

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 98TH 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, 15TH OCTOBER, 2009
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, GEORGETOWN

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 (Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Minister of Health (Absent – on leave)

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

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***Non-elected Minister**

2.

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 (Absent – on leave)

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) (Absent – on leave)

***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.

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**

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P. (Absent)

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)

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

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 Kisson, 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. (Absent)

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P. (Absent)

5.

Mrs. Sheila Holder, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

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

Mr. David Patterson, M.P. (Absent - on leave)

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

Mr. Everall N. Franklin, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

OFFICERS (2)

Mr. Sherlock E. Isaacs, Clerk of the National Assembly

Ms Hermina Gilgeours, Assistant Clerk of the National Assembly

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The sitting commenced at 2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The Minister of Finance did not proceed with the presentation of the Reports of the Directors of the Dependents' Pension Fund for the years 2001, 2002 and 2003.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-**For Written Reply****MAINTENANCE OF ROAD FROM STANLEYTOWN TO MARA**

Member Asking: Mr. Robert H. O. Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition

Minister Answering: The Minister of Public Works and Communications

Since millions of dollars are expended annually for the maintenance of the East Bank Berbice Road, from Stanleytown to Mara, and the said road is constantly in a deplorable state, causing severe difficulties and inconvenience to residents and road-users, forcing them to regularly engage in protest activity over their neglected conditions, could the Honourable Minister provide answers to the following:

- (a) How much money has been spent annually for the past ten years, i.e., 1998 to 2008, for the maintenance of the East Bank Berbice road?
- (b) Could the Minister identify the specifics of the allocated expenditure by the respective year, indicating the amounts that were spent; the sections of the road maintained with the approved expenditure; the name/s of the contractor/s involved; and, whether there were satisfactory completion certificates issued at the end of each job and by whom were they signed?
- (c) Whether it would not make economic sense and reflect more prudent use of our financial resources if, instead of the piecemeal maintenance approach to the East Bank Berbice Road, a comprehensive road building project is implemented even if such a project is phased over a few years?

7.

- (d) How soon does the government plan to address the immediate problem of the present deplorable state of the road as emphasized by residents in their recent demonstrations?

(Notice Paper No. 401 (Q289 Opp 274) published on 2009-09-18)

Answers:

“The road from Stanleytown to Mara, East Bank Berbice is approximately 40 kilometres, (25 miles) in length. It goes through primarily farming communities.

During the past ten (10) years the Ministry of Public Works and Communications and Regional Administration, Region No. 6, have carried out routine and periodic maintenance works on the 40 kilometres stretch of road as shown in the table below:

(a) and (b)

Year	Name of Contractor	Contract Sum	Nature of Intervention
1998	K.P. Jagdeo General Contractors Ltd.	\$5.628M	Routine maintenance from Everton to Mara
2000	L & R Construction and Contracting	\$3.163M	Routine maintenance – Stanleytown to Bermine
2001	- do -	\$14.519M	- do -
2002	K. Jagdeo General Contractors Ltd.	\$12.220M	Cleaning roadside drains and shoulders from Sisters to California
2004	K. Jagdeo General Contractors Ltd.	\$35M	Routine maintenance – Bermine to Highbury
2005 - 2007	K. Jagdeo General Contractors Ltd.	\$150M	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rehabilitation of 5 miles of road in Mara Village (99m) 2. Improve critical sections between Everton and Highbury (49m). 3. Remedial works, scarification and pot hole patching between Enfield and Glasgow (2m)
	Sub Total	\$220.530M	

Routine Works by Region 6

2006	Kumar Singh		\$0.078M	Labour contract for filling pot holes at Highbury
2007	Associated Services	Construction	\$1.741M	Routine maintenance in the Islington/Overwinning area
2007	K.P. Jagdeo		\$8.9M	Routine maintenance in the Glasgow area
2008	K.P. Jagdeo		\$7.8M	Routine maintenance – Islington to Everton
	Associated Services	Construction	\$6.0M	Routine maintenance from Everton to Plegt-Anker
	Sub-total		\$24.519M	

Total Amount spent 1998 to 2008.

Ministry of Public Works and Communications: \$220.530M

Region 6: \$ 24.519M

\$245.049M

- (c) It is true that it would make economic sense to carry out a comprehensive maintenance/construction programme for the 40 kilometres stretch of road on the East Bank Berbice road but since limited funds have been provided over the years, maintenance works have been carried out in accordance with the funds allocated.
- (d) Efforts are being made to address the immediate problem of certain deplorable sections of the road. In this regard the Ministry's Force Account Unit has commenced routine maintenance works in the Stanleytown to Glasgow area. The estimated cost is \$18M."

