

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 59th SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2012-2013) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY, 27TH JUNE, 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 (Absent – on leave)

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**

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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. (Absent)

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 (Absent)

****Non-Elected Member**

4.

Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P. (Absent)

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)

Mrs. Mabel Baveghems, M.P.

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

Mr. Christopher A. Jones, M.P.

Ms Rennita L. Williams, 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.

5.

(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.

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 2.11 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read the prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker made the following announcements:

Leave

The Speaker informed Members that leave had been granted to the Minister of Health from 27th June, 2013 to 4th July, 2013.

6.

Audited Financial Statements supplied on CD-ROMs by the Minister of Finance

The Speaker made the following announcements:

“You will notice that there is a CD-ROM at your place. The Minister of Finance wrote to me last week seeking leave of the Speaker for documents to be supplied in electronic format. After due and careful consideration and some advice received from the Clerk of the National Assembly we have decided to allow this novel form of presentation of reports because of the volume and I will continue to encourage Ministers and others who have documents to present to send them electronically to the Parliament Office. The Parliament Office will then, upon request, make copies in printed form, if any Member wishes to have it printed. It is time, as we have said before, that we reduce the use of paper much of which, admittedly, is not utilised. I would like, therefore, to compliment the Minister for this novel approach and the CD-ROMs are available and I have asked the Minister to supply the documents in PDF as well so that they can be put up on to the website and can be scrutinised at will.”

Staff Appreciation Day

The Speaker announced that the staff had organised a staff appreciation day and it was expected that Members of Parliament and the Press and would attend. It will be held at Thirst Park Banks DIH at 10.00 am until 8.00 p.m. on Monday, 1st July, 2013.

The Speaker reiterated that last year it was well attended and everyone had lots of fun and we would like to see more Members coming out to say thank you to the staff.

School's Outreach Programme

The Speaker also announced that on the 3rd July there would be a one day School Outreach and that Members will be visiting Region 8, Paramakatoi, Kato and the town of Mahdia.

7.

Visit by the Pupils of Grade 6 of the New Guyana School

The Speaker informed Members that the students of Grade 6 of the New Guyana School were observing the proceedings at that sitting.

Visit of Charge D' Affaires of the British High Commission

The Speaker informed Members that the Charge D' Affaires of the British High Commission, Mr. Rob Lindsay was also observing the proceedings at that sitting. The Speaker welcomed him.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

By the Minister of Finance:

(i) The Annual Report of Kwakwani Utilities Inc. for the year ended 31st December, 2010.

(Circulated)

(ii) The Annual Report of Kwakwani Utilities Inc. for the year ended 31st December, 2011.

(Circulated)

(iii) Audited Financial Statements of the Environmental Protection Agency for the years ended 31st December, 1999 to 31st December, 2008.

(Circulated)

(iv) Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Wildlife Management Authority for the period 1st August, 1998 to 31st December, 1998 and for the years ended 31st December, 1999 to 31st December, 2008.

(Circulated)

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8.

(v) Audited Financial Statements of the Environmental Protection Agency/Wildlife Division for the years ended 31st December, 2009 to 31st December, 2011.

(Circulated)

(vi) Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Energy Agency for the years ended 31st December, 1998 to 31st December, 2009.

(Circulated)

(vii) Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Office for Investment for the years ended 31st December, 1994 to 31st December, 2011.

(Circulated)

(viii) Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission for the period 1st June, 2001 to 31st December, 2001 and for the years ended 31st December, 2002 to 31st December, 2009.

(Circulated)

(ix) Audited Financial Statements of the Institute of Applied Science and Technology for the years ended 31st December, 1994 to 31st December, 2003.

(Circulated)

(x) Audited Financial Statements of the National Parks Commission for the years ended 31st December, 1989 to 31st December, 2007.

(Circulated)

(xi) Treasury Memorandum pursuant to Resolution No. 48/2012 of the National Assembly dated 17th December, 2012 on the Public Accounts of Guyana for the year 2009.

(Circulated)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Presentation and First Reading

LAND SURVEYORS (PROFESSION) BILL 2013 – Bill No. 16/2013

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to make provision for the establishment of a Board of Land Surveyors, the registration and licensing of land surveyors, the regulation of the practice of land surveying and for connected matters.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) **GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS**

BILLS – Second Readings

ITEM 1 - HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER (AMENDMENT) BILL 2013 – Bill No.15/2013
published on 2013-06-13

At the request of the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs the second reading of the following Bill was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Hydro-Electric Power Act.

