

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

ORDER PAPER

FOR THE 38TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION

(2015-2016) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA TO BE HELD

AT 2.00 P.M.

ON TUESDAY, 24TH MAY, 2016,

IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS,

BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

BUSINESS FOR SITTING

PRAYERS

OATH OF A NEW MEMBER-

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT-

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER-

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS-

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

ORAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE-

2.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Replies

**1. HONOURARY MINISTERIAL ADVISORS APPOINTED BY THE APNU+AFC
COALITION GOVERNMENT**

Member Asking: **Mr. Mohabir Nandlall, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Minister of State**

In the interest of good, accountable and transparent governance and in light of certain public disclosures made by him, I ask of the Minister of State, the Honourable Joseph Harmon, the following questions:

- (i) The names, qualifications, portfolio responsibilities and terms and conditions of appointment of the 34 “Honourary Ministerial Advisors” appointed by the APNU+AFC Coalition Government?
- (ii) The criteria used in selecting these individuals?
- (iii) What process, if any, was employed to determine whether these persons are of good character and are fit and proper to hold these high offices, especially, when they would be representing the Government of Guyana in Foreign Lands and would have been issued with diplomatic passports?
- (iv) How much these persons are costing the treasury monthly; while they may not be paid a salary, what costs, if any, are attached to the services which they render and for which the Government of Guyana and by extension, taxpayers are responsible?

3.

- (v) Why neither the President nor the people of Guyana were informed of these appointments until April, 2016, several months after they were made?

(Notice Paper No. 47 (Q6 Opp.6) published on 2016-05-03)

2. **MINISTERIAL ADVISORS APPOINTED BY THE APNU+AFC COALITION GOVERNMENT**

Member Asking: Mr. Mohabir Nandlall, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of State

In the interest of good, accountable and transparent governance, I ask of the Minister of State, the Honourable Joseph Harmon the following questions:-

- (i) The names, qualifications, portfolio responsibilities, terms and conditions of appointment and remuneration package of every Ministerial Advisor (excluding the “honorific and honorary advisors”) appointed by the APNU+AFC Coalition Government?
- (ii) The criteria used in selecting these individuals?

(Notice Paper No. 48 (Q7 Opp.7) published on 2016-05-03)

For Oral Reply

3. * **DONATIONS FROM CONTRACTORS IN THE WATER SECTOR IN REGION NO. 9**

Member Asking: Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P., Opposition Chief Whip

Minister Answering: Hon. Dawn Hastings-Williams, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Communities

4.

Could the Honourable Dawn Hastings-Williams, M.P., Minister within the Ministry of Communities, inform the National Assembly if the \$8M solicited as donations from contractors in the water sector for projects in Region 9 was:-

- (i) Entered into the accounts of the Guyana Water Inc. as revenue or a special projects fund in the Ministry or GWI? or
- (ii) Submitted to the Consolidated Fund? and
- (iii) Were receipts issued to the donors for their contributions? and
- (iv) Will any preferential treatment be given to those who contributed?
(Notice Paper No. 49 (Q8 Opp.8) published on 2016-05-03)

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS-

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS-

**REQUESTS FOR LEAVE TO MOVE THE ADJOURNMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY ON
DEFINITE MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE-**

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

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS

1. THE STATE OF THE RICE INDUSTRY IN GUYANA

Assembly to resume the debate on the following motion:

WHEREAS on the 31st day of October, 2015, Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, the General Secretary of the Rice Producers Association and a Member of Parliament, wrote to the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Noel Holder, upon the direction of the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Bharrat Jagdeo, conveying to the Honourable Minister the grave concern of the PPP/Civic in respect of the state of the Rice Industry in Guyana;

AND WHEREAS in that letter it was pointed out that rice farmers were promised a one hundred percent (100%) increase in the price for which paddy was sold for the first crop of 2015, by several leaders of the APNU+AFC during the campaign leading up to the National and Regional Elections held on 11th May, 2015, and that in breach of that promise, for the second crop for 2015, farmers received between 35 percent (35%) to sixty percent (60%) of the price which they obtained for their paddy in the first crop of 2015;

AND WHEREAS as a consequence, both rice farmers and rice millers are facing tremendous financial and economic hardships and many of them are unable to meet their obligations under loan contracts with commercial banks for which their homes and other assets have been lodged as collateral by way of mortgages and as a result, many of these properties are now in jeopardy of being the subject of foreclosures and sales;

AND WHEREAS in an attempt to bring some measure of relief a number of measures were proposed to the Honourable Minister for his implementation;

6.

