

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 111TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION
(2006-2010) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON MONDAY, 15TH FEBRUARY, 2010
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

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

/...2

***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

The Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P., (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice),
Minister of Human Services and Social Security (Absent)

The Hon. Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, 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 (Absent)

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.

Mr. Lloyd J. Pereira, J.P., 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.

***Non-elected Parliamentary Secretary

4.

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

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

Ms Dawn Hastings, M.P.

(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 2.05 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

OATH OF A NEW MEMBER

(i) **Election of Mr. Lloyd Joyston Pereira**

The Speaker informed the Assembly that following the death of Dr. Desrey Clementine Caesar Fox, and his subsequent call upon the representative of the People's Progressive Party/Civic list of candidates, he was informed that the name of Mr. Lloyd J. Pereira had been extracted from the list and that Mr. Pereira was on 8th February, 2010 declared to be an elected a Member of the National Assembly.

6.

The Speaker stated that before Mr. Pereira could take part in the proceedings of that sitting of the National Assembly, he would have, as required by Article 167 of the Constitution, to make and subscribe the oath of office.

As Mr. Pereira was present, the oath was administered to him by the Clerk

(ii) **Election of Ms Dawn Hastings**

The Speaker informed the Assembly that following the resignation of Mr. Anthony Veiria, and his subsequent call upon the representative of the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana list of candidates, he was informed that the name of Ms Dawn Hastings had been extracted from the list and that Ms Hastings was on 4th February, 2010 declared to be elected a Member of the National Assembly.

The Speaker stated that before Ms Hastings could take part in the proceedings of that sitting of the National Assembly, she would have, as required by Article 167 of the Constitution, to make and subscribe the oath of office.

As Ms Hastings was present, the oath was administered to her by the Clerk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

(i) **Congratulations to Mr. Lloyd J. Pereira and Ms Dawn Hastings**

The Speaker, on behalf of Members of the Assembly and himself, congratulated Mr. Lloyd Pereira and Ms Dawn Hastings on their becoming Members of the National Assembly.

He welcomed them to the Assembly and also extended best wishes to them.

(ii) **Birthday Greeting to Mr. Robert H.O. Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition**

The Speaker, on behalf of Members of the Assembly and himself, congratulated Mr. Robert Corbin on his birthday.

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES-

Mr. Winston Murray, on behalf of Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P., (Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee), presented the following documents:

- (i) Report of the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly on the Public Accounts of Guyana for the years 2004 and 2005.

(Circulated)

- (ii) Minutes of Proceedings of the Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly on the Public Accounts of Guyana for the years 2004 and 2005.

(Circulated)

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Reply

THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE (SICKNESS BENEFIT MEDICAL CARE)

REGULATIONS

Mr. Mervyn Williams, M.P., asked the Minister of Finance the following questions:

1. With respect to the amendment to the National Insurance and Social Security (Sickness Benefit Medical Care) Regulations cited as the National Insurance and Social Security (Sickness Benefit Medical Care) (Amendment) Regulations 2009, could the Honourable Minister of Finance inform this National Assembly why the (Sickness Benefit Medical Care) Regulation 2(4) was amended and its corresponding provision in the (Injury Benefit Medical Care) Regulations, at Regulation 3(4) was not similarly amended?

8.

2. In 2007 at “Minimum Reasonable Cost” the Scheme’s expenditure with respect to Medical Care was 9.23% of total benefit expense broken down as follows:-

Sickness Benefit Medical Care	-	\$643,693,000
Injury Benefit Medical Care	-	\$ 32,419,000
Total:	-	\$676,112,000

The prevailing rates of contribution in effect from 1st April, 2004 to date are Employed persons 13%, Self Employed persons 11.5%.

Given the above facts could the Honourable Minister provide this National Assembly with expenditure projections over the period 1st January, 2010 to 31st December, 2012 under the headings:

- (a) Sickness Benefit Medical Care; and
 - (b) Injury Benefit Medical Care.
3. (a) Could the Honourable Minister say what studies have been done to determine that the National Insurance Scheme can meet the increase in expenditure in the short, medium and long terms while remaining a viable entity?
- (b) Could the Honourable Minister share with this National Assembly the details of such studies, particularly the aspect showing specifically how the Scheme intends to meet the increased cost while remaining a viable entity?
4. In 2007, the Scheme’s total expenses amounted to 8.5 billion dollars. This was met by \$8.1 billion dollars representing the total contribution revenue collected for that year, plus \$0.4 billion dollars from investment income (26.8% of investment revenue collected for 2007). With the advent of the new provision, could the Honourable Minister provide the National Assembly with an overall projection of the Scheme’s operations for the period 1st January, 2010 to 31st December, 2012?

