NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

OF THE 66TH 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, 19TH DECEMBER, 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 (Absent – on leave)

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

Minister of the Public Service

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. Shadick, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

*Non-Elected Minister

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 (Absent)

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 (Absent – on leave)

**Non-Elected Member

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-Williams, 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.

(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 2.07 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read the prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) Leave

The Speaker informed Members that leave had been granted to -

The Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment; and

Mrs. Deborah Backer, for that day's sitting

The Speaker made the following announcements:

(ii) Sympathy to the family and relatives of the late Assistant Commissioner of Police, Mr. Derrick Josiah

"On behalf of the National Assembly, I wish to express our sympathy collectively on the passing of Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), Mr. Derrick Josiah, who passed away on the 7th December, 2013. ACP Josiah was undoubtedly an honourable and outstanding member of the Guyana Police Force, who discharged his functions professionally and efficiently. This National Assembly was privileged to have benefited from his involvement in our many undertakings and activities. So, we wish his colleagues in the Guyana Police Force and his grieving relatives and friends our heartfelt sympathy. May his soul rest in peace."

(iii) Grant by United Nations Development Fund (UNDP)

"Hon. Members, the National Assembly received a quantity of computer equipment to the value of US\$ 45,000 or just over GYD \$9 million from the United National Development Fund to aid in our work towards establishing an e-parliament, whereby most of our information, it is hoped, will be shared and exchanged electronically, thus avoiding the use and waste of volumes of paper, as we currently do, in my opinion.

So, I will be speaking to representatives of both Government and Opposition for them to be able to identify the respective MP's who will agree to be part of our pilot project. We have received, as part of the grant, 15 Samsung Tablets which we hope to use, giving five to Government, five to Opposition and five to be used by the Parliament Office to share and exchange information with the hope that come next year we can start to move fully into having a completely electronic Parliament. Equipment was also received to upgrade our resource centre. So, we thank the UNDP."

(iv) Thanks to Organisers of Parliament's Annual Children Christmas Party

"Hon. Members, I also personally wish to thank the organisers, in particular Ms. Onieka Walton, for the excellent provisions put in place for the successful holding of the annual Christmas party for children which was held yesterday in the compound.

My gratitude is also extended to the Hon. Prime Minister who very thankfully, came and to the Leader of the Opposition, who was also there, the Minister of Human Services and Social Security, Ms. Webster, and Members of Parliament (MPs) Mr. Bulkan, Dr. Norton, Ms. Selman and others who came by. We were able to take care of gifts, meals and entertainment, Dora and Diego and others, for over 300 children from the Mahaica Home for Children, the Sophia Care Centre and the Drop In Centre, and, of course, children of staff. Ms. Shadick as well was here and relatives of hers. A grand time was had by all yesterday."

(v) Courtesy Call from Minister of Tourism

"Hon. Members, yesterday, as well, the National Assembly received a courtesy call from the visiting Minister of Tourism who was here with the Ambassador from Argentina. So, we welcome him."

(vi) Non Assent of a Bill by His Excellency the President

"Hon. Members, I observed today an odd letter in one of the daily newspapers calling on the Speaker, that is Yours Truly, to publish the reason for His Excellency's non assent of a Bill. I wish to remind Members that this was done at the last sitting of the National Assembly where both Members of Parliament and the press were provided with the actual copies of the letter written by His Excellency the President. I just wish to say that sometimes a simple enquiry could clear up unnecessary speculation and misconceptions."

(vii) <u>Birthdays of Members</u>

"Hon. Members, on a brighter note, we celebrate the birthday of Dr. Frank Anthony. This week two birthdays passed. They were the birthdays of Mr. Christopher Jones and Mr. Keith Scott. I know recently that Mr. Neendkumar also celebrated his birthday - last week. I wish to note that I do not anticipate a Sitting on Christmas Day or on Boxing Day. So, I wish to say in advance that the Hon. Prime Minister will celebrate his birthday next week Friday. To all of you we would like to say happy birthday. The Speaker also has a birthday next week Friday."

(viii) Welcome to the Deputy High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Guyana

"Hon. Members, we recognise in our presence today, Mr. Jim Cousins, the Deputy High Commissioner of the United Kingdom to Guyana. We welcome you, and hope that your sojourn here is a fruitful and rewarding one."

(ix) Motion Surrounding Activities of Hon. Minister of Finance

"Hon. Members, I have observed, as most of you would have, some of you would have had more intimate knowledge than I do that in the newspapers on Tuesday a motion has been submitted for

debate surrounding the activities of the Hon. Minister of Finance. I have not as yet formally seen this motion. The Clerk advises that he is in receipt of it and is currently going through it with his staff. I wish to assure the House that it will be dealt with as every other motion is, that is, in a timely and professional manner.

The Committee of Privileges process is not meant to be a lynch mob. Its function is to review the question as to whether a Member has violated any of the Standing Orders of the National Assembly and privileges of the House. In due course, this motion will be dealt with."

