

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**  
**OF THE 72<sup>nd</sup> SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION**  
**(2006-2009) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD**  
**AT 2.00 P.M.**  
**ON THURSDAY, 22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY, 2009**  
**IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM**

**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (70)**

**Speaker (1)**

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

**MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (41)**

**(i) People's Progressive Party/Civic (40)**

**(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. 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 Foreign Affairs

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

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

\*Non-elected Minister

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.D., M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Health

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

\*The Hon. Pauline Sukhai, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs (Absent)

The Hon. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water

Mr. Donald R. 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)

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**\*Non-Elected Minister**

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

3.

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

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

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)

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

Mr. Moses V. Nagamootoo, J.P., M.P.

Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P.

Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P.

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

\*\*\*Mr. Steve P. Ninvalle, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport

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 in the Ministry of Housing and Water

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

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

Dr. Vishwa Deva Budhram Mahadeo, M.P.

Rev. Kwame Gilbert, M.P.

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\*\*\*Non-elected Parliamentary Secretary

**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.

Mrs. Clarissa S. Riehl, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P., Chief Whip

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.

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

Ms Amna Ally, M.P.

Ms Cheryl Sampson, M.P.

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

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

Mr. Ernest Barnabas 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)

5.

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

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

**(ii) Alliance for Change (5)**

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

Mrs. Sheila Holder, M.P.

Mrs. Latchmin Punalall, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. David Patterson, M.P.

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

Mr. Everall N. Franklin, M.P.

**OFFICERS (2)**

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 2.15 p.m.

**PRAYERS**

The Clerk read Prayers.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER****Consultants from the Millenium Challenge Account Programme**

The Speaker informed Members of the Assembly that Ms Margaret Clement, Leader of the Delegation, Mr. David Ogle, Specialist on Parliamentary Committees and Mr. Allan Green, Library Consultant were visiting from the United States of America to conduct assessments on the Parliamentary Library and the Committees Division.

He further stated that the consultants' services were being provided through the Millenium Challenge Account Programme and that they would be in Guyana for two weeks.

The Speaker wished the consultants an enjoyable stay in Guyana.

**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-**

- (1) By The Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and International Cooperation:  
Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and International Cooperation for the year 2007.

(Circulated)

- (2) By the Minister of Finance:  
Report on the Special Investigation into Alleged Collusion by Customs Officers with Fidelity Investments Inc./Kong Inc. to defraud the Guyana Revenue Authority of millions of dollars in Tax Revenue for the period 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2007 to 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2008.

(Circulated)

**REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES-**

- (3) By Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., (Chairperson of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services):

Third Periodic Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services.

(Circulated)

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-****For Written Replies**

- 1, **NUMBER OF PERSONS DETAINED FOR 72 HOURS OR MORE**

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

**Minister Answering:** Minister of Home Affairs

Could the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs provide this National Assembly with a list of the number of persons detained for the year 2007, at each Police Station listed below, for 72 hours or more, who were subsequently released without any charges being preferred against them:-

- (i) Sparendam Police Station
- (ii) Beterverwagting Police Station
- (iii) Vigilance Police Station
- (iv) Cove and John Police Station
- (v) Brickdam Police Station
- (vi) Providence Police Station

**(Notice Paper No. 309 (Q225 Opp 220) published on 2008-11-05)**

The Minister of Home 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).

2. **CARICOM BONDS**

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

**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Finance

- (i) Will the Hon. Minister state what was the value of Caricom bonds prior to the global financial crisis and credit crunch?
- (ii) Will the Hon. Minister say what is the present value of Caricom bonds, by country, if significant variation prevails?
- (iii) Will the Hon. Minister state the quantum of Caricom bonds that each of the local banks invested in and the losses incurred, if any, as a result of the global financial crisis?
- (iv) Should losses resulting from investments in Caricom bonds be significant, how does the Minister foresee the banking sector coping with the consequences of such losses? And what remedies he would recommend?

**(Notice Paper No. 354 (Q266 Opp251) published on 2008-12-30)**

**Answers:**

- (i) At the end of September, 2008, CARICOM bonds held by the commercial banks amounted to G\$15 billion, equivalent to US\$73.6 million and represented 6.6% of their total assets. With effect from September, 2008, the Bank of Guyana requested all licensed financial institutions (LFIs) to submit a monthly report on their foreign investments, along with a bi-monthly narrative on any developments with respect to those investments.



(ii) (Please refer to Table 1 for distribution by country)

At the end – November, 2008, the value of CARICOM bonds amounted to G\$14.3 billion equivalent to UD\$70.7 million and represented 6.3% of total assets. Three countries accounted for 86% of the total: Jamaica – 34%, Trinidad – 30% and Barbados – 22%.

As indicated above, as at end – September, 2008, the value of CARICOM bonds amounted to G\$15 billion equivalent to US\$73.6 million. Three countries accounted for 87% of the total: Jamaica – 33%, Trinidad – 30% and Barbados – 24%.

The reduction in volume from September to November was due primarily to the redemption of bonds upon maturity. (CBI redeemed bonds amounting to G\$25 million).

**TABLE 1**

Amounts in million

Country	November 2008		September 2008		Change	
	G\$	US\$	G\$	US\$	G\$	Percent
Jamaica	4,894	24.2	4,894	24.0	-	-
Trinidad	4,344	21.5	4,433	21.7	(89)	-2.0
Barbados	3,122	15.4	3,585	17.6	(463)	-12.9
St. Lucia	1,455	7.2	1,478	7.3	(23)	-1.6
St. Vincent	236	1.2	358	1.8	(122)	-34.1
Belize	69	0.3	69	0.3	-	-
Turks and Caicos	49	0.2	49	0.2	-	-
Antigua	42	0.2	42	0.2	-	-
St. Kitts & Nevis	8	0.03	8	0.03	-	-
Grenada	100	0.5	100	0.5		
Total	14,319	70.7	15,016	73.6	(697)	-4.6

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- (iii) Bank of Nova Scotia and Bank of Baroda do not invest in CARICOM bonds. The CARICOM bonds held by the other four (4) banks are shown in Table 2.