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

(1) **Hydroelectricity Developments in Guyana and Interruptions in Power Supply**

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications made a statement on hydroelectricity developments in Guyana and the current spate of interruptions in power supply.

(2) **The Resuscitation of the Good Offices Process**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs made a statement on "Good Offices Process" of the United Nations Secretary General that was established in 1989 to assist Guyana and Venezuela in search of a solution to the controversy that arose from the Venezuela contention that the Arbitral Award of October 3, 1989 was null and void.

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

The Present untenable and deplorable situation in the supply of Electricity by Guyana Power and Light Company (GPL) to Consumers

A request by Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition to move the adjournment of the Assembly to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, to wit, the present untenable and deplorable situation in the supply of electricity by GPL to consumers, was allowed by the Speaker.

The motion accordingly stood over to 5.00 p.m.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS-

Presentation and First Readings

1. **FUGITIVE OFFENDERS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2009 – Bill No. 34/2009**

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Fugitive Offenders Act 1988.

2. **RICE FACTORIES (AMENDMENT) BILL 2009 – Bill No. 35/2009**

The Minister of Agriculture, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Rice Factories Act 1998.

3. **MARITIME ZONES BILL 2009 – Bill No. 36/2009**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Government, presented the following Bill, which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to repeal and replace the Maritime Boundaries Act 1977, to incorporate certain provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage 2001, to provide for marine scientific research, maritime cultural area, eco-tourism, marine parks and reserves and mariculture, the protection and preservation of the marine environment and for related matters.

PUBLIC BUSINESS -

(i) **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MOTIONS

ITEM 1 - GUYANA'S RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTIVE TREATY OF THE UNION OF SOUTH AMERICAN NATIONS (UNASUR)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs moved the following motion:

WHEREAS this Treaty is the constitutive legal instrument of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) which was founded by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela, and signed by the said Nations on May 23, 2008 in Brasilia, Brazil;

AND WHEREAS this Treaty is designed to strengthen political and economic cooperation and dialogue between/among member states, and to advance continental integration;

AND WHEREAS Guyana is desirous of ratifying this Treaty.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves Guyana's ratification of the Constitutive Treaty of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).
(Notice Paper No. 402 (M107 Govt65) published on 2009-10-07)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Donald Ramotar

Mr. Aubrey Norton

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

Thereafter, the Minister of Foreign Affairs replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

ITEM 2 - DEPLOYMENT OF GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE PERSONNEL TO TRINIDAD FOR COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING

The Minister of Home Affairs moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting from 21st to 30th November, 2009;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana joined with the CARICOM countries to offer security support to the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago;

AND WHEREAS the Government of Guyana has pledged the deployment of Guyana Defence Force military personnel on a security support mission;

AND WHEREAS the management and operation of troops deployed by the Government of Guyana shall be in accordance with the Visiting Forces Act 2007 of Guyana, the Visiting Forces Act of Trinidad and Tobago and the Treaty of Security Assistance among CARICOM Member States.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly honours the pledge of the Government of Guyana and approves the deployment of such personnel to the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the purpose and period stated.

(Notice Paper No. 403 (M108 Govt66) published on 2009-10-07)

Mrs. Deborah Backer spoke to the motion.

Thereafter the Minister of Home Affairs replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

The Speaker's consent was given in accordance with Standing Orders No. 28(2) to move the following motion:

ITEM 3 - GUYANA'S ACCESSION TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

The Minister of Foreign Affairs moved the following motion:

WHEREAS this Convention was adopted by the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO in October, 2005 and entered into force on 18th March, 2007;

AND WHEREAS the Convention addresses the need to recognize that cultural goods and services convey identity, values and meaning and consequently cannot be considered mere goods. And the need for States to take appropriate measures to protect and promote diversity of cultural expression while allowing the free flow of ideas and works;

AND WHEREAS Guyana is desirous of acceding to this Convention.

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves Guyana's accession to the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

(Notice Paper No. 404 (M109 Govt67) published on 2009-10-08)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Mr. Aubrey Norton

Thereafter the Minister of Foreign Affairs replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.15 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.05 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

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

In accordance with the permission granted earlier, Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition moved the adjournment of the Assembly and spoke, to wit, the present untenable and deplorable situation in the supply of electricity by GPL to consumers.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, Mr. Robert Corbin replied.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications concluded the debate on the motion in accordance with Standing Order No. 39(2).

