

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 37TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2012-2013) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY, 7TH FEBRUARY, 2013
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS,
BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN.

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (68)

Speaker (1)

The Hon Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (34)

(i) People's Progressive Party/Civic (34)

Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, O.E., M.P., Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

Hon. Clement J. Rohee, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs

Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P., Minister of Agriculture (Absent – on leave)

Hon. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica),
Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs

Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo),
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent – on leave)

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

Hon. Robert M. Persaud, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (Absent – on leave)

Hon. Dr. Jennifer Westford, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni),
Minister of the Public Service

2.

Hon. Dr. Bheri S. Ramsarran, M.P., Minister of Health

Hon. Mohamed I. Alli, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water

Hon. Dr. Frank C.S. Anthony, M.P., Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Hon. Brindley H.R. Benn, M.P., Minister of Public Works

Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice),
Minister of Education (Absent – on leave)

Hon. Ganga Persaud, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

Hon. Jennifer I.M. Webster, M.P., Minister of Human Services and Social Security

Hon. Pauline Campbell-Sukhai, M.P., Minister of Amerindian Affairs

*Hon. Dr. Nanda K. Gopaul, M.P., Minister of Labour

Hon. Alli Baksh, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam),
Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture

Hon. Norman A. Whittaker, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini),
Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Hon. Bishop Juan A. Edghill, M.S., J.P., M.P., Minister in the
Ministry of Finance

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P., Government Chief Whip

Mr. Manzoor Nadir, M.P.

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Bibi S. Shaddick, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

***Non-Elected Minister**

3.

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

Mr. Odinga Lumumba, M.P.

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

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

Dr. Vishwa D.B. Mahadeo, M.P.

Rev. Dr. Kwame A. Gilbert, M.P.

**Mr. Joseph Hamilton, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Health

Dr. Vindhya Vasini Persaud, M.S., M.P.

Mr. Cornel Damon, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam)

Mr. Faizal M. Jafarally, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

Members of the Opposition (33)

(ii) Members of A Partnership for National Unity(26)

Brigadier (Ret'd) David A. Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition

Dr. Rupert Roopnarine, M.P.

Ms Amna Ally, M.P., Opposition Chief Whip (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Dr. George Norton, M.P.

Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

****Non-Elected Member**

4.

Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P.

Lieutenant Colonel (Ret'd) Joseph F. Harmon, M.S.M., M.P.

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

Ms Dawn Hastings, M.P. (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Mr. Winston Felix, D.S.M., M.P.

Ms Jennifer J. Wade, M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)

Mr. Sydney Allicock, M.S., M.P.

Ms Africo Selman, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Desmond Trotman, M.P.

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

Mr. James A. Bond, M.P.

Mr. Ronald A. Bulkhan, M.P.

Mr. Jaipaul Sharma, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Mabel Baveghems, M.P.

Mr. John Adams, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)

Mr. Christopher A. Jones, M.P.

Mr. Richard Allen, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

Mr. Renis Morian, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice)

Miss Annette N. Ferguson, M.P.

5.

(iii)Members of The Alliance For Change (7)

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

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

Mrs. Catherine Hughes, M.P.

Mrs. Valerie Garrido-Lowe, M.P.

Dr. Veersammy Ramayya, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

Ms June Eula Marcello, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)

Mr. Trevor Williams, M.P.

OFFICERS

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 2.21 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read the prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

1. **Sympathy to the Relatives of the four year old boy in Linden**

The Speaker, on behalf of Members of the Assembly and himself, expressed sympathy to the relatives of the four year old boy who was brutally killed in Linden on Wednesday, 6th February, 2013.

6.

2. **Sympathy to the Family of the Former Chancellor of the Judiciary, Professor Aubrey Bishop**

The Speaker also, on behalf of Members of the Assembly and himself, expressed sympathy to the family, relatives and associates of former Chancellor of the Judiciary, Professor Aubrey Bishop who died on Wednesday, 6th February, 2013.

3. **Visit of Students from Regima Primary School in Region 10**

The Speaker welcomed thirty three Grade 6 students and teachers of the Regima Primary School, Region 10 to the Parliament Chamber to observe the proceedings at that sitting.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

By the Minister of Finance:

- (i) The Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Electricity Corporation Inc. for the year ended 31st December, 2009.

