

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE 43<sup>RD</sup> SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST**  
**SESSION (2012-2013) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD**  
**AT 1.00 P.M.**  
**ON THURSDAY, 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2013**  
**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

**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

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

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

Hon. Mohamed I. Alli, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water

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. Ganga Persaud, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

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

Hon. Pauline Campbell-Sukhai, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs

\*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)

Bibi S. Shaddick, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

**\*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)

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)

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

Dr. George Norton, M.P.

Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

**\*\*Non-Elected Member**

4.

Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P.

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

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

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

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

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

Mr. James A. Bond, M.P.

Mr. Ronald A. Bulkan, M.P.

Mr. Jaipaul Sharma, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica) (Absent)

Mrs. Mabel Baveghems, M.P.

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

Mr. Christopher A. Jones, M.P.

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

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

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) (Absent – on leave)

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

Mrs. Lilawtie Coonjah, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly

**COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING**

The Sitting commenced at 1.10 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

The Clerk read the prayers.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

The Speaker made the following announcements:

**(1) Point of Order in relation to Dr. Norton’s Presentation**

“Last evening a Point of Order was raised with regard to contents of the speech of the Hon. Dr.

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George Norton and I did give a preliminary finding of my opinion but I undertook to have a review of both the audio and the written transcript, both of which have been supplied to me by the Hansard Department and for which I am very grateful. Having had the opportunity to go through the contents of the speech I am of the opinion that the first aspect as it pertains to Dr. Ramsarran levelling allegations and being, himself, careful I did not find that that in any way violated the Standing Orders.

A reference is thereafter made to officials of a company and the words, and I quote them:

“...probably to convince himself and the rest of his party that the PPP/C Government still gave(sic) contracts to companies owned by Afro Guyanese. I can assure the Hon. Minister that it has become difficult not to see some degree of race baiting by the accusation of being racist as a desperate attempt to whip up some degree of sympathy among a particular race of the Guyanese people (sic)”

I do find that last paragraph to be uncalled for. I believe that it does raise the spectre of racism within this House and it does suggest that a Member of this House practices racism and it is a specific Standing Order that we are not to imply or seek in any way to suggest that any Member is less than honourable.

For that reason I would, Mr. Clerk, ask that that paragraph beginning with the word “naming” and ending with the words “Guyanese Population” be expunged. Thank you.”

**(2) Ruling to do with a letter of complaint received from the Hon. Mr. Keith Scott**

“I have a second ruling and that has to do with a formal letter of complaint that I received from the Hon. Member Mr. Keith Scott pertaining to news items carried by *INEWS* and thereafter by the *Guyana Chronicle* which Mr. Scott was labelled or described as having a saying that mining was ‘destroying’ Guyana and the Environment was being raped.

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I have had the benefit of both the audio and the written transcript of what Mr. Scott said including, as well, the ability and opportunity to read the *INEWS* Report and the *Guyana Chronicle* Report and I do find that both have violated Mr. Scott's privileges as a Member of Parliament because at no time did he use the word 'destroyed' and in both stories the word "destroying" is in parenthesis suggesting that he is being quoted directly and that mining is raping our society.

I had prepared a ruling which I will circulate and in which I call on both publishers to issue an unqualified apology to the Member and to retract their stories and to give both apologies and retractions equal prominence to which they carried their stories against him and that this should be done forthwith and I hope nothing else comes on the matter.

I wish to say as well that just before coming out this afternoon I have received a letter from *INEWS* of which they have acknowledged that the context was wrong and so I applaud the publishers of *INEWS* for taking that stand. I believe that is the way and the direction we should be going that if something ought not to have been said in a certain way we should recognise it, accept it and move on and so I believe that this could be the end of the matter because I have, as I said, received a letter and I applaud, in fact, the stand in which, I think, is a dignified stand taken by *INEWS* to acknowledge the manner in which the reporting was done...left much to be desired. But I do still find, as I said, that Mr. Scott's privileges as a Member of this House were violated and Mr. Scott will advise further. Notwithstanding the letter written to me I still believe that published apologies and a retraction must be given and those should be given forthwith."

(3) **Death of a former Member of Parliament, Reverend Dr. Dale Bisnauth**

"The third is on a more sombre and solemn note and that is to announce and have the House observe that a former Member of this House, an esteemed Member of our society Dr. Reverend Dale Bisnauth passed, unexpectedly, last evening. He was a gentleman, a man of the cloth

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serving the Lutheran Brethren of Guyana. I am informed that Dr. Reverend Bisnauth, a former Minister of the Government has died, as I have stated.

He first became a Parliamentarian in the Sixth Parliament of Guyana and was designated Senior Minister of Education and Cultural Development with effect of 13<sup>th</sup> October, 1992 following the General and Regional Elections of the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1992.

Dr. Bisnauth also served in the Seventh Parliament and the Eight Parliament and in the Eight Parliament he was designated the Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security with effect from the 12<sup>th</sup> April, 2001 with General and Regional Elections being held on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2001.

He ceased to be a Minister with effect from the 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2006 and we remember him for his contribution not only to this House, to the body of Christ but also of course to academia as he was also a renowned historian.

In honour of his memory, I would ask that we stand and observe one minute of silence as a mark of respect for him.

*One minute of silence observed.*

May his soul rest in peace.”

Brigadier (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs joined the Speaker in extending condolences to the family of the late Reverend Dr. Dale Bisnauth.

### **Request for Leave**

The Speaker informed Members that leave had been granted to-

- Mrs. Catherine Hughes and
- Dr. Veersammy Ramayya, for that day's sitting



**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-**

**For Written Replies**

**1. IMPACT OF THE ‘NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND POLICY’**

**Member Asking:** Ms Africo Selman, M.P.

**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Education

Could the Hon. Minister of Education inform this House whether an evaluation has been conducted to ascertain the impact of the ‘No Child left behind Policy’ on the delivery of education in Guyana.

**(Notice Paper No.148 (Q 90 Opp. 89) published on 2013-02-05)**

The Minister of Education did not pass copies of the answer to the above question to the Clerk of the National Assembly for circulation to Members at that sitting as required by Standing Order No. 22(4).

**2. ASSESSMENT OF THE ‘NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND POLICY’**

**Member Asking:** Ms Africo Selman, M.P.

**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Education

Could the Hon. Minister of Education inform this House whether the Hon. Minister considers an assessment of the ‘No Child left behind Policy’ a necessity in relation to the improvement of the quality of education delivery in Guyana?

**(Notice Paper No.149 (Q 91 Opp. 90) published on 2013-02-05)**

The Minister of Education did not pass copies of the answer to the above question to the Clerk of the National Assembly for circulation to Members at that sitting as required by Standing Order No. 22(4).

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**3. PAYMENT OF CLEANERS BY PARENT TEACHER'S ASSOCIATIONS (PTA)**

**Member Asking:** Mrs. Catherine Hughes, M.P.

**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Education

Can the Hon. Minister explain why Parent Teacher's Associations (PTA) are being asked to pay cleaners employed at senior secondary schools?

**(Notice Paper No.161 (Q 103 Opp 101) published on 2013-02-06)**

The Minister of Education did not pass copies of the answer to the above question to the Clerk of the National Assembly for circulation to Members at that sitting as required by Standing Order No. 22(4).

**PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS-**

**News Item in the Times Newspaper**

Mr. Basil Williams gave a personal explanation with respect to a news item in the Times Newspaper of 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2013, about the Speaker upbraiding Mr. Williams about an allegation against Mr. Robert Persaud's family.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS -**

**(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**MOTION**

**BUDGET SPEECH 2013 – MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2013**

Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2013.

**(Moved by the Minister of Finance on 2012-03-25)**

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While Mrs. Volda Lawrence was speaking to the motion the sitting was suspended.

**SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

At 1.55 p.m., the sitting was suspended due to the sudden illness of Mr. Richard Allen.

**RESUMPTION OF SITTING**

At 2.34 pm., the sitting was resumed.

**Thanks to Medical Doctors (Members) in the Assembly**

The Speaker, on behalf of the Members and himself, expressed gratitude to those Members of the Assembly who are Medical Doctors, especially those on the Government's side of the House, for the quick response and attention given to Mr. Richard Allen.

Brigadier (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition joined the Speaker in expressing thanks to the Doctors on the Government's side.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for 2013.

Mrs. Volda Lawrence continued and concluded her speech.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Minister of Labour

Mr. James Bond

**SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

At 3.55 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

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**RESUMPTION OF SITTING**

At 5.07 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for 2013.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture

Ms Mabel Baveghems

Mr. Joseph Hamilton

Ms Dawn Hastings

**SUSPENSION OF SITTING**

At 6.52 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

**RESUMPTION OF SITTING**

At 7.45 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for 2013.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance

Mr. Winston Felix

Mr. Komal Chand

Ms Valarie Garrido-Lowe

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)**

At 9.55 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Standing Orders No. 10(1) was suspended to enable the Assembly to continue with the budget debate uninterrupted.

Ms Valarie Garrido-Lowe continued and concluded her speech.

Mr. Faizal Jafarally also spoke to the motion.

**ADJOURNMENT**

At 10.45 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the Assembly was adjourned to 1.00 p.m., on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2013.

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**HON. RAPHAEL G.C. TROTMAN, M.P.,**  
**Speaker of the National Assembly**

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE,**  
**Public Buildings,**  
**Brickdam,**  
**Georgetown.**

**4<sup>th</sup> April, 2013.**

