

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 22nd SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2006-2007) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY, 15TH MARCH, 2007
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Hari. N. Ramkarran, S.C., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government (42)

(i) People's Progressive Party/Civic (41)

(ii) The United Force (1)

The Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, M.P., (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice),
Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

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

The Hon. Shaik K.Z. Baksh, M.P., Minister of Education

The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P., Minister of Foreign Trade and International
Cooperation (Absent – on Leave)

The Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Minister of Health

The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P., (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),
Minister of Amerindian Affairs

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

*The Hon. S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water

***Non-elected Minister**

The Hon. Robert M. Persaud, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Minister of Agriculture (Absent)

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

The Hon. Kellawan Lall, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

*The Hon. Doodnauth Singh, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

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

The Hon. B.H. Robeson Benn, M.P., Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

**The Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P., Minister of Labour

The Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P., (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice),
Minister of Human Services and Social Security

The Hon. Dr. Desrey Fox, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Education

The Hon. Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Health (Absent)

The Hon. Jennifer I. Webster, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Finance

The Hon. Manniram Prashad, M.P., Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Mr. Donald Ramotar, M.P.

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P.

Mr. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P.

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., Chief Whip

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

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Albert Atkinson, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)

***Non-Elected Minister**

****Elected Member from the United Force**

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

Mr. Bernard C. DeSantos, S.C., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Shirley V. Edwards, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Mohamed F. Khan, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam) (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P.

Mr. Moses V. Nagamootoo, J.P., M.P. (Absent – on Leave)

Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P.

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

***Mr. Steve P. Ninvalle, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

Mr. Parmanand P. Persaud, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam)

Mrs. Philomena Sahoye-Shury, C.C.H., J.P., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

***Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

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

Mr. Norman A. Whittaker, M.P., (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

Members of the Opposition (28)

(i) Members of People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana (22)

Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Winston 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)

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

Ms Anna Ally, M.P.

Mr. James McAllister, M.P.

Mr. Dave D. Danny, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Aubrey C. Norton, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

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

Mrs. Judith David-Blair, M.P., (Region No.7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Mr. Mervyn Williams, M.P., (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

Ms Africo Selman, M.P.

Dr. John Austin, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

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

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

Mr. Desmond Fernandes, M.P., (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

(ii) **Alliance For Change (5)**

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

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

Ms Chantalle L. Smith, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. David Patterson, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

(iii) Guyana Action Party/Rise Organize and Rebuild (1)

Mr. Everall N. Franklin, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

Mrs. Lilawttie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The sitting commenced at 2.24 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Acquisition of a Television for Members of Parliament

The Speaker, on behalf of the Members of the National Assembly and himself, extended thanks to the Minister of Finance and Minister within the Ministry of Finance for the acquisition of a 42 inches television for use by Members of the Assembly.

ORAL QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., asked the Minister of Home Affairs the following question:

Can the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs inform this National Assembly which contracting parties, as defined by Article 1 of the Treaty on Security Assistance Among Caricom Member States, have signed the aforesaid Treaty.

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-**For Oral Replies****1. FILLING OF VACANT POSITION OF SOLICITOR GENERAL**

Member Asking: Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Legal Affairs

* Could the Hon. Minister of Legal Affairs inform this National Assembly what plans his Government has to fill the Constitutional position of Solicitor General which has been vacant since 1994?

(Notice Paper No. 93 (Q69 Opp69) published on 2007-01-31)

Thereafter the Minister of Legal Affairs replied.

2. HEAVILY CONGESTED AND NARROW STREETS IN GEORGETOWN

Member Asking: Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Home Affairs

*Could the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs tell this National Assembly whether he is prepared to operationalised the recommendation, made by the PNCR-1G during the 2006 Budget Debate that heavily congested and narrow streets in Georgetown be converted to one way streets?

(Notice Paper No. 95 (Q71 Opp71) published on 2007-01-31)

Answer:

The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs is prepared to continually examine through the Police Force the traffic situation in Georgetown and where necessary create one-way streets to ease any congestion. If the PNCR-1G is aware of additional streets please submit the names to me and the situation will be examined to determine its feasibility.

3. **EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS TO MINERALS FOUND IN RORAIMA AREA**

Member Asking: Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

*Has the Government of Guyana given exclusive rights to any company to all minerals found in a sixteen thousand square kilometer area of Roraima, which may also include Amerindian Lands?