(Circulated)

- (ii) The Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Electricity Corporation Inc. for the year ended 31st December, 2010.

(Circulated)

- (iii) The Audited Financial Statements of the Guyana Electricity Corporation Inc. for the year ended 31st December, 2011.

(Circulated)

- (iv) Financing Agreement **No. 4969-GY** dated September 30, 2012 between the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the International Development Association for SDR 6,200,000 for the University of Guyana Science and Technology Support Project.

(Circulated)

/...7

7.

- (v) Dollar Credit Line Agreement dated October 30, 2012 between the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana and the Export-Import Bank of India for US\$19,000,000 for the purpose of setting up a Multi-Speciality Hospital.

(Circulated)

- (vi) Government Concessional Loan Agreement signed on November 2, 2012 between the Government of the Republic of Guyana and the Export-Import Bank of China **GCL No. (2012) 32 Total No. (434) No. 1420203052012112030** for Renminbi Yuan ¥825,000,000 for the Cheddi Jagan International Airport Expansion Project.

(Circulated)

- (vii) Agreement dated December 20, 2012 between the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana and the Government of the Russian Federation on releasing the Cooperative Republic of Guyana from repayment of the debt owed to the Russian Federation for US\$277,490.24.

(Circulated)

ORAL QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

1. Death of Ms Tirtawattie Shonandeo at the New Amsterdam Hospital

Ms Annette Ferguson, M.P., asked the Minister of Health the following question:

“The Stabroek News of 3rd February, 2013, reported that Ms Tirtawattie Shonandeo died at the New Amsterdam Hospital while undergoing surgery at the institution on Sunday, 20th January, 2013, due to a power failure.

- (i) Could the Honourable Minister of Health explain to the National Assembly what were the reasons of the malfunctioning of the generator at the New Amsterdam Hospital?

/...8

8.

- (ii) Are there alternative systems in place in the event of generator failures?
- (iii) Have disciplinary action been taken against the attendants who reportedly neglected their duty?
- (iv) What systems are in place to avoid such reoccurrence? ”

Thereafter, the Minister of Health replied.

Dr. George Norton, M.P., asked the Minister of Health supplementary questions.

Thereafter, the Minister of Health replied.

Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, M.P., asked the Minister a supplementary question.

Thereafter, the Minister of Health replied.

2. **Payment of Security Services Guards in Region No. 10**

Ms Vanessa Kisson, M.P., asked the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development the following questions:

- (i) “Could the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development outline clearly the procedure involved for the paying of security services contracted by Region 10 and what arrangements are in place to ensure that these contracted services are paid on time?”

9.

- (ii) Does the Ministry or Region has in place appropriate arrangements to ensure companies honour their obligations to employees, including wages that were agreed upon – the guards are receiving \$1.20 as against \$1.43 which they should have received also uniform benefits and NIS contributions?”

Thereafter, the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development replied.

Ms Vanessa Kissoon, M.P., asked the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development a supplementary question.

Thereafter, the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development replied.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Replies

1. CARIFORUM NEGOTIATORS

Member Asking: **Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Foreign Affairs**

During the course of her closing comments in the debate concerning the ratification of the CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) on 10th May, 2012, Minister Rodrigues-Birkett claimed that “we have learned many things from that process, Caricom in particular. We have learned that we must pay our own negotiators. We must not let people who are negotiating with pay our negotiators. We are now negotiating with Canada and we have taken that decision because there were times when one could not differentiate from (SIC) who is paying and who was negotiating. I must say that I say some of that here today...”

10.

Would the Minister be good enough to say:-

- (i) In which particular EPA negotiations she participated, what evidence she has to support this claim of malfeasance on the part of CARIFORUM negotiators and which other CARIFORUM state has made such a complaint?
- (ii) Attached is the list of Members of the CARIFORUM's College of Negotiators for the EPA, would the Minister please indicate:
 - (a) Which of these persons was paid for their services?
 - (b) Which were paid by the EU, who requested that they be paid and the mechanism by which they were paid?
- (iii) What proportion of the cost of the EPA negotiations was borne by CARIFORUM member states?
- (iv) How does the funding arrangements for the Canada/CARICOM negotiations differ from that of the EPA in relation to the payment of negotiators and the funding of the workshops and negotiating sessions?