Based on the information received from these banks, no loss was incurred due to the global financial crisis.

TABLE 2

Bank	Period	Bonds		Government		Corporate	
		G\$	US\$	G\$	US\$	G\$	US\$
RBL	September	3,314	16.2	1,336	6.2	1,978	9.7
	November	2,691	13.3	1,236	6.1	1,455	7.2
GBTI	September	5,899	28.9	1,998	9.8	3,901	19.1
	November	5,899	29.2	1,998	9.9	3,901	19.3
DBL	September	3,276	16.1	3,276	16.1	-	
	November	3,727	18.4	3,411	16.8	316	1.6
CBI	September	2,527	12.4	1,563	7.7	964	4.7
	November	2,002	9.9	1,038	5.1	964	4.8
BNS	September	-					
	November						
BOB	September	-					
	November						
Total	September	15,016	73.6	8,173	40.1	6,844	33.5
Total	November	14,319	70.7	7,683	37.9	6,637	32.9

- (iv) To date no losses have been reported by the banks. The Bank of Guyana has indicated that it is not overly concerned about the current overall performance and condition of the banking sector. The prudential financial indicators indicate that the banks are generally adequately capitalized, liquid, profitable, possess satisfactory asset quality, and well managed.

Relevant international accounting standards (IAS) prescribe how to report financial assets and banks are expected to comply with such requirements. Where necessary impairment of assets has to be reported in accordance with the IAS and appropriate treatment effected in the accounts.

The banks continue to monitor developments which could impact on their foreign assets and advise the Bank of Guyana periodically.

**For Oral Replies**

3. **WELL IN KINGSTON**

Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P. asked the Minister of Housing and Water the following question:

\*In August 2007 a company was hired to drill a well in Kingston for approximately sixty four million dollars (\$64,000,000.00). Has this well produced water and was the bidding process followed? Please name the company.

**(Notice Paper No. 351 (Q263 Opp248) published on 2008-12-30)**

Thereafter the Minister of Housing and Water replied.

Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P., asked the Minister of Housing and Water a supplementary question.

Thereafter the Minister of Housing and Water replied.

4. **WELL AT COTTON TREE, WEST COAST BERBICE**

Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P. asked the Minister of Housing and Water the following question:

\*A contract was awarded to the same Contractor for a well at Cotton Tree, West Coast Berbice, for approximately fifty four million dollars (\$54,000,000.00) in October, 2007. Could the Minister state whether or not the well is producing adequate water and name the company contracted?

**(Notice Paper No. 352 (Q264 Opp249) published on 2008-12-30)**

Thereafter the Minister of Housing and Water replied.

Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P., asked the Minister of Housing and Water a supplementary question.

Thereafter the Minister of Housing and Water replied.

5. **WELL AT NUMBER 47 VILLAGE CORENTYNE**

Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P. asked the Minister of Housing and Water the following question:

\*Another contract was awarded in February, 2008 for a well at Number 47 Village Corentyne. What was the contract sum and state if this well is producing up to 10% of the expected yield? Please name the contracted company.

**(Notice Paper No. 353 (Q265 Opp250) published on 2008-12-30)**

13.

Thereafter the Minister of Housing and Water replied.

Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P., asked the Minister of Housing and Water a supplementary question.

Thereafter the Minister of Housing and Water replied.

**INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-**

**Presentation and First Reading**

**CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2009 – Bill No. 4/2009**

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to alter the Constitution in accordance with Articles 66 and 164.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS-**

**(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**BILLS – Second Readings**

**ITEM 1 - MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2009 – Bill No. 2 of 2009 published on 2009-01-14**

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Medical Practitioners Act.  
(Read a first time on 2009-01-15)

14.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Dr. George Norton

Mr. Raphael Trotman

Thereafter the Minister of Health replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

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

**In Committee**

**Clause 1** was passed as printed.

**Clause 2**

Dr. George Norton moved the following amendments, which were put and negatived:

Insert immediately after section 8(3) the following as section 8(4):

“It shall be the duty and responsibility of the Guyana Medical Council to plan, organize and give adequate notice of no less than six months before the end of the calendar year of the schedule of CME’s for the next year in order to facilitate the re-registration process”.

Re-number the existing “8(4)” as “8(5)”.

**Clause 2** was then passed as printed.

**Assembly resumed**

On a motion by the Minister of Health, the Medical Practitioners (Amendment) Bill 2009 was read a third time and passed as printed.

**ITEM 2 - PROTECTION OF CHILDREN BILL 2009 – Bill No. 3 of 2009 published on 2009-01-14**

At the request of the Minister of Human Services and Social Security, and with the approval of the Assembly, the following Bill was referred to a Special Select Committee:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the protection of children at risk, children in difficult circumstances and children in general and for related matters.

**(Read a first time on 2009-01-15)**

**COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

**MOTION**

**ITEM 3 - ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE FORESTS BILL 2007**

The Minister of Agriculture (Chairman of the Special Select Committee on the Forests Bill 2007) moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Report of the Special Select Committee on the Forests Bill 2007 – (Bill No. 21 o 2007) be adopted.

**(Notice Paper No. 357 (M87 Govt53) published on 2009-01-14)**