(Notice Paper No. 114 (Q89 Opp 89) published on 2007-02-09)

Answer:

Goldstone Resources Ltd on 2005-05-16 applied for a Permission to conduct Geological Geophysical Surveys (PGGS) over three (3) separate parcels, two of which may be considered to be in the area of RORAIMA, the third being in the Parrish's Hill in Berbice. The two parcels in the Roraima area overlap with Amerindian villages. The Kopinang and Mazaruni parcels cover 1876 and 3056 km² respectively totaling 4,922 km² not the 16000 km² you alluded to.

This application for a PGGS is a Large Scale application. In accordance with Section 50 of the Amerindian Act (Act No. 6 of 2006) the Government being satisfied that this application was in the interest of the nation as a whole granted the PGGS on 2005-09-06 for a period of two years. Furthermore, this PGGS provides exclusive rights for Lateritic Bauxites and related minerals and not for all minerals.

4. **LATERITIC BAUXITE DEPOSIT IN THE KOPINANG BASIN**

Member Asking: Mr. Overall Franklin, M.P.

**Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and
Communications**

*Will the Honourable Prime Minister state if a lateritic Bauxite deposit exceeding 1,100 million metric tons was confirmed in the Kopinang Basin?

(Notice Paper No. 115 (Q90 Opp90) published on 2007-02-09)

Answer:

BHP Billiton has advised that:

“At the current stage of prospecting BHP Billiton cannot state that a lateritic bauxite deposit exceeding 1,100 million tons is confirmed in the Kpoinang basin. However we can say that BHP Billiton is still exploring the region and believes the Kopinang Basin and the Upper Mazaruni area together do have potential to host a large (lateritic bauxite) deposit. The company is not in a position to release statements regarding volumes and grade estimates, due to the early stage of the exploration programme.

For Written Replies

5. **RECONSTRUCTION OF SUSSEX STREET**

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Could the Hon. Minister of Transport and Hydraulics inform this National Assembly whether there are any current plans for the reconstruction of Sussex Street?

(Notice Paper No. 96 (Q72 Opp72) published on 2007-01-31)

Answer:

Sussex Street falls under the jurisdiction of the Mayor and City Council of Georgetown. The question should therefore be addressed to the Hon. Minister of Local Government under whose portfolio Municipalities fall.

6. **REPAIRS TO BRIDGES LINKING UPPER SUSSEX STREET TO SURROUNDING AREAS**

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Could the Hon. Minister of Transport and Hydraulics inform this National Assembly, when will the three main bridges linking Upper Sussex Street with Callender Street, Castello Housing Scheme and West La Penitence (the Island) be repaired to provide normal ingress and egress?
(Notice Paper No. 97 (Q73 Opp 73) published on 2007-01-31)

Answer:

Sussex Street, Callender Street, Castello Housing Scheme and West La Penitence (the Island) all fall under the jurisdiction of the Mayor and City Councillors of Georgetown. The question is therefore one for the Minister of Local Government under whose portfolio Municipalities fall.

7. **MEDICAL FACILITIES FOR RESIDENTS OF NORTH AND PLUM PARK SOPHIA**

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Health

Could the Hon. Minister of Health inform this National Assembly:-

- (i) When the residents of North Sophia and Plum Park Sophia will benefit from medical facilities?
- (ii) Whether these medical facilities, when made available, will have medical staff available on a 24 hour basis?

(Notice Paper No. 98 (Q74 Opp 74) published on 2007-01-31)

Answers:

A health center is presently functioning in B Field, Sophia. Its coverage (catchment area) includes Field A, B, C and D. North Sophia. Plum Park is presently included in the catchment area of the Sophia Health Center.

The health center provides service between 8.00 a.m and 4.30 p.m. Its staff includes a doctor, a Medex, a staff nurse/midwife, a nurse aide and a pharmacy assistant.

The services offered include maternal and child health care, family planning, VCT, PMTCT, chronic disease clinics. Like all health centers around the country, the Sophia Health Center does not operate on a 24 hour basis.

With improved road network and bridges in the entire Sophia area, Plum Island and North Sophia are less than 5 minutes by vehicle and 10 minutes by walking from the Sophia health Center.

Prior to the construction of the Sophia Health Center in 2004, the residents of Sophia depended on the health center at Campbellville and other centers.