(Notice Paper No. 418 (Q301 Opp276) published on 2010-01-11)

Answers:

I am advised of the following:

1. There was no need to amend the provision at regulation 3(4) in the National Insurance and Social Security (Injury Benefit Medical Care) Regulations since qualifying cases have all their expenses paid as part of the compensation transferred under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance to the Industrial Benefit branch under the National Insurance and Social Security Act. On the other hand, the rates for the reimbursement of Sickness Benefit Medical Care expenses are determined by the Board based on surveys of prevailing costs.

2. **MEDICAL CARE COST PROJECTIONS 2010 TO 2012**

Medical Care Benefit	Budget 2010	Projection 2011	Projection 2012
Sickness	554,896,000	642,802,000	663,223,000
Injury	14,066,000	26,989,000	27,226,000
Total	568,962,000	669,791,000	690,449,000

3. (a) The Seventh Actuarial Review of the National Insurance Fund addressed this issue and concluded that the short term benefits branch under which the Sickness Benefit Medical Care fell and the Industrial Benefits Branch under which the Industrial Benefit Care fell both had funding ratios well in excess of the target funding ratios and were therefore in no danger with respect to viability.

- (b) With the present contribution rate of 13% of Insurable earnings, 2.2% has been allotted to the Short Term Benefit Branch and 1.5% to the industrial Benefits Branch. As at the end of November, 2009, total expenditure on the Short Term Benefits Branch is approximately 1.5% of Insurable Earnings and for the Industrial Branch approximately 0.3% of Insurable Earnings.

4. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE PROJECTIONS 2010 TO 2012

Description	Budget 2010	Projection 2011	Projection 2012
Income	10,940,892	11,425,792	11,997,087
Contribution Employed	8,477,563	8,942,329	9,389,446
Contribution Self-employed	470,551	496,046	520,849
Arrears Contribution	427,896	344,921	361,505
Total contribution	9,376,010	9,782,666	10,271,800
Investment Income	1,540,271	1,617,285	1,698,149
Other Income	24,611	25,842	27,134
Expenditure	10,173,439	11,291,684	11,856,268
Benefit Payments	8,823,156	9,809,965	10,300,463
Administrative Costs	1,350,283	1,481,719	1,555,805
Employment Costs	903,100	959,677	1,007,661
Other Admin. Costs	436,203	510,513	536,039
Materials and Supplies	10,980	11,529	12,105
Income minus expenditure	767,453	134,108	140,814

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS-**Reports emanating from the Republic of Suriname on the invasion of Guyana's territory – the New River Triangle**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs made a statement on Reports emanating from the Republic of Suriname that there were Presidential instructions, under the previous Surinamese government, to invade Guyana's territory, namely the New River Triangle.

**MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND
MOVED BY A MINISTER-
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 71(2)**

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications moved the following motion:

WHEREAS Standing Order No. 71(2) provides for five (5) days to be allotted for the debate on a motion for the approval of the Estimates of Revenues and Expenditure;

AND WHEREAS it is anticipated that the five days allotted by Standing Order No. 71(2) would be inadequate for the debate on the motion for the approval of the 2010 Estimates of Revenues and Expenditure,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That Standing Order No. 71(2) be suspended to enable the debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Revenues and Expenditure for the year 2010 to be extended to six (6) days.

(Notice Paper No. 423 (M122 Govt 77) published on 2010-02-08)

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

MOTION

BUDGET SPEECH 2010 – MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2010

Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2010.

(Moved by the Minister of Finance on 2010-02-08)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Winston Murray

The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

While Mr. Desmond Fernandes was speaking to the motion the time for the suspension of the sitting was reached.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.30 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.30 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Mr. Desmond Fernandes continued and concluded his speech.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Minister of Labour

Mrs. Sheila Holder

The Minister of the Public Service

Ms Africo Selman

The Minister in the Ministry of Health

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 8.08 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.35 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Ms Vanessa Kissoon

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj

Mr. Parmanand Persaud

ADJOURNMENT

At 9.50 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, 16th February, 2010.

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

Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,

Public Buildings,

Brickdam,

Georgetown.

15th February, 2010.