AND WHEREAS none of these proposed measures have been implemented and the situation in the rice industry has since gotten progressively worse;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls upon the Government of Guyana to implement the following measures with every convenient speed:

- (i) To resume negotiations with the Government of Venezuela with the intention of selling rice and paddy to that country;
- (ii) To immediately remove all form of taxes and duties on fuel for the industry;
- (iii) To remove all taxes and duties on inputs for the industry including machinery, equipment and spares;
- (iv) To commence discussions with all the commercial banks lending to the industry to review terms and conditions of loans taking into account the low prices farmers are getting in order to 'soften' repayment conditions;
- (v) To suspend payments of land leases and drainage and irrigation charges;
- (vi) To lay supplementary provisions in the National Assembly to provide financial support to farmers in order to aid in the purchase of seed paddy and fertilizers;
- (vii) To immediately implement minimum export prices for rice and paddy;

7.

- (viii) To implement an aggressive marketing strategy in order to enhance current prices and secure new lucrative markets; and
- (ix) To withdraw its pronouncement that the rice industry's crisis "is a private matter" and give support to the industry, especially the farmers.

(Notice Paper No. 44 (M38 Opp. 5) published on 2016-04-29)

2. **THE PERSISTENT SHORTAGE OF DRUGS AND MEDICAL SUPPLIES IN THE PUBLIC HEALTH CARE DELIVERY SYSTEM**

Dr. Frank Anthony, M.P. to move the following motion:

WHEREAS Article 24 of the Constitution of Guyana guarantees the right of every citizen to free medical attention as one of the fundamental rights;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Public Health is responsible to ensure that citizens have access to medicines and medical supplies in sufficient quality and quantity on a timely manner to ensure access to health care is a right and not a privilege granted by the government;

AND WHEREAS the National Assembly appropriated \$5.19B in the 2015 Budget and tripled the allocation to \$19B in the 2016 Budget, current and capital, for the Ministry of Public Health of which approximately \$5B has been allocated in 2016 for the procurement and distribution of medicines and medical supplies to all hospitals, health centers and health posts in Guyana;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Public Health has admitted that more than \$600M of the appropriated allocation for medicines and medical supplies were not utilized in 2015;

8.

AND WHEREAS the shortages countrywide of basic and essential drugs and medical supplies were raised in the House with calls for urgent action to be taken by several Opposition Members of Parliament during the examination of the Estimates of the 2016 Budget on the allocations for the health sector in the central Ministry and the Regional health budgets;

AND WHEREAS at the present time there appears to have been no response to this growing crisis with no procurement of large quantities of these medicines and medical supplies dating back to latter half of 2015, despite on-going and persistent reports of the shortages of medicines, including basic and essential drugs, reagents and x-rays supplies across the country, and most noticeably at its tertiary care and referral hospital, the Georgetown Public Hospital, where \$2.8B of its \$7.2B 2016 budgetary allocation is for the procurement of medicines and medical supplies;

AND WHEREAS this is reaching crisis levels putting thousands of people's lives at risk as the Ministry and Government continue to drag their feet and take no emergency interventions to correct the situation,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Minister of Public Health to:-
Launch an immediate investigation into which drugs and medical supplies are not in supply and those that are in short supply (name of items and the quantities by region) in the public health care delivery system and to report within one month to the National Assembly on –

- (i) Which drugs and medical supplies are in short supply or non-existent and the reasons for the shortages of drugs in the public health care delivery system;

9.

- (ii) The measures which have been, and are being taken, to rectify this ongoing crisis, the projected timelines for an improvement in the delivery and access to these medicines and medical supplies in the public health care delivery system across the country, and the budgetary implications of these emergency measures, if any; and
- (iii) The measures the Minister has put in place to prevent such a recurrence.
(Notice Paper No. 45 (M39 Opp. 6) published on 2016-04-29)

3. **CURBING THE RISE OF SUICIDE RATES IN 2016**

Dr. Vindhya Persaud, M.S., M.P. to move the following motion:

WHEREAS the incidence of suicide has been consistently increasing in Guyana in 2016 with the younger members of the population taking or attempting to take their lives;