Sophia residents, like all of the residents of Georgetown can access 24 hours service through the GPHC. These residents also benefit from ambulance services operated by GPHC, Mercy Hospital and Davis Memorial Hospital. The private ambulances operated by Mercy Hospital and Davis Memorial would pick up emergency cases for the GPHC.

8. AMBULANCE FOR SUB-REGION 2 OF REGION NO. 8

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Health

Could the Hon. Minister of Health inform this National Assembly when sub-Region 2 of Region No. 8 will be provided with an ambulance?

(Notice Paper No. 99 (Q75 Opp75) published on 2007-01-31)

Answer:

Region 8 has an ambulance located at Mahdia. The ambulance at Mahdia is a Nissan Cruiser, which has been adapted with stretchers and IV stands. This ambulance presently serves Princeville, Campbeltown, Micobie, Tumatumarie, Potaro Landing and Mango Landing.

11.

The health care services of Region 8 are under the supervision of the RDC of Region 8. The budget for the health care services in Region 8 is under the RDC. The Ministry of Health advises and monitors the implementation of programs in Region 8.

Region 8 has to determine whether it needs another ambulance for the sub-region #2 and the appropriate request must be made.

The Ministry of Health has, as part of the National Health Plan, advised all RDCs since 2003 that viable ambulance service needs to be developed and each Region should develop a plan to ensure adequate and effective ambulance service is available. In that respect, the Ministry of health and the Ministry of Local Government have been working in collaboration with the Regions to enhance ambulance services.

A new training program is being put into place to train personnel to work with ambulances around the country to enhance the ambulance service. This program is being developed at the GPHC. It is our intention that all ambulances should have trained, dedicated personnel and not have to depend on doctors and nurses accompanying ambulances when they have to pick up patients.

9. **TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AGE**

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

Could the Hon. Minister of Education inform this National Assembly of the total number of students of primary school age presently NOT enrolled in the Primary School system throughout Guyana?

(Notice Paper No. 100 (Q76 Opp 76) published on 2007-01-31)

Answer:

All students of primary school age are enrolled in the school system throughout Guyana.

10. **POLICY TO DEAL WITH SCHOOL DROPOUTS**

Member Asking: Mr. Mervyn Williams, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

Could the Hon. Minister of Education inform this National Assembly what is the policy of his Ministry to deal with school dropouts?

(Notice Paper No. 104 (Q80 Opp80) published on 2007-01-31)

Answer:

The actions taken to deal with school dropouts are as follows:

1. Re-integration of teenage mothers in school;
2. CARE – campaign – Care, Assess, Respect and Educate the target group.
(These are re-integrated too);
3. Collaborating with NGOs e.g. EDUCARE, Every Child Guyana, Sunshine Group;
4. Inter-sectoral collaboration to cater for various needs.
5. Pastoral Care – This is the preventive strategy;
6. Referral to YWCA, Technical Institute and AEA.
7. Services of the Schools' Welfare Officers.

11. **HIGH LEVEL OF TRUANCY IN REGION NO. 3**

Member Asking: Mr. Mervyn Williams, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

Could the Hon. Minister of Education inform this National Assembly when the Schools Welfare Officers in Region No. 3 will begin a systematic program to combat the high level of truancy in Region No. 3?

(Notice Paper No. 105 (Q81 Opp 81) published on 2007-01-31)

Answer:

A program is in place to deal with truancy in the School System. With respect to Region 3, the following is in place:

- (i) a team comprising Region 3 Education Officer and the Schools Welfare Officer are visiting areas to identify children not attending school and also contacting parents whose children are found loitering. This will be done on a regular basis.
- (ii) The Regional Education Officer will be holding meetings with the sub-regional organization of schools which is a grouping of all PTA's on the West Demerara, in order to educate them on and seek their support to curb truancy in the Region.

12. **ALLOCATION OF TIME AND PUBLICISING OF DEBATES IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Member Asking: Mrs. Sheila Holder, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

- (i) Will the Honourable Prime Minister say what system is employed by the state's radio and television stations in allocating time to speakers from the various parliamentary parties in publicising debates in the National Assembly?
- (ii) Will the Honourable Prime Minister say how much time was allocated on state's radio and television to the various parliamentary parties during the debates that took place since the opening of the Ninth Parliament?
- (iii) Will the Honourable Prime Minister list the names of the Parliamentarians whose presentations were aired on state's radio and television during the debates in the National Assembly for the period commencing the opening of the Ninth Parliament to January 31, 2007?