(Read a first time on 2013-06-13)

MOTIONS

ITEM 2 - LIMIT ON AMOUNT OUTSTANDING UNDER GUARANTEES GIVEN
UNDER THE GUARANTEE OF LOANS (PUBLIC CORPORATIONS
AND COMPANIES) ACT

At the request of the Minister of Finance, consideration of the following motion was deferred:

10.

WHEREAS in accordance with Section 3(1) of the Guarantee of Loans (Public Corporations and Companies) Act, Chapter 77:01, the Government may in such manner and on such terms and subject to such conditions as may be agreed between it and a lending agency –

- (a) Guarantee the discharge by a Corporation of its obligations under any agreement which may be entered into by the Corporation with a lending agency in respect of any borrowing by that Corporation that is authorised by the Government;
- (b) Assume such other obligation as may be agreed between the Government and a lending agency in relation to or pursuant to any such agreement;
- (c) Undertake the repayment to a lending agency of such sums as the lending agency may have advanced to or for the benefit of the Government;

AND WHEREAS it is provided under Section 2(2) of the aforesaid Act that, for the purposes of the Act, a borrowing by a Corporation shall be deemed to include the obligation of the Corporation to make payments to any person arising out of any contract lawfully entered into by the Corporation;

AND WHEREAS it is provided under Section 4(1) of the aforesaid Act that the aggregate amount of the liability of the Government in respect of guarantees given under Section 3 of the Act shall not at any time exceed the sum of one thousand million dollars or such greater sum as may from time to time be specified by the Resolution of the National Assembly;

11.

AND WHEREAS it has become necessary to specify in accordance with the said Section 4(1) a greater sum for the purpose of enabling the aggregate amount of the liability of the Government in respect of guarantees to be increased due to the extended activities of those incorporated bodies to which the Act applies in accordance with the country's development programme,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approve that the aggregate amount of the liability of the Government under Section 4(1) of the Guarantee of Loans (Public Corporations and Companies) Act, in respect of guarantees given under Section 3 of the Act, shall not at any time exceed the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand million dollars.

(Notice Paper No. 195 (M 75 Govt. 25) published on 2013-06-13)

ITEM 3 - RATIFICATION OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY

The Minister of Foreign Affairs moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Arms Trade Treaty on the 2nd day of April, 2013;

AND WHEREAS the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) has played an integral role in furthering the agenda which led to the adoption of the Treaty;

AND WHEREAS the Arms Trade Treaty seeks to establish the highest possible common international standards for regulating or improving the regulation of international trade in conventional arms and to prevent and eradicate illicit trade and its diversion;

AND WHEREAS the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty is considered to be of great significance in that it will aid in achieving the purpose of contributing to international and regional peace, security and stability; reducing human suffering; and promoting cooperation, transparency and responsible action by States Parties in the international trade in conventional arms, thereby building confidence among States Parties;

AND WHEREAS the Arms Trade Treaty was signed by the Republic of Guyana at the United Nations, New York on June 3, 2013,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana approves of Guyana's ratification of the Arms Trade Treaty.

(Notice Paper No. 196 (M 76 Govt. 26) published on 2013-06-14)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Ms Africo Selman

Mr. Moses Nagamootoo

Mr. Winston Felix

Thereafter, the Minister of Foreign Affairs replied.

The motion was put and carried.

BILLS – Second Readings

ITEM 4 - TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL 2012 – Bill No. 18/2012 published on 2012-08-09

At the request of the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the second reading of the following Bill was deferred:

13.

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the establishment of the Telecommunications Agency and for a regular, coordinated, open and competitive telecommunications sector and for matters incidental thereto or connected therewith.

(Read a first time on 2012-08-09)

ITEM 5 - PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2012 – Bill No. 17/2012 published on 2012-08-09

At the request of the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the second reading of the following Bill was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Public Utilities Commission Act.