(ii) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTION

ITEM 4 - SUSPENSION OF SALE OF GOVERNMENT SHARES IN G.T.&T. INC.

Mr. Robert H. O. Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition, moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the wholly owned State Corporation, Guyana Telecommunications Corporation, (G.T.C.), was privatized by the Guyana Government on specific terms, which included, the retention by the Government of Guyana of 20% (twenty percent) shareholding in the new privatized Company, Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company (G.T.&T. Inc);

AND WHEREAS the said terms of privatization included provisions for the Government of Guyana to appoint at least one member on the Board of Management of the Company to ensure that the interest of the people of Guyana could be represented and safeguarded;

AND WHEREAS Guyana has benefited from the operations of the new Company to the tune of millions of dollars in taxes and dividends from the Company, reported in 2008 to be as high as \$1.5B in taxes and \$265M in dividends and approximately \$US1M to US\$4M annually;

AND WHEREAS it is the workers of GT&T who have made that company into an effective and efficient organization;

AND WHEREAS the 20% ownership in GT&T did not in any way inhibit or prevent the Guyana Government from permitting other telecommunications and internet operators from doing business in Guyana as is evident from the continued operation of DIGICEL, for several years now in Guyana;

AND WHEREAS the retention of Government's 20% shareholding in GT&T has facilitated a significant stream of revenues in the form of dividends to the people of Guyana, notwithstanding the existence of other competing telecommunication operators in Guyana;

AND WHEREAS, notwithstanding this stream of revenue, the Government has announced plans of its intention to dispose of its 20% shares in the GT&T Company;

AND WHEREAS the retention of a 20% shareholding in GT&T cannot or should not affect the implementation of a government's policy of liberalizing the Telecommunications Sector;

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government of Guyana to appoint an objective professional group to assess the Cost/benefit to the people of Guyana, of sale versus retention of the said shares;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls on the Government of Guyana to suspend the decision to dispose of its 20% shareholding in GT&T until the review is completed by the appointed professional group; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That, should the review group recommend that the shares be disposed of, the first option for disposal of these shares should be to the workers of the Company, thereafter a transparent process, to publicly announced, should be followed for the disposal of the said shares or for such number of the shares not bought by the workers of the Company.

(Notice Paper No. 400 (M106 Opp30) published on 2009-08-04)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

The Minister of Housing and Water

While Mr. Odinga Lumumba was speaking to the motion the Speaker suspended the sitting.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 7.25 p.m., the Speaker suspended the sitting in light of an appeal from Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition, with respect to Mr. Odinga Lumumba's imputing improper motive to him.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 7.43 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Mr. Odinga Lumumba was disallowed from continuing his speech because of his refusal to withdraw unsubstantiated remarks he made about Mr. Robert Corbin.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Minister of Finance

Mr. Winston Murray

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications concluded the debate in accordance with Standing Order No. 39(2).

The motion was then put and negatived on the following division:

FOR

Mr. Fernandes

Ms Kisson

Ms Wade

Dr. Austin

Miss Selman

Mr. Mervyn Williams

Mrs. David-Blair

Mr. Elliot

Mr. Norton

Mr. Danny

Mrs. Sampson

Miss Ally

Mr. Scott

Dr. Norton

Mr. Basil Williams

Mrs. Backer

Mr. Carberry

AGAINST

Rev. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Seeraj

Mrs. Sahoye-Shury

Mr. Parmanand Persaud

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Nandlall

Mr. Khan

Mrs. Edwards

Mr. DeSantos

Mr. Atkinson

Miss Shadick

Mr. Nokta

Mrs. Chandarpal

Miss Teixeira

Mr. Ramotar

Mrs. Riehl
Mr. Murray
Mr. Corbin

Mr. Ali
Mr. Prashad
Ms Webster
Dr. Ramsaran
Dr. Fox
Ms Manickchand
Mr. Benn
Dr. Anthony
Mr. Lall
Dr. Westford
Mr. Robert Persaud
Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
Mr. Rohee
Mr. Hinds

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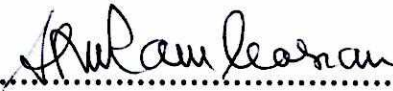
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DIWALI GREETINGS

Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of his party and the Government, extended Diwali Greetings to all Guyanese, especially the hindu community.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.07 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 Thursday, 22nd October, 2009.



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HON. HARI. N. RAMKARRAN, S.C., M.P.,

Speaker of the National Assembly

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

15th October, 2009.