(Notice Paper No. 107 (Q82 Opp82) published on 2007-02-09)

Answers:

- (i) Deliberations in the National Assembly are about debate and as such, to effectively carry a news story on any given issue, both sides of the house must be heard. It is therefore an internal newsroom policy that this is enforced. Suffice to say, as it relates to radio news under the period of review, there were nineteen (19) sound bites by combined Opposition M.P.'s in news stories as compared to eighteen (18) sound bites by M.P.'s on the Government side.

On the other hand, television news coverage mirror the figures presented for that of radio.

(ii) 1. **3rd Sitting Television
Cricket World Cup Bill**

Hon. Dr. Frank Anthony	25 mins
Hon. Clarissa Reihl	12 mins
Hon. Manzoor Nadir	15 mins
Hon. Basil Williams	10 mins

Radio

Hon. Dr. Frank Anthony	20 mins
Hon. Clarissa Reihl	8 mins

2. **5th Sitting, VAT**

Television

Hon. Dr. Ashni Singh	35 mins
Hon. Winston Murray	15 mins

3. 7th Sitting, Old Metal Dealers Bill

Television

Hon. Samuel Hinds	25 mins
Hon. Raphael Trotman	10 mins
Hon. Manzoor Nadir	15 mins
Hon. Deborah Backer	10 mins

4. 8th and 9th Sitting, Rice Factories Bill

Television

Hon. Robert Persaud	25 mins
Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan	10 mins
Hon. Anil Nandlall	10 mins
Hon. James McAllister	10 mins

Gambling Prevention Bill

Television

Hon. Clement Rohee	30 mins
Hon. Robert Corbin	15 mins
Hon. Desiree Fox	15 mins
Hon. Sheila Holder	10 mins
Hon. Maniram Prashad	15 mins
Hon George Norton	10 mins
Hon. Odinga Lumumba	10 mins

5. 10th Sitting, VAT and Berbice Bridge

Television

Hon. Jennifer Webster	15 mins
Hon. Winston Murray	10 mins
Hon. James McAllister	10 mins

Hon. R. H. Benn	20 mins
Hon. Shaik Baksh	15 mins
Hon. Robert Corbin	12 mins
Hon. Robert Persaud	20 mins

6. 11th Sitting, Immigration, CARICOM Visa and Preclearance

Television

Hon. Clement Rohee	25 mins
Hon. Basil Williams	10 mins
Hon. Frank Anthony	20 mins
Hon. Aubrey Norton	8 mins
Hon. Robert Persaud	
Hon. Harinarine Nawbatt	
Hon. Dr. Frank Anthony	
Hon. Priya Manikchand	
Hon. Dr. Leslie Ramsammy	
Hon. Robeson Benn	
Hon. Dr. Beri Ramsarran	
Hon. Kellawan Lall	
Hon. Dr. Ashni Singh	

- (iii) Hon. Sheila Holder
 Hon. Robert Corbin
 Hon. Winston Murray
 Hon. Desmond Fernances
 Hon. Alfrico Selman
 Hon. Ernest Elliot
 Hon. Kemraj Ramjattan
 Hon. Dr. David Patterson
 Hon. Volda Lawrence

Hon. James Mc Allister
Hon. Dr. George Norton
Hon. Basil Williams
Hon. Deborah Backer
Hon. Keith Scott
Hon. Samuel Hinds
Hon. Dr. Desiree Fox
Hon. Manzoor Nadir

13. **OVERSEAS TREATMENT OF CITIZENS**

Member Asking: Mrs. Sheila Holder, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Health

- (i) Will the Honourable Minister say what is the system being utilised by the Ministry of Health in allocating financial assistance for overseas treatment of citizens in circumstances where local health facilities are not available and citizens cannot afford to pay for their life-saving medical treatment prescribed?
- (ii) With the Ministry of Health's ongoing programme of improvements in the public hospital system when does the Minister envisage a reduction or cessation in the overseas treatment being financially sponsored by the government?
- (iii) Will the Minister please list the names of the persons who benefited from overseas paid treatment by the State over the last fourteen (14) years?

(Notice Paper No. 108 (Q 83 Opp83) published on 2007-02-09)

Answers:

- (i) The system used to provide support to persons who require treatment not available in the public hospital system applies to persons seeking medical treatment through the public and private hospital systems. In addition, the system does not apply only to persons seeking medical care overseas since some of the service for which the Government supported people previously to travel abroad are now available in the private sector (through a public/private partnership arrangement).