(Read a first time on 2012-08-09)

(i) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

BILLS – Second Reading

ITEM 6 - THE MARRIED PERSONS (PROPERTY) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2013 – Bill No. 9 of 2013 published on 2013-06-14

Due to the absence of Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., the second reading of the following Bill was deferred:

A Bill intituled AN ACT to amend the Married Persons (Property) Act.

(Read a first time on 2013-06-13)

MOTION

ITEM 7 - HONOURING THE 21ST AUGUST, 2012 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA AND THE REGIONAL DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL, REGION #10

Ms Vanessa Kissoon, M.P. moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the people of Linden have from the time of the announcement by the Government that there would be an increase in electricity tariff, consequent to the government's intended withdrawal of the subsidy, indicated through their pronouncements in the national media, peaceful picketing exercises and other forms of peaceful protest that the community did not have the economic capacity to pay the steep and unconscionable increase in the cost of electricity and therefore saw the decision as an unjust imposition on the people of Linden;

AND WHEREAS the Government continued to take action to impose the increase in the cost of electricity on the people of Linden in total violation of the people's right to be involved in decisions that directly affect them as is explicit in Article 13 of the Constitution which states that, "The principal objective of the State is to establish an inclusionary democracy by providing increasing opportunities for the participation of citizens, and their organizations in the management and decision-making processes of the State, with particular emphasis on those areas of decisions-making that directly affect their well being";

RECOGNISING that the Government was not responsive to the concerns and interests of the people of Linden and therefore left the people of Linden with no alternative, but to continue to protest;

AND WHEREAS the people of Linden were involved in peaceful protest and were subjected to the uncalled for use of excessive and lethal force by the Guyana Police Force resulting in the death of Mr. Allen Lewis, Mr. Ron Sommerest, Mr. Shemroy Bouyea and the injuring of scores of unarmed protestors;

AND WHEREAS the use of lethal force rather than instilling fear that was intended, increased the resolve of the people and escalated the protest forcing the Government to respond to concerns of the people of Linden and enter into negotiations with the people of Region 10, represented by their elected and legitimate representatives;

15.

CONCERNED that even while the negotiations were ongoing the Guyana Police and Guyana Defence Forces were used against the people of Linden, including the indiscriminate shooting and injuring of innocent people in their homes on a quiet Sunday;

NOTING that in the face of such provocation, the Region continued to negotiate with the Government in good faith;

AND WHEREAS these negotiations resulted in the Agreement of 21st August, 2012, between the Government of Guyana and Region 10 Regional Democratic Council signed, on behalf of the Government of Guyana, by the Hon. Prime Minister, Mr. Samuel Hinds, O.E., M.P., and on behalf of Region 10, Regional Democratic Council, by Mr. Sharma Solomon;

AND WHEREAS the full text of the aforesaid written Agreement, which is attached to this motion, contains the details of the Agreement, inclusive of the deadlines for implementation and the actions required to be undertaken by all parties to the Agreement; (See Appendix)

CONCERNED that six (6) months after the signing of the Agreement many aspects of the Agreement have not been implemented, especially the commitment to return the dish and transmitter to the people of Linden, inter alia;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government of Guyana to immediately adhere to its commitments and obligations under the written Agreement of 21st August, 2012 thereby ensuring that the benefits which were to accrue to the residents of Region 10 are realized; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Government of Guyana be held solely accountable and responsible for all direct and indirect consequences flowing from its continued unwillingness to adhere to the letter and spirit of the written Agreement of 21st August, 2012.

(Notice Paper No. 165 (M 61 Opp.38) published on 2013-03-13)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Odinga Lumumba

Dr. Rupert Roopnarine

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 3.46 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.20 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the motion.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Minister of Public Works

Mr. Trevor Williams

Ms Bibi Shaddick

Rev. Rennis Morian

Ms Gail Teixeira

Mr. Basil Williams

The Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

Thereafter, Ms Vanessa Kissoon replied.

The motion was put and carried.

Caricom Greetings

The Speaker extended Caricom Day Greetings to Members of Parliament, the Staff of the Parliament Office and the Press.

Ramadan Greetings

Ms Bibi Shaddick extended Ramadan Greetings to all of the Muslims in Guyana. The Speaker joined Ms Shaddick in extending Ramadan Greetings.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8.05 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on 18th July, 2013.

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

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

27th June, 2013.