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES-

By Dr. George Norton, M.P. (Chairman of the Committee on Appointments):

First Report of the Committee on Appointments in relation to the Appointment of Members of the Ethnic Relations Commission.

(Circulated)

ORAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Renovation of the Kumaka/San Jose Bridge

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

"In view of the fact that renovation to the Kumaka/San Jose bridge in Moruca, Region #1, has turned out to be an absolute disaster after spending the sum of \$28M, then a further \$15M to fix it, and where the residents of Moruca, mostly school children, who traverse the bridge on a daily basis to go to school is affected.

What plans the Hon. Minister has to solve this problem, since renovation works began in November, 2012 and was to be completed in December, 2012 and it is now December, 2013?"

Thereafter, the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development replied.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Replies

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A STANDING COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS BORDER
AND NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

Member Asking: Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P.,

Leader of the Opposition

Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

- (i) Could the Hon. Prime Minister inform the National Assembly whether the Government intends to work towards establishing a Standing Parliamentary Committee to address, specifically, border and national security issues as recommended by the Border and National Security Committee in its Report of 21st June, 2001?
- (ii) Could the Hon. Prime Minister inform the National Assembly of the proposed date for the establishment of the recommended committee, if the Government intends to establish the committee as recommended?
- (iii) Could the Hon. Prime Minister inform the National Assembly, in the event that the Government intends not to act in accordance with the said recommendation, of the reasons for not establishing the Standing Committee?

(Notice Paper No. 260 (Q 169 Opp. 167) published on 2013-11-22)

Answers

- "(i) The Government has no current plans to establish a Parliamentary Committee to specifically address border issues.
- (ii) Taking account of (i) there can be no date.
- (iii)There is already the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Security established by constitutional amendments which is intended to be the forum for parliamentary consideration of national security matters."
 - 2. <u>VISIT BY DEPUTIES OF ASAMBLEA NACIONAL De VENEZUELA INTO THE TERRITORY OF GUYANA AT ETERINGBANG IN THE CUYUNI-MAZARUNI REGION</u>

Member Asking: Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P.,

Leader of the Opposition

Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

- (i) Could the Hon. Prime Minister inform the National Assembly of the circumstances surrounding the visit of Deputies of the National Assembly of Venezuela into Guyana's territory at Eteringbang on or about Sunday, 10th November, 2013?
- (ii) Could the Hon. Prime Minister inform the National Assembly of the actual time and duration of the said visit and of the names of Members of the National Assembly of Venezuela who participated in the visit?

(iii) Could the Hon. Prime Minister inform the National Assembly of the administrative procedures prescribed by the Government of Guyana and of the actions required of members of the Guyana Defence Force who were stationed at Eteringbang, with regard to such visits?

(Notice Paper No. 261 (Q 170 Opp. 168) published on 2013-11-22)

Answers:

"(i) On Sunday, 10th November, 2013, at sometime after 15:30 hours, a group of Venezuelan persons, said to be legislators in Venezuela from Opposition parties, at various levels, landed at Tabat landing on the Guyana shore of the Cuyuni River, opposite the village of San Martin on the Venezuelan side. The persons landing are thought to be all civilians. They were observed taking photographs. The members in military uniform of the National Guard remained in the boats.

At the time that they visited Tabat landing, no ranks from the Guyana Police Force and Guyana Defence Force were present. No names were given or recorded.

- (ii) The time of the landing was reported as some time after 15:30 hrs. The time of departure was not recorded it seems that their stay was not long, not more than half hour. No names were given or recorded.
- (iii)I have been advised that information on those procedures and actions is restricted."

3. <u>LEASES/LICENCES/PERMITS ISSUED IN THE AREA OF NEW RIVER</u>

TRIANGLE OR CONTIGUOUS AREAS

Member Asking: Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon, M.S.M., M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment

Could the Hon. Minister state with respect to leases/licences/permits issued by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment in the area of New River Triangle or contiguous areas

over the period 1st January, 2012 to 1st November, 2013?

(i) How many leases/licences/permits were issued?

(ii) To whom were the leases/licences/permits issued?

(iii) The consideration for issue of leases/licences/permits?

(iv) Were the ISO 9001 procedures followed in the issue of leases/licences/permits?

(v) Could the Hon. Minister also provide copies of all leases/licences/permits issued

during the period for the said areas?

(Notice Paper No. 262 (Q 171 Opp. 169) published on 2013-11-25)

Answers:

See Appendix

4. <u>ALL LEASES/LICENCES/PERMITS ISSUED FOR MINING OPERATIONS IN</u>
REGIONS 7, 8 AND 9 OF GUYANA

Member Asking: Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon, M.S.M., M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Natural Resources and the Environment

Could the Hon. Minister state with respect to the period 1st January, 2012 to 1st November, 2013 the full particulars of all leases/licences/permits issued for mining operations by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment in Regions 7, 8 and 9 of Guyana?