The first step is for a case to be made to demonstrate that the requested treatment or diagnostic procedure is not available in the public sector (for local private sector treatment options) or in Guyana (for overseas options);

Anyone can apply for assistance to the Ministry of Health. The person must be referred by a specialist or by a senior physician for possible overseas care. The physician must establish that the care necessary is not available in the public sector (in the case where a request is being made for support for such services in the local private sector) or in Guyana (where overseas treatment is being requested). The referral letter must be signed by the Head of the Hospital where the requests emanate from. The referral letter must include details about the person and the medical condition, all diagnostic tests that have been completed and the reasons why the physician feel the person would benefit from overseas treatment. This letter must include a statement that such services are not available in the public sector or in Guyana.

The second step is for the person (directly or through a responsible family member) to make application to the Ministry of Health for such assistance.

The third step is for the Ministry to complete two different assessments. These assessments are done simultaneously and not sequentially. The first assessment is done to determine the ability of the person to pay and to ensure all options are being pursued by the patient, e.g. NIS, private health insurance etc. The second assessment is for the Chief Medical Officer to determine the appropriateness of the medical request.

The next step is for the Ministry to determine where such services might be available and the costs associated with the interventions being requested.

The decision to support can be made at the level of the CMO and the PS if the costs are less than \$US1,000. The Minister's NO Objection is required if the costs are up to \$US2,000. For sums greater than \$US2,000, a no objection from Cabinet is required.

- (ii) It would be difficult for the Government to say that assistance for medical care abroad will cease at any time because Guyana has all the services necessary. People who live in the most advanced of countries sometimes are unable to obtain all the care needed and re forced to travel to other countries. However, the Government could state that request for overseas treatment has been reduced, while requests for cost-sharing services in Guyana have increased. Several treatment options which the Government previously supported are available locally (through a public/private partnership program for the introduction of services previously unavailable in Guyana). Thus, travelling overseas for diagnostic and treatment reasons, such as CT and MRI, cancer (surgery, chemo- and radiotherapy), heart diseases (angiograms, angioplasty, stenting, by-pass surgeries, valve replacements etc), hip and joint replacements, dialysis and other conditions are now available locally. Treatments for these conditions are still supported, but only locally. We also expect that some of the cases supported overseas for eye treatment will soon be available at the Port Mourant Ophthalmology Center and this will further reduce the need to travel overseas for medical treatment.
- (iii) I am unable to supply the lists of names for public examination by the Member. There is an issue of confidentiality and we would have to obtain the permission of each person to publish this information.

14. **ELECTRICITY FOR FOUR MILE HOUSING SCHEME AND WEST SIDE OF BARTICA SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Member Asking: Mrs. Judith David-Blair, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

Could the Honourable Prime Minister inform this National Assembly when the residents of Four Mile Housing Scheme and West Side of the Secondary School at Bartica, Region No. 7 will receive electricity?

(Notice Paper No. 109 (Q84 Opp84) published on 2007-02-09)

Answer:

The following areas in Region 7 have been sequenced for electrification in Phase 2 of the Unserved Areas Electrification Programme which commences in 2007 and concludes in 2009:

1.	West Indian Association Scheme
2.	West Secondary School Scheme
3.	Four Miles Scheme Phase I
4.	Four Miles Scheme Phase II

The order for commencement of infrastructural works will chiefly be determined by occupancy level, which should desirably be at least 50% to achieve the greatest economic returns for the GPL, and residents' willingness to pay the consumer contribution of \$10,000 which is a small fraction of the cost for expanding the networks.

15. **ROYALTIES PAID TO THE GUYANA GEOLOGY AND MINES COMMISSION (GGMC) THROUGH THE MINERS ASSOCIATION**

Member Asking: Mrs. Judith David-Blair, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

Could the Honourable Prime Minister tell this National Assembly when the funds, of approximately GY\$200 million, obtained from Royalties paid to the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) through the Miners Association will be made available for repairs to the One to Five Miles Potaro Road?

(Notice Paper No. 110 (Q85 Opp 85) published on 2007-02-09)

Answer:

No Royalties, GY\$200 million or whatever, have been or are being paid to the GGMC through the Miners Association.

16. **HINTERLANDS AREAS TO BENEFIT FROM ENERGY-EFFICIENT BULBS**

Member Asking: Mrs. Judith David-Blair, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

Could the Honourable Prime Minister say which hinterland areas will benefit from the donation of energy-efficient bulbs given to the Guyana Government by the Cuban Government?

