:

Whereas the Madhia School Dormitories do not have a library, hence, students living in these facilities are denied the opportunity of reading for relaxation and enjoyment and for the expansion of their consciousness;

And whereas it is the duty of the State to create a good study environment for these students.

Could the Hon. Minister say if her Ministry has any plans of setting up a library in the Madhia School Dormitories anytime soon and, if so, how soon would that be?

(Notice Paper No. 305 (Q 206 Opp. 203) published on 2014-03-20)

2. **CONSTRUCTION OF THE PARAMAKATOI PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Member Asking: **Mrs. June Marcello, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Education**

(i) Could the Hon. Minister tell this House why construction of the Paramakatoi Primary School, Region 8, that started in April, 2012, has not been completed?

(ii) Could the Hon. Minister tell this House when construction of the Paramakatoi Primary School would be completed?

(Notice Paper No. 293 (Q 195 Opp. 193) published on 2014-02-13)

Answers:

(i) “This project is being executed by the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF)/ Ministry of Finance. From the inception the execution of the works was negatively affected by time lapses and the continual shortage of materials, workers, machinery and equipment. This coupled with the abandonment of the project by the contractor in March 2013, and the cessation of work for approximately five (5) weeks led to the termination of the contract on April 22, 2013.

In October, 2013 the Basic Needs Trust Fund (BNTF) applied to the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) for and obtained a “no-objection” to re-tender for the completion of the project. The project was advertised publicly for twenty eight (28) days, as per CDB procurement guidelines, and bids were opened on October 18, 2013.

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- (ii) A contract between BNTF and Vishal Contracting Company was signed on November 29, 2013 for a construction period of 7½ months and defects liability period of six (6) months. The actual commencement date was January 29, 2014 and the scheduled completion date is August 30, 2014.”

For Oral Reply

3. DISBURSEMENT OF THE \$10,000 GRANT BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Ms Amna Ally, M.P., Opposition Chief Whip, asked the Minister of Education the following questions:

Can the Hon. Minister say:-

* (i) What mechanism will be employed by the Ministry of Education to disburse the \$10,000.00 per child, as has been promised in Budget 2014?

* (ii) When will this money be disbursed?

(Notice Paper No. 322 (Q 222 Opp. 219) published on 2014-04-28)

Thereafter, the Minister of Education indicated that the answers to the questions were not readily available and informed the Assembly that the answers will be supplied within 3 weeks.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS

Establishment of a Women Causus of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarian, Guyana Branch

The Minister of the Public Service made a statement on the Establishment of a Women Causus of Commonwealth Women Parliamentarian, Guyana Branch.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Presentation and First Reading

WILDLIFE IMPORT AND EXPORT BILL 2014 – Bill No. 8/2014

The Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to regulate international trade of Guyana's wildlife and to enable Guyana to fulfill its obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

(To be Circulated)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) **GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS**

BILLS – Second Reading

ITEM 1 - WILDLIFE IMPORT AND EXPORT BILL 2013 –Bill No. 20/2013

published on 2013-11-27

At the request of the Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment the following Bill was withdrawn:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to regulate international trade of Guyana's wildlife and to enable Guyana to fulfill its obligations under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Washington, 1973.

(Read a first time on 2013-12-12)

(i) **PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

BILLS – Second Reading

ITEM 2 - BROADCASTING (AMENDMENT) BILL 2013 – Bill No. 19/2013 published on 2014-02-28

At the request of Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon, M.S.M., M.P., the second reading of the following Bill was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Broadcasting Act.

(Read a first time on 2014-02-28)

MOTION

ITEM 3 - APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TO INVESTIGATE THE TORTURE OF PERSONS BY THE GUYANA POLICE FORCE BETWEEN 2006 AND 2013

Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition, moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana prescribes, at Article 141, that “No person shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading punishment or other treatment;”

AND WHEREAS it has been widely reported that persons were tortured by members of the Guyana Police Force between the years 2006 and 2013, inclusive;

AND WHEREAS in accordance with the Commission of Inquiry Act, Chapter 19:03, “The President may issue a commission appointing one or more commissioners and authorising such commissioner or commissioners to inquire into any matter in which an inquiry would, in the opinion of the President, be for the public welfare;”

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly expresses its sympathy with the victims of torture;
and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly calls upon the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, in accordance with the Commission of Inquiry Act, Chapter 19:03, to appoint a commission of inquiry to inquire into the torture of persons by members of the Guyana Police Force and to make recommendations to prevent a recurrence of such torture.

(Notice Paper No. 281 (M 97 Opp 57) published on 2014-02-05)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Ms Gail Teixeira

Mr. Winston Felix

Presiding by Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

At 4.20 p.m., the acting Speaker withdrew from the Chamber and Mr. Keith Scott took the Chair.

Return of Speaker

At 4.22 p.m., the acting Speaker returned to the Chamber.

Mr. Winston Felix continued and concluded his speech.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.23 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.30 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

15.

Assembly resumed the debate on the motion.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

Mr. James Bond

The Minister of Home Affairs

Mr. Moses Nagamootoo

Thereafter, Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger replied.

The motion was seconded by Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon.

The motion was then put and carried.

Independence Greetings

Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition, extended Independence Greetings to the Speaker, Members of the Assembly and Staff of the Parliament Office. Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan and the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs joined Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger in extending Independence Greetings to Members of the Assembly, Staff and the people of Guyana.

ADJOURNMENT

At 7.43 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Thursday, 19th June, 2014.

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MR. BASIL WILLIAMS, M.P.,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.

21st May, 2014.