(Notice Paper No. 263 (Q 172 Opp. 170) published on 2013-11-25)

Answer:

See Appendix

5. <u>FULL DETAILS OF ALL FORESTRY CONCESSIONS ISSUED OVER THE PERIOD 1ST NOVEMBER, 2012 TO 1ST NOVEMBER, 2013 IN REGIONS 7, 8 AND 9 OF GUYANA</u>

Member Asking: Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon, M.S.M., M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Natural Resources and the

Environment

Could the Hon. Minister provide full details of all forestry concessions issued by the Ministry over the period 1st January, 2012 to 1st November, 2013 in Regions 7, 8 and 9 of Guyana?

(Notice Paper No. 264 (Q 173 Opp. 171) published on 2013-11-25)

Answer:

See Appendix

6. <u>COURSES OF INSTRUCTION ATTENDED BY FOREIGN SERVICE</u>
<u>OFFICERS</u>

Member Asking: Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P.,

Leader of the Opposition

Minister Answering: The Minister of Foreign Affairs

(i) Could the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly of the courses of instruction attended by Foreign Service Officers of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from 2002 to 2012?

(ii) Could the Hon. Minister, in so doing, state the institution, title, dates and numbers of students attending each of the courses and the countries in which those courses were conducted?

(Notice Paper No. 265 (Q 174 Opp. 172) published on 2013-11-28)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs 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).

16.

7. COURSES OF INSTRUCTION CONDUCTED BY THE FOREIGN SERVICE

INSTITUTE

Member Asking: Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P.,

Leader of the Opposition

Minister Answering: The Minister of Foreign Affairs

(i) Could the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly of the courses of instruction

conducted by the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from

2002 to 2012?

(ii) Could the Hon. Minister, in so doing, state the title, dates and numbers of students

attending each of the courses?

(iii) Could the Hon. Minister also state the names of the Director of Studies and the

permanent instructors and lecturers at the institute during this period?

(Notice Paper No. 266 (Q 175 Opp. 173) published on 2013-11-28)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs 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).

8. FIRE HYDRANTS INSTALLED IN THE VARIOUS NEW HOUSING SCHEMES

Member Asking: Ms Mabel Baveghems, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Housing and Water

Can the Hon. Minister provide this National Assembly with the total number of fire hydrants that

have been installed in the various new housing schemes throughout the country?

(Notice Paper No. 267 (Q 176 Opp. 174) published on 2013-11-28)

Answer:

"Installation of fire hydrants does not fall within the ambit of the Central Housing and Planning Authority (CH&PA), however, the water infrastructure network is designed in such a manner that fire hydrants can be accommodated."

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) **GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS**

BILLS – Second Readings

<u>ITEM 1</u> - <u>PROCUREMENT (AMENDENT) BILL 2013 - Bill No. 17/2013 published</u> on 2013-11-07

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Procurement Act.

(Read a first time on 2013-11-07)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Carl Greenidge

The Minister of Housing and Water

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.35 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.33 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the Procurement (Amendment) Bill 2013.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Jaipaul Sharma

Mr. Manzoor Nadir

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

Thereafter, the Minister of Finance replied.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 8.27 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.55 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P., moved that the 2nd reading of the Bill be deferred to a period within six (6) months.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Carl Greenidge

Mr. Moses Nagamootoo

Thereafter, Ms Gail Teixeira replied.

The motion was put and carried.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, after noting that a Bill containing substantially the same provision was negatived during this (Tenth) Parliament, moved the suspension of Standing Order No. 69 to enable the second reading of the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2013.

ITEM 2 - ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING AND COUNTERING THE FINANCING OF TERRORISM (AMENDMENT) BILL 2013 – Bill No. 22/2013 published on 2013-12-10

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism Act.

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

Mr. Carl Greenidge spoke to the motion.

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 Order No. 10(1) was suspended to enable the Assembly to continue and conclude the debate on the Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing to Terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2013.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Ms Gail Teixeira

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan

Presiding by Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

At 10.58 the Speaker withdrew from the Chamber and Mr. Keith Scott took the Chair.

While the Minister of Finance was speaking to the motion the Speaker returned to the Chamber.

Return of Speaker

At 11.05 p.m, the Speaker returned to the Chamber.

The Minister of Finance continued and concluded his speech.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon also spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs replied.

The Bill was then read a second time and referred to a Special Select Committee.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The Speaker extended Christmas greetings to everyone. Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, Mrs. June Marcello and the Prime Minister joined the Speaker in extending Christmas and New Years Greetings to Members of Parliament, the staff of the Parliament Office and the media.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11.39 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Thursday, 16th January, 2014.

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HON. RAPHAEL G.C. TROTMAN, M.P.,

Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

19th December, 2013.