AND WHEREAS for the last decade a person takes his life every 1.8 to 2.4 days in Guyana; in the United States of America there is a suicide every 13 minutes and, sadly, there is a suicide every 30 seconds somewhere in the world. Suicide accounted for 1.4 per cent of all deaths worldwide in 2012, making it the 15th leading cause of death. Among the age group of 15 to 30, anywhere in the world, suicide is among the top 3 causes of deaths;

AND WHEREAS in Guyana's case suicide has ranked in the top 10 causes of death for the last several decades. In the age group 15 to 24, suicide ranks between 1 and 3 in terms of the top causes of deaths. In the 1980s, suicide deaths were about 200 to 250 per year. In the last decade it has been between 150 and 200 cases per year;

10.

AND WHEREAS it is estimated that there are between 1500 to 2000 attempted suicide cases each year, or about one attempt every 5 hours in Guyana. Around the world, it is estimated that there is one suicide attempt almost every second;

AND WHEREAS while Guyana has done no such studies, it is estimated that suicide costs the Health Ministry conservatively about \$600M to \$900M annually excluding the loss of life, family income and emotional and psychological anguish for the surviving family members;

AND WHEREAS the majority of suicides occur among people suffering mental health conditions and illness such as depression, bipolar disorders and schizophrenia, social issues such as alcohol abuse, poverty and unemployment also contribute to the growing number of suicide cases;

AND WHEREAS the current economic situation in the agricultural communities due to falling rice prices, loss of income and consequential foreclosures on loans in the banking sector coupled with the state of the sugar industry where jobs are under threat, and, the unemployment of thousands of people in the last 9 months in the public service and general society, are leading to a state of despair and hopelessness which are factors contributing to this rise;

AND WHEREAS whilst there are cultural, religious, class and other prejudices that inhibit people from seeking help for mental health problems, the mental health services are inadequate to meet the demand with only 3 full time psychiatrists (based in Georgetown and New Amsterdam), insufficient hospital beds and trained personnel in the National Psychiatric Hospital, and no day treatment or community residential facilities, and, inadequate numbers of counsellors, to help and treat patients;

AND WHEREAS there are insufficient counsellors in the educational system, both private and public, to provide support to students of all ages;

11.

AND WHEREAS the availability and easy accessibility of poisons especially in rural agricultural communities contributes to making this the easiest method of committing suicide in Guyana;

AND WHEREAS suicide is still a crime in the statutes thereby posing serious challenges for social, health, law enforcement and prosecutorial services;

AND WHEREAS there is at present no infrastructure in place for follow-up for persons who have attempted suicides even though there is high risk of a reattempt unless treated;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government to implement the comprehensive 2014 Mental Health Strategic Plan and the National Suicide Prevention Plan 2015 – 2020 which were crafted under the PPP government;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government to ensure that funds are allocated to provide the financial, human, technical and physical infrastructure needed to treat mental health and level of suicides as a national health priority;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this Nationally Assembly calls on the Ministry of Public Health to resuscitate the National Suicide Prevention and Control Committee with regional committees, comprising both professionals from health, education, academics, law enforcement and broad-based representation from civil society including the religious community to update the National Strategy to Prevent and Control Suicide within 3months of its appointment, monitor and evaluate the data on suicide, lead a national education and awareness campaign to help individuals and their families to seek help, and make recommendations to government;

12.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly agrees that a nondenominational National education and intervention campaign be crafted with the technical support of PAHO/WHO with emphasis on the value of life, self-esteem and practical approaches to problem solving and coping mechanisms, anger management, and depression to be introduced into the schools, work places and communities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Ministry of Public Health to train health care providers – GMOs, nurses, medex, Community Health Workers as first responders at the primary health care level, emergency rooms, etc., to use the Depression Suspicion Index in recognising and diagnosing depression and to refer the individuals to GMOs and psychiatrist for further evaluation;

BE IT FURTHER RESLOVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government to urgently establish a special scholarship programme to fast track training of 100 health care providers and counsellors in mental health over the next 5 years to improve the availability of properly trained personnel to address suicides and other mental health issues;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Ministry of Public Health re-establishes a 24 hour Mental Health Hotline with health care providers manning it and referring individuals to appropriate facilities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Ministry of Public Health to resuscitate community support through partnership with Faith-based and Community Based Organisations, experienced Non-governmental organisations in the Gatekeepers, Alcohol and Substance Abuse Programmes and Pesticide Safety Programmes;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly reviews and amends legislation to decriminalise suicide;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the Government submits a Report to the National Assembly by August 2016 with regards to the actions taken.

(Notice Paper No. 46 (M40 Opp. 7) published on 2016-04-29)

*4. **NARCOTICS DRUG AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES (CONTROL)**
(AMENDMENT) BILL 2015 -No. 17 of 2015

Mr. Michael Carrington, M.P., to move the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly, in accordance with Standing Order No. 52(1), grant leave for the introduction and first reading of the Narcotics Drug and Psychotropic Substances (Control) (Amendment) Bill 2015 -No. 17 of 2015:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act 1988.

(Notice Paper No. 25 (M20 APNU/AFC Private Member.1) published on 2015-12-10)

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***Not to be proceeded with at this Sitting**

(ii) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

1. **UNEQUIVOCAL SUPPORT FOR THE ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA IN DEFENSE OF GUYANA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY**

The First Vice-President and Prime Minister to move the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly expresses its sincere thanks to His Excellency President David A. Granger, M.S.S., for addressing the National Assembly on the controversy which has arisen as a result of the Venezuelan Contention that the 1899 Arbitral Award is null and void, and for informing the Assembly of the state of relations between Guyana and Suriname.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly expresses its unequivocal support for the action taken by the Government of Guyana in defense of Guyana's Territorial Integrity.

(Notice Paper No. 29 (M24 Govt.20) published on 2016-01-04)

BILLS – SECOND READINGS

2. **INSURANCE BILL 2016 – Bill No. 11/2016 published on 2016-04-15**

The Minister of Finance to move the second reading of the following Bill:

15.

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the regulation of insurance in Guyana, the promotion of competition in the insurance industry, the protection of consumers and to repeal the 1998 and 2009 Acts on insurance and for related matters.

(Read a first time on 2016-05-04)

3. **WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT BILL 2016 – Bill No. 14/2016 published on 2016-05-10**

The Minister of Natural Resources to move the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the protection, conservation, management, sustainable use internal and external trade of Guyana's wildlife.

(Read a first time on 2016-05-12)

MOTION

*4. **CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 3/2015 – CURRENT AND CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

Assembly to resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

The Minister of Finance to signify the recommendation or consent of the Cabinet and to move the following motion:

/...16

***Not to be proceeded with at this Sitting**

BE IT RESOLVED:

Financial Paper No. 3/2015 – Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) – Advances made from the Contingencies Fund totalling \$799,897,637 for the period 1st September, 2015 to 31st December, 2015.

(Notice Paper No. 42 (M36 Govt 29) published on 2016-05-04)

(Paper presented on 2016-05-04)

(iii) COMMITTEES BUSINESS-

MOTIONS

1. OUTSTANDING WORK OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT

Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P., to move the following motion:

WHEREAS in accordance with Standing Order No. 104(1), every Committee shall before the end of the Session in which it was appointed, make a Report to the Assembly upon matters referred to it;

AND WHEREAS the Natural Resources Committee, a Sectoral Committee of the National Assembly of the First Session of the Tenth Parliament, was unable, owing to the prorogation and subsequent dissolution of Parliament on the 10th November, 2014 and 28th February, 2015, respectively, to conclude the work that was referred to it in that Session,

BE IT RESLOVED:

That the Natural Resources Committee of the National Assembly of the First Session of the Eleventh Parliament adopt all outstanding work of the previous Committee.

(Notice Paper No. 37 (M31 Committee 4) published on 2016-03-10)

17.

2. **ADOPTION OF THE THIRD PERIODIC REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY
SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE TENTH
PARLIAMENT**

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P. (Chairperson of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations) to move the following motion:

WHEREAS in accordance with Standing Order No. 104(1), every Committee shall before the end of the Session in which it was appointed, make a report to the Assembly upon matters it has addressed or were referred to it;

AND WHEREAS the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations appointed in the Tenth Parliament was unable to conclude its agreed upon work programme;

AND WHEREAS the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations of the 11th Parliament reviewed the report of the previous Committee and agreed that it be laid in the National Assembly,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly adopts the Third Periodic Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations of the 10th Parliament.

(Notice Paper No. 41 (M35 Committee 5) published on 2016-05-03)

S.E. ISAACS
Clerk of the National Assembly

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

17th May, 2016.