(Notice Paper No. 111 (Q86 Opp 86) published on 2007-02-09)

Answer:

Under the Energy Cooperation Programme between the Government of Guyana and Cuba, about 450,000 incandescent bulbs were replaced with low energy compact florescent lamps in residential and public buildings along the Essequibo Coast, Demerara, Berbice, Linden, Kwakwani and Ituni.

Government intends to extend its policy on the economic use of energy to hinterland communities which currently have access to electricity or will in the near future benefit from electrification including Lethem, Mabaruma, Port Kaituma, Mahdia, Santa Rosa, St. Cuthbert's Mission, Orealla and Moraikobai.

Government is in discussion with the Cuban Embassy on the implementation of an arrangement that allows for replacement lamps to be available for purchase by the general population.

17. **ROADS ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE BARTICA SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Member Asking: Mrs. Judith David-Blair, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Could the Honourable Minister say when the roads on the West Side of the Secondary School in Bartica, Region No. 7 will be completed?

(Notice Paper No. 112 (Q87 Opp87) published on 2007-02-09)

Answer:

This question should be directed to the Minister of Local Government since the Bartica Roads are being rehabilitated under the Community Services Enhancement Project which falls under the Ministry of Local Government.

18. **COMPLETION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL AT THREE MILES POTARO ROAD**

Member Asking: Mrs. Judith David-Blair, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

Could the Honourable Minister tell this National Assembly when the Secondary School at Three Miles Potaro Road will be completed?

(Notice Paper No. 113 (Q88 Opp 88) published on 2007-02-09)

Answer:

The Secondary School at Three Miles Potaro Road is expected to be completed by August 31, 2007.

19. **PROCUREMENT OF IT EQUIPMENT TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VALUE-ADDED TAX (VAT)**

Member Asking: Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Finance

- (i) Is it true that the procurement of IT equipment to support the implementation of VAT was delayed?
- (ii) Was the said delay due to the Procurement Manager advising on 28th August, 2006 that the contract for IT equipment be split by GRA locations so as to keep each under \$100,000.00 U.S. so as to avoid an international tender?
- (iii) What was the approximate sum intended to be spent on the procurement of IT equipment to support the implementation of VAT?
- (iv) Was this sum to be provided by the IDB?
- (v) How soon will the IT equipment be procured for this said purpose?
- (vi) Who were awarded the contract(s) to provide the said IT equipment?
- (vii) Will there be any sanctions attached to any officer(s) who may have caused or contributed to the delay in the procurement of the said IT equipment?

(Notice Paper 116 (Q91 Opp 91) published on 2007-02-09)

Answers:

- (i) The Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) is currently implementing a comprehensive Total Revenue Integrated Processing System (TRIPS) which is serving, and will continue to serve, the purposes of both implementation of VAT and a more general upgrading and transformation of the GRA's IT systems and capabilities. I am advised that the required IT equipment was procured in batches, many of which were procured on time, but the procurement of some equipment was subject to a delay.
- (ii) I am advised that the Procurement Manager tendered no such advice.
- (iii) and (iv) I am advised that, as a result of the comprehensive nature of the new system that is being implemented, and given that much of the equipment that is used in the implementation of VAT will also be used in the implementation and operation of other elements of TRIPS, it is not possible to isolate the cost of equipment to be used for implementation of VAT. Nevertheless, I am advised that, over the period of implementing TRIPS, which spans 2006 and 2007, the IDB is expected to provide a total of US\$3.75 million under the Fiscal and Financial Management Programme (FFMP) and the GRA is expected to provide through the Central Government budget a total of G\$53 million to procure IT equipment over the same period.
- (v) I am advised that most of the equipment has been procured, and all will be procured within three months.
- (vi) I am advised that the contracts to procure equipment under FFMP for TRIPS were awarded, through a competitive process, to Netcom Computer City, Micro-Design Technologies, and Vishnu Panday Associates.

- (vii) I am advised that the delay in procuring the equipment is not attributable to any particular officer's actions. An independent review found that there were shortcomings in the equipment specifications prepared by a Consultant, which would have contributed to the delay. I am further advised that the Consultant is no longer contracted under the FFMP.

**MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND
MOVED BY A MINISTER-**

1. **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 28(1)**

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications moved the following motion:

WHEREAS it is provided by Standing Order No. 28(1) that a Government motion shall not be placed upon the Order Paper for a day earlier than seven (7) days from the day on which the notice was given to the Clerk;

AND WHEREAS a notice of a motion has been given this day, Monday, 12th March, 2007 to be moved on Thursday, 15th March, 2007, for the suspension of Standing Order No. 54 (1) to enable the Assembly to proceed with the second and third readings of the Security Assistance (Caricom Member States) Bill 2007 – Bill No. 11/2007, the Visiting Forces Bill 2007 – Bill No. 12/2007 and Status of Visiting Police Officers Bill 2007 – Bill No. 13/2007.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 28 (1) be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed with the motion to suspend Standing Order No. 54(1).

(Notice Paper No. 133 (M28 Govt 20) published on 2007-03-12)

2. **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 54**

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 54 be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its sitting on Thursday, 15th March, 2007, with the second reading and the remaining stages of the Security Assistance (Caricom Member States) Bill 2007 – Bill No. 11/2007, the Visiting Forces Bill 2007 – Bill No. 12/2007 and Status of Visiting Police Officers Bill 2007 – Bill No. 13/2007.

(Notice Paper No.134 (M29 Govt21) published on 2007-03-12)

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILLS - Second Readings

ITEM 1 -SECURITY ASSISTANCE (CARICOM MEMBER STATES) BILL 2007 – Bill No. 11/2007 published on 2007-03-09

The Minister of Home Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the implementation of the Treaty on Security Assistance among CARICOM Member States and for matters connected therewith.

(Read a first time on 2007-03-13)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Aubrey Norton

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs 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 5 were passed as printed.

Clause 6

The following amendment moved by the Minister of Home Affairs was put and carried:

Clause 6 After clause 5 insert the following as clause 6 –

“Expiry of 6. The Minister may by order specify a date on which this
Act. Act shall Expire.”

Clause 6 was then passed as amended.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Security Assistance (Caricom Member States) Bill 2007 was read a third time and passed as amended.

ITEM 2 - VISITING FORCES BILL 2007 – Bill No. 12/2007 published on 2007-03-09

The Minister of Home Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to make provision for the armed forces of certain states visiting Guyana and for related purposes.

(Read a first time on 2007-03-13)

Mr. Basil Williams spoke to the motion.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

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

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 4.42 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan also spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs 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 33 were passed as printed.

Clause 34

The following amendment moved by the Minister of Home Affairs was put and carried:

Clause 34 For Clause 34 substitute the following –

“Expiry of 34 This Act expire on 30 June 2007.”

Act.

Clause 34 was then passed as amended.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Visiting Forces Bill 2007, was read a third time and passed as amended.

ITEM 3 - STATUS OF VISITING POLICE OFFICERS BILL 2007 – Bill No. 13/2007
published on 2007-03-09

The Minister of Home Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the presence, activities, privileges and immunities of members of foreign police forces and civillian personnel during the period of CWC 2007 and for matters connected therewith.

(Read a first time on 2007-03-13)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Deborah Backer

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan

Thereafter, the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

The Bill was read a second time.

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

In-Committee

Clauses 1 – 27 were passed as printed.

Clause 28

The following amendment moved by the Minister of Home Affairs was put and carried:

Clause 28 After Clause 27 insert the following as Clause 28 –

“Expiry of 28. This Act expires on 30 June 2007.”
Act.

Clause 28 was then passed and amended.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Status of Visiting Police Officers Bill 2007 was passed as amended.

The Speaker's consent was obtained in accordance with Standing Order No. 28(2) for the following motion to be proceeded with at that sitting:

ITEM 4 - OVERSEAS DEPLOYMENT OF THE GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE 2007

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the CARICOM Community is hosting Cricket World Cup 2007;

AND WHEREAS the Community has established a community wide security system that involves participating states and friendly governments in securing the single domestic space;

AND WHEREAS Guyana has been requested to contribute the services of members of the military in overseas deployment in CARICOM participating States during the hosting of Cricket World Cup 2007.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the deployment of officers and ranks of the Guyana Defence Force overseas in the territories of CARICOM participating countries during the community hosting of Cricket World Cup 2007.

(Notice Paper No.138 (M30 Govt22) published on 2007-03-14)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Deborah Backer

Mrs. Sheila Holder

Thereafter, the motion was then put and carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.21 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister, the Assembly was adjourned to a date to be fixed.



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

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.

13th March, 2007.