(Notice Paper No.122 (Q 68 Opp. 67) published on 2013-01-07)

Answers:

- (i) "The Minister of Foreign Affairs was involved with the negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between CARIFORUM countries and the European Union.

To be clear, as a matter of principle, CARICOM decided that following the experience with the EPA negotiations all future negotiation sessions will be paid for

/...11

by Member States of CARICOM. As a result, the budget of CARICOM's Office of Trade Negotiations (OTN) which replaced the Regional Negotiating Machinery (RNM) includes a specific budget for CARICOM-Canada negotiations which is ongoing.

- (ii) Please refer to Standing Order 17(1). The Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs is not responsible for the payment of the CARIFORUM College of Negotiators which comprises several CARICOM nationals and therefore cannot provide this information.
- (iii) Please refer to Standing Order 17(1). The responsibility for payment by all CARIFORUM Member States does not fall within the purview of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.
- (iv) The budget of the CARICOM Office of Trade Negotiations (OTN) includes a budget for CARICOM-Canada Negotiations. This is paid for by Member States of CARICOM. The Head of the OTN reports to the Secretary General including on matters related to funding. This was not the case with the EPA.”

2. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT – HOPE CANAL CONSTRUCTION

Member Asking: Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Natural Resources and Environment

- (i) Since the provisions of the Environmental Protection Act 1996 made it a requirement that environmental impact assessments be done in relation to projects which include dams or constructions designed to hold liquid or store it, why was not an environmental impact assessment (EIA) done on the Hope Canal construction?

- (ii) Was this omission to carry out an environmental impact assessment on the Hope Canal construction, not a violation of the Environmental Protection Act 1996?
 - (iii) Did the Developer of the Hope Canal Project submit any data to the Environmental Protection Agency?
 - (iv) Did the Environmental Protection Agency publish any information on the Hope Canal Project more particularly as to whether the Project may or may not significantly affect the environment?
 - (v) Was an Environmental Authorisation issued by the Environmental Protection Agency? Could a photocopy be issued to the National Assembly?
 - (vi) If some alternative called an Environmental Plan was submitted, could a copy of that Plan be shared with the National Assembly?
- (Notice Paper No.123 (Q 69 Opp. 68) published on 2013-01-07)**

Answers:

- (i) “The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received an application for Environmental Authorisation (Environmental Permit) on September 10, 2009, for the proposed construction of the East Demerara Water Conservancy Northern Relief Structure at Hope/Dochfour. The Agency reviewed the information submitted and conducted a site visit of the proposed development on September 11, 2009. Based on findings from the assessment conducted during the site visit and the information submitted, the Agency determined that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was not required but an Environmental Management Plan would be required for the Project. This decision (EIA not required) was communicated to the Developer.

Additionally, it must be noted that from the scope of work to be conducted for the project, the foreseen environmental impacts could be mitigated to a satisfactory level. The EMP submitted was used in identifying feasible and effective measures that should be implemented to reduce the environmental impacts related to the project. Subsequently, an EMP was submitted and a Construction Permit was issued.

- (ii) According to the Environmental Act 1996, Part IV section (11)(2)(b), a project would be required to conduct an EIA, if the potential environmental impacts are unclear and may be significant to the environment. As it relates to construction of the Hope Canal Project, these stipulations were not applicable. The requirement to carry out an EIA was therefore not an omission, nor a violation of the Environmental Protection Act, 1996.
- (iii) The Developer of the construction of Hope Canal Project submitted the following information to the Environmental Protection Agency:
- Feasibility Study for the Project;
 - Guyana Floods – UNDAC- Geotechnical and Hydraulic Assessment of the East Demerara Water Conservancy Dam – February, 2005;
 - NDIA – Hydrological and Hydraulic Modeling Studies – CEMCO/SRKN’gineering/Mott McDonald – June 18, 2009; and
 - GOG Task Force for Infrastructure Recovery – Infrastructure Rehabilitation – Short to Medium Term Plan – 12th July, 2005 – Mott McDonald.
- (iv) The Agency issued four (4) types of Environmental Authorisation (Environmental Guidance for the Development, Implementation and Operation of Projects, August, 2006). These are:
- No Objection Letters;
 - Environmental Permits;

14.

- Construction Permits; and
- Operational Permits.

Since the environmental impacts of this project were known, not significant, and were mitigatable, the Agency decided that a Construction Permit should be issued. For such Permits, a Public Notice is not required.

- (v) An Environmental Authorisation (Construction Permit) valid for two years was issued on October 2, 2012, by the Environmental Protection Agency. A copy of the Environmental Authorisation issued is attached.
- (vi) See Plan attached.”

3. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR THREE (3) LAND FILLING SITES

Member Asking: Ms Jennifer Wade, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

On 28th November, 2012, a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) was signed for three (3) land filling sites. Could the Honourable Minister say to this Honourable House:-

- (a) What criteria were used in identifying these sites?
- (b) Were there any consultations with the residents in the various areas?
(Notice Paper No.124 (Q 70 Opp. 69) published on 2013-01-07)

Answers:

- “The process of identification of sites for the purpose of establishing land fill sites commenced in 2004 as part of the IDB/GOG Urban Development Programme (UDP).

- A consultant was appointed in 2004 and several consultations were held across the RDCs, NDCs and Municipalities during 2004 and 2005, involving Chairpersons and Councillors and other stakeholders in each Local Authority Area. Additional consultations were held in those Local Authority Areas, in which the twenty two (22) possible sites were identified in Regions 1 to 10, excluding Region No. 4.
- Verification and validation exercises were conducted to ensure that the sites identified were land owned by the State. Hence the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC) was actively involved in this process.
- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was paid by the Project to conduct the standard evaluation and necessary tests to determine the suitability of the sites identified.
- Subsequently 15 sites were found to be suitable by the EPA; this was communicated to the UDP in 2005. Three (3) such approved sites were identified in Region No. 5.

Location of sites

- West of Burma Road
- St. John-Firebrace
- Zore-en-hoop
- The EPA subsequently developed a document which clearly outlined the requirements for the operation of the Land Fill sites in the areas identified.
- The signing of the MOU on 28th November, 2012 along with all the others which were signed in 2012 was therefore taking a process which started in 2004 closer to its implementation state.
- I am very happy that in 2013, our country will have Landfill sites across the other nine (9) Administrative Regions in Guyana and those sites will be operated in strict compliance with the EPA's guidelines for such sites.”

4. **TOLL FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN TO CROSS THE BERBICE RIVER BRIDGE**

Member Asking: Ms Jennifer Wade, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Public Works

The cost for a school child to cross the Berbice River Bridge is eight hundred (\$800.00) dollars daily. Could the Honourable Minister say to this Honourable House if there are plans to reduce the toll for school children in 2013?

(Notice Paper No.125 (Q 71 Opp. 70) published on 2013-01-07)

Answer:

“The Berbice Bridge Company Inc. charges toll for the different classes of vehicles, and not for passengers. At present the fare to cross the bridge is \$2,200 for mini buses and cars.

At present there are no plans to reduce the toll in 2013.

However, Transport and Harbours Department of the Ministry of Public Works operates a ferry service across the Berbice River between Rosignol and New Amsterdam. The fare for school children using the ferry is \$60 per return trip if they pay daily or \$200 monthly if they purchase a contract.”

5. **SYNTHETIC TRACK AT LEONORA**

Member Asking: Mr. John Adams, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

- (i) Could the Honourable Minister say to this Honourable House the status of the synthetic tract at Leonora, West Coast Demerara?

- (ii) How much money has been expended so far on this project?
- (iii) What is the projected date of the completion of this project?
(Notice Paper No.126 (Q 72 Opp. 71) published on 2013-01-07)

Answers:

- (i) “The Project is divided into three phases:
- (a) **Phase 1** – was done by Courtney Benn Contracting Services Ltd.
- (b) **Phase 2** – has 6 Lots:
- **Lot 1** – Laying synthetic surface – this component has been awarded to Regupol. This is incomplete because the track foundation must be laid before this is done.
 - **Lot 2** – Completion of Track Foundation and Section “D” – BK International awarded works ongoing. Schedule date for completion is February, 2013.
 - **Lot 3** – Construction of inner field and drainage system – Eagle’s Transportation and General Construction awarded works about 90% complete.
 - **Lot 4** – Construction of Boundary Fence and Ticket Booths – JPM’s General Construction was awarded. Contractor was terminated for non-performance. The remaining work was subdivided into 4 sub-lots and retendered. Two new companies Bhola Nauth Ramraj and Andre Howard Construction Services were awarded these contracts. Works are about 26% completed.
 - **Lot 5** – Construction of Internal Roads and Associated Structures – this contract was awarded to Pioneer General Construction. Works ongoing about 10% completed.

18.

- **Lot 6** – Construction of Northern Stands – this contract was awarded to BK International. Work to commence within the next month.
- (c) **Phase 3** – these projected works would be tendered after budget approval in 2013.
- **Lot 1** – Construction of the Southern Stands
 - **Lot 2** – Construction of Sanitary Facilities
 - **Lot 3** – Construction of Club House and Pavilion
 - **Lot 4** – Construction of Eastern Parking lot.
- (ii) The cost of contracts awarded in Phases 1 & 2 is 651 million Guyana dollars. Payment made to various contractors for works completed is 374 million Guyana dollars.
- (iii) Phase 2 projects are projected for completion during 2013. Phase 3 projects are expected to commence in 2013 and be completed by the end of 2014.”

6. NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND POLICY

Member Asking: Ms Vanessa Kissoon, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

Could the Honourable Minister inform this Honourable House whether her Ministry will be abolishing the no child left behind policy? If so, how soon?

(Notice Paper No.127 (Q 73 Opp. 72) published on 2013-01-07)

Answer:

“The Ministry of Education has implemented a “non-repetition and automatic promotion” policy. This policy was introduced because the research has shown that repetition does not automatically translate better performance. Research by the Ministry found:

1. The students at risk for failing would pass some of their subjects but fail others.
2. These students require special attention; they must be identified early, informed early and remedial work done by both teacher and parent.
3. Repetition generally places the burden of underperformance solely on the student and absolves the parents, teachers and school.
4. Teachers sometimes do not complete the curriculum for a given term, so that the examination will cover material that was not taught in school. If the child fails in these circumstances then it is not their fault but that of the system.
5. Repetition is directly linked to dropout rates. Findings in the secondary schools have shown among first repeaters approximately 65% would drop out of school and among second repeaters 90% would drop out of school. This phenomenon is disproportionately affecting boys.
6. Repetition places a psychological burden on the child that is left behind while their peers move ahead. They repeaters are often labeled as failures.

These findings guided the Ministry of education to adopt a more enlighten approach since 2010, this included:

1. Replace repetition with systematic and consistent remediation. The policy emphasizes early diagnosis and intervention. Teachers should consistently measure the competence levels of their students and devise early intervention strategies to prevent problems.
2. Remediation will be done during the July – August vacations and mandatory afterschool remediation programs in all schools throughout the academic year have been implemented.

3. Early intervention to decrease the probability of failure. The Ministry has introduced several strategies for both primary and secondary levels.
4. The Ministry has been reorienting teachers towards adopting a more student-centered, competency –based approach to education. This approach will ensure early detection of problem students and measures would be put in place to prevent them.
5. Parent-teacher conferences and consistent performance updates are now required of all schools to inform parents of their children’s performance so any deficiencies could be collectively addressed. No longer should parents be informed at the end of the term that a student has failed. Imminent failure should be recognized, discussed and effectively addressed by all parties involved.

The Ministry of Education has started a series of consultations on this particular policy since June, 2012. These consultations are ongoing and the feedback received will inform the future direction of this policy.”

7. COMPULSORY NURSERY EDUCATION

Member Asking: **Ms Vanessa Kissoon, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Education**

Could the Honourable Minister inform this Honourable House whether her Ministry will be:-

- (i) Making Nursery Schools in Guyana compulsory?
- (ii) If, yes, how soon and if no, why?

(Notice Paper No.128 (Q 74 Opp. 73) published on 2013-01-07)

Answer:

“Nursery Education in Guyana is not compulsory in Guyana. The period of compulsory

education is from age 5 years 9 months to 15 years. Recent research has shown the importance of Early Childhood Education. These findings have led many to advocate for compulsory nursery education. Despite this however, no country in Caricom has implemented this policy as yet.

The Government of Guyana has a draft Education Bill that includes a provision to make Nursery Education compulsory. This Bill is currently under discussion.”

8. FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF THE CYRIL POTTER COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Member Asking: Ms Vanessa Kissoon, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

- (i) Could the Honourable Minister inform this Honourable House why the first year students of the Cyril Potter College of Education 2010-2011 have to pay thirty eight thousand (\$38,000.00) dollars for laptops?
- (ii) Could the Honourable Minister inform this Honourable House and the people of Guyana, whether the first year students of the Cyril Potter College of Education 2010-2011 would receive the laptops that were meant for them?

(Notice Paper No.129 (Q 75 Opp. 74) on 2013-01-07)

Answers:

- (i) “Government of Guyana and the World Bank are funding the Guyana Improving Teaching Education Project. On page 25 of the Project’s Operational Manual it states, “that there will be a cost sharing for the procurement of net-books for the first

year DE students, De Tutors and lecturers at CPCE and UG. IDA will subsidize 50% of the cost of the netbook and the recipient will finance the other 50%.” As per agreement netbooks were provided to the batch of students who entered College in September, 2011. The students paid \$38,000, while staff members paid \$40,000.00.

- (ii) The Government of Guyana made available for the 2010 and 2012 batch of students who graduated from the ADE Programme. Of these 165 teachers have collected their netbooks. The two remaining centers Linden and Georgetown were notified, but to date have not collected their netbooks. They will be receiving 11 and 43 netbooks, respectively. These 219 netbooks were provided free of cost.”

9. PUBLIC DEBT

Member Asking: **Mr. Moses Nagamootoo, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Finance**

- (i) Can the Hon. Minister say what was the total public debt (both foreign and local) in US and Guyana dollars equivalent, as at September 30, 1992?
- (ii) Can the Hon. Minister say what was the public debt in US and Guyana dollars equivalent, as at March 30, 2012?
- (iii) Can the Hon. Minister confirm that the public debt at 31st December, 2010 was G\$338,432,786,000.00 (three hundred and thirty eight billion, four hundred and thirty two million, seven hundred and eighty six thousand dollars)? If not, what is the accurate amount?

- (iv) Can the Minister confirm that the public debt as at 31st December, 2011 was G\$378,850,385,000.00 (three hundred and seventy eight billion, eight hundred and fifty million, three hundred and eighty five thousand dollars)? If not, what is the accurate amount?

(Notice Paper No.130 (Q 76 Opp. 75) published on 2013-01-09)

Answers:

- (i) “The total public debt (both external and domestic) as at September 30, 1992 stood at US\$2,087.99 million, equivalent to G\$263,086.5 million (at an exchange rate of G\$126/US\$1).
- (ii) The requested total public debt position as a March 30, 2012 is not readily available since debt stock statistics are typically compiled at the end of each quarter. Accordingly, the closest available date of reporting would be March 31, 2012. The total public debt as at March 31, 2012 stood at US\$1,743.04 million, equivalent to G\$355,580.39 million (at an exchange rate of G\$204/US\$1).
- (iii) The total public debt stock as at December 31, 2010 stood at G\$312,180.26 million (at an exchange rate of G\$203.5/US\$1). The amount of G\$338,432.786 million cited in the question is sourced from the Central Government Statement of the Public Debt as included in Report of the Auditor General for the year ended December 31, 2010. Because that statement relates to the Central Government, the amount shown would have included debts owed by the Central Government to other public sector agencies, principally debentures issued by the Central Government to the Bank of Guyana, and would have excluded debts owed by public sector entities other than the Central Government, principally debts owed by the Bank of Guyana and other parastatal agencies.

- (iv) The total public debt stock as a December 31, 2011 stood at G\$350,574.81 million (at an exchange rate of G\$203.75/US\$1). The amount of G\$378,850.385 million cited in the question is sourced from the Central Government Statement of the Public Debt as included in the Report of the Auditor General for the year ended December 31, 2011. As before, because that statement relates to the Central Government, the amount shown would have included debts owed by the Central Government to other public sector agencies, principally debentures issued by the Central Government to the Bank of Guyana, and would have excluded debts owed by public sector entities other than The Central Government, principally debts owed by the Bank of Guyana and other parastatal agencies.”

For Oral Reply

10. NATIONAL SPORTS POLICY

Mr. Christopher Jones, M.P., asked the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport the following questions:

WHEREAS it was reported in the Stabroek News of Wednesday, 9th January, 2013, that representatives of FIFA and CONCAF will be visiting Guyana shortly to seek reconciliation in the long running chaos between GFA and GFF;

AND WHEREAS the administration of cricket is in a similar state of chaos;

- (i) * Could the Honourable Minister state whether there exist, a National Sports Policy and, if so, what is the state of implementation of this Policy?

25.

- (ii) * Could the Honourable Minister also confirm that a National Sports Policy document was prepared by a Doctor Hick from Canada with assistance from UNDP and what has happened to that document?

(Notice Paper No.132 (Q 77 Opp. 76) published on 2013-01-16)

Thereafter, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport replied.

Mr. Christopher Jones, M.P., asked the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport supplementary questions.

Thereafter, the Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport replied.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS, INCLUDING POLICY STATEMENTS-

At 3.15 p.m., the Members of the Opposition withdrew from the Chamber.

Reform of the Security Sectors in Guyana

The Minister of Home Affairs made a statement on re: Reform of the Security Sectors in Guyana.

At 3.23 p.m., the Members of the Opposition returned to the Chamber.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) **GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS**

BILLS – Second Readings

ITEM 1 - CUSTOMS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2013 – Bill No. 2/2013 published on 2013-01-08

At the request of the Minister of Finance the second reading of the following Bill was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Customs Act.

(Read a first time on 2013-01-10)

ITEM 2 - LOCAL AUTHORITIES (ELECTIONS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2013 – Bill No. 3/2013 published on 2013-01-09

The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Local Authorities (Elections) Act to provide for the postponement of elections of councillors of local democratic organs.

(Read a first time on 2013-01-10)

Mr. Ronald Bulkan spoke to the motion.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.05 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.10 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

27.

Assembly resumed the debate on the Local Authorities (Elections) (Amendment) Bill 2013.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

The Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Mr. Renis Morian

The Minister in the Ministry of Finance

Dr. Veersammy Ramayaa

Mr. Basil Williams

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 7.12 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.20 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

Assembly resumed the debate on the Local Authorities (Elections) (Amendment) Bill 2013.

Thereafter, the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

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

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 were passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the Local Authorities (Elections) (Amendment) Bill 2013 was read a third time and passed as printed.

/...28

ITEM 3 - SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (APPEAL) (AMENDMENT) BILL

2013 – Bill No. 6/2013 published on 2013-01-25

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Court of Appeal Act and the High Court Act.

(Read a first time on 2013-01-25)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Basil Williams
Bibi Shaddick
Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan
Mr. James Bond

At 9.50 p.m., Mrs. Deborah Backer, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, seconded by Mr. Basil Williams, M.P., moved a motion for the suspension of Standing Order No. 10(1) and (2) for the sitting to continue beyond 10.00 p.m., to consider motions for the first readings of two Private Members' Bills.

At 9.52 p.m., the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs moved a motion for the suspension of Standing Order No. 10(1) for the Assembly to continue beyond 10.00 p.m., to conclude the Supreme Court of Judicature (Appeal) (Amendment) Bill 2013. The motion was put a negative on the following division:

AGAINST

Mr. T. Williams
Ms Marcello
Dr. Ramayaa
Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

FOR

Mr. Jafarally
Mr. Damon
Dr. Persaud
Rev. Gilbert

Mrs. Hughes
 Mr. Nagamootoo
 Mr. Ramjattan
 Ms Ferguson
 Mr. Morian
 Mr. Allen
 Mr. Jones
 Mr. Adams
 Ms Baveghems
 Mr. Sharma
 Mr. Bulkan
 Mr. Bond
 Ms Kissoon
 Mr. Trotman
 Ms Selman
 Mr. Allicock
 Ms Wade
 Mr. Felix
 Ms Hastings
 Mr. Scott
 Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon
 Mr. Greenidge
 Mrs. Backer
 Dr. Norton
 Mrs. Lawrence
 Mr. B. Williams
 Dr. Roopnarine
 Brig. (Ret'd) Granger

Dr. Mahadeo
 Mr. Seeraj
 Mr. Neendkumar
 Mr. Chand
 Ms Shaddick
 Mrs. Chandarpal
 Mr. Nadir
 Ms Teixeira
 Bishop Edghill
 Mr. Whittaker
 Mr. Baksh
 Mrs. Campell-Sukhai
 Ms Webster
 Mr. G. Persaud
 Mr. Benn
 Dr. Anthony
 Mr. Ali
 Dr. Ramsarran
 Dr. Westford
 Dr. Singh
 Mr. Nandlall
 Mr. Rohee
 Mr. Hinds

Thereafter, the debate on the Supreme Court of Judicature (Appeal) (Amendment) Bill 2013 resumed.

Mr. Manzoor Nadir also spoke to the motion.

Thereafter, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

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

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 3 were passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the Supreme Court of Judicature (Appeal) (Amendment) Bill 2013 was read a third and passed as printed.

ITEM 4 - TELECOMMUNICATIONS BILL 2012 – Bill No. 18/2012 published on 2012-08-09

At the request of the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs the second reading of the following Bill was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the establishment of the Telecommunications Agency and for a regular, coordinated, open and competitive telecommunications sector and for matters incidental thereto or connected therewith.

(Read a first time on 2012-08-09)

ITEM 5 - PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2012 – Bill No. 17/2012 published on 2012-08-09

At the request of the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs the second reading of the following Bill was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Public Utilities Commission Act.

(Read a first time on 2012-08-09)

(ii) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTIONS

ITEM 6 - THE APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TO INVESTIGATE THE INCIDENCE OF CRIMINAL VIOLENCE FROM 2004 TO 2010 IN GUYANA

At the request of Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition, consideration of the following motion was deferred:

WHEREAS, Article 138(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Guyana prescribes that no person shall be deprived of his life intentionally save in the execution of the sentence of a court in respect of an offence under the Laws of Guyana of which he has been convicted;

AND WHEREAS in accordance with the Commission of Inquiry Act, Chapter 19:03, "The President may issue a commission appointing one or more commissioners and authorizing such commissioner or commissioners to inquire into any matter in which an inquiry would, in the opinion of the President, be for the public welfare";

AND WHEREAS this country has witnessed a pattern of unlawful killing of undetermined numbers of persons – including assassinations; executions; murders; extra-judicial killings by members of the Guyana Police Force Target Special Squad and other forms of criminal violence in Guyana during a period of ‘troubles’ on the East Coast and East Bank of Demerara and elsewhere – which were harmful to the public welfare;

AND WHEREAS several of these killings have been of a deliberate and systematic nature – particularly those which occurred at Agricola; Bartica; Buxton; Eccles; Lindo Creek; Lusignan and Bel Air, Bourda and Kitty in Georgetown – which can be classified as massacres and have engendered alarm and despondency among the population;

AND WHEREAS some killings involved members of the Guyana Police Force, the Guyana Defence Force and unidentified criminal gangs in which gangsters were equipped with a variety of electronic ‘eavesdropping’ equipment, weapons and vehicles that were provided with assistance and support by members of the Guyana Police Force;

AND WHEREAS commissions of inquiry and coroners’ inquests have not been conducted into some unnatural deaths and criminal investigation reports by the Guyana Police Force, with regard to the most egregious of these crimes, have often been inconclusive;

AND WHEREAS the National Assembly is the supreme legislative forum of our Republic wherein the people’s elected representatives discuss and determine matters of national interest and which is obliged to consider the grave threats to the public welfare and public security which prevailed during the aforesaid period of the ‘troubles’ and which remain substantially uninvestigated,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly condemns the killing of citizens of Guyana which occurred during the period of the 'troubles' and expresses its concern that commissions of inquiry have not been convened to investigate the unlawful killings, including the assassination of a Minister of the Government in April, 2006, on the East Coast of Demerara;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly calls upon the President of Guyana, in accordance with the Commission of Inquiry Act, Chapter 19:03, to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to inquire into the unlawful killing of citizens during the years 2004 to 2010.

(Notice Paper No. 112 (M47 Opp 29) published on 2012-12-12)

ITEM 7 - THE CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2013 – Bill No. 4 of 2013

Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P., moved 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 Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2013 – Bill No. 4 of 2103:-

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Constitution of Guyