

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 79TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION
(2006-2009) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON FRIDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY, 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 (Absent – on leave)

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**

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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. Charles R. Ramson, 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

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

Mr. Donald R. Ramotar, M.P.

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P.

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., Chief Whip

Mr. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P.

Ms Bibi S. Shadick, M.P., (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

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

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***Non-Elected Minister**

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

3.

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. (Absent – on leave)

Rev. Kwame Gilbert, M.P.

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

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

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*****Non-elected Parliamentary Secretary**

4.

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P.

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P. (Absent)

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)

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)

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

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) (Absent – on leave)

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 2.12 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

By the Speaker of the National Assembly (Chairman of the Committee of Selection):

Minutes of Proceedings of the 10th Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on
Wednesday, 18th February, 2009.

(Circulated)

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-**For Written Replies**1. **FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS****Member Asking:** Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P.**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Health

The Minister of Health has aggressively tackled stigma and discrimination in the fight against HIV/AIDS on the one hand. Would the Minister consider legislation at this time, which would punish individuals who knowingly infect persons with the AIDS Virus?

(Notice Paper No. 361 (Q269 Opp254) published on 2009-01-30)

Answer:

After extensive consultation, HIV Legislation has been drafted. This has been submitted to the Attorney General's Office and we expect to submit a final draft for Cabinet consideration by the end of the year. The proposed legislation intends to make provisions to address the problem of people knowingly infecting others with HIV.

2. **MULTI DRUG RESISTANT TB CASES WITHIN GUYANA****Member Asking:** Mr. Everall Franklin, M.P.**Minister Answering:** The Minister of Health

- (i) Can the Minister of Health inform this Assembly on any particular measure(s) being undertaken to reduce the number of Multi Drugs Resistant TB cases within Guyana?
- (ii) What legislation is required to control the spread of Multi Drug Resistant TB cases?
- (iii) What measures are in place to prevent the overstocking of TB drugs?

(Notice Paper No. 362 (Q270 Opp255) published on 2009-01-30)

Answers:**(i) Measures to Reduce MDR-TB**

The health system actively detects and apply prompt treatment according to the WHO recommended DOTS strategy for the control of TB. The key measure to reduce MDR-TB is to use a combination of standard medicines and implement strict supervision of all on treatment.

The DOTS Strategy requires:

- All TB cases be placed on a combination of at least 4 first line anti-TB medications (INH, Rifampicin, PZA and Ethambutol) for no less than 6 months.
- All patients on anti-TB medication be supervised by a TB outreach worker (DOTS worker or community Health Worker), who visits the home of such patients and observe them taking each dose of the treatment until cured.
- Patients and their relatives be counseled on the vital importance of taking all prescribed treatment for the defined period.
- Sputum smears be done routinely at the initial diagnosis, at 2, 4 and 6 months while on treatment to ensure that the medicines are working as they should and no resistance is developing. With the standard regimen, sputum conversion occurs at about 2 months of treatment and complete cure can be achieved by 6 months.
- Sample of sputum from all patients not responding to the first line treatment are cultured and sensitivity testing conducted to detect resistance to any of the four first line medicines.
- Patients defaulting from treatment are actively traced and placed on appropriate regimen following re-investigation. It is among those that default from treatment that the risk of emergence of resistant TB emerges.
- Some short periods of hospitalization is necessary for some defaulters so as to reduce the chance of MDR-TB developing.

(ii) The existing quarantine legislation is inadequate. In addition, new quarantine legislation is needed for several emerging and existing infectious disease that threatens globally, e.g. SARS. These are being drafted and will be presented to this Honourable House shortly.

8.

Enforcement of the existing legislation can provide some legal support so that the health system can maintain TB patients on the prescribed treatment until a cure is achieved. This requires some restriction of movement around the country or assisted movement if necessary so that the treatment supervision can be transferred to another health worker to follow up and observe treatment.

- (iii) TB medicines are procured based on estimates of a modern quantification software (Quantimed). This software package uses the current TB incidence information along with the consumption patterns to calculate the stocking levels need. The software adjusts the estimates to provide for a buffer stock of about 4 – 6 months supply. This reduces the burden of possible stock outs that frequently occurred in the TB program during the 1980's and early 1990's and which hinder full treatment of all cases.

Over stocking and stock-outs are not a usual problem for anti-TB medication in Guyana.

3. **SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY TO DORMITORIES – AISHALTON SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

Could the Honourable Minister of Local Government and Regional Development share with this Honourable House and the students at the Aishalton Secondary School, especially those who will be writing the CXC Examination in June, 2009, the measures to be put in place for the supply of electricity to the school dormitories?

(Notice Paper No. 365 (Q273 Opp258) published on 2009-01-30)

Answer:

The supply of electricity is contingent upon the repairs to the generator, which should be operable by 2009-02-26.

4. DUST PROBLEM FACING THE RESIDENTS OF LETHEM

Member Asking: Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Local Government and Regional
Development

Could the Honourable Minister of Local Government and Regional Development inform this Honourable House and the residents of Lethem of his Government's plan to tackle the dust problem facing the residents of Lethem?

(Notice Paper No. 366 (Q274 Opp259) published on 2009-01-30)

Answer:

Due to the fact that most of the major roadways are presently uncapped the level of dust is indeed high.

The major roadways are currently been capped. This will reduce significantly the dust problem. In the dry season, the uncapped roadways are sprinkled with water. Additionally, humps will be placed at strategic places to reduce speed of vehicles to ease the dust problem.

PUBLIC BUSINESS -

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

BUDGET SPEECH 2009 – MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2009

Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2009.

(Moved by the Minister of Finance on 2009-02-09)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. E. Lance Carberry

Mr. Donald Ramotar

Mr. Raphael Trotman

Thereafter, the Minister of Finance replied.

CONCLUSION OF BUDGET DEBATE

Following the conclusion of the general debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2009, Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider and dispose of the Report of the Business Sub-Committee of the Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

The Speaker reported that the Business Sub-Committee of the Committee of Supply met on Thursday, 19th February, 2009, considered the allocation of time for the consideration of the

2009 Estimates of Expenditure in the Committee of Supply, and passed a Resolution on the matter.

Copies of the Sub-Committee's Minutes, Resolution and Time Table had been circulated to Members at the sitting on Thursday, 19th February, 2009.

On a motion by the Prime Minister, the Committee of Supply agreed with the Business Sub-Committee in its Resolution.

The Speaker stated that in accordance with the Resolution, the Committee of Supply would commence consideration of the 2009 Estimates of Expenditure on Tuesday, 24th February, 2009.

Assembly resumed

ADJOURNMENT

At 5.30 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Tuesday, 24th February, 2009.


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HON. HARI N. RAMKARRAN, S.C., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

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

20th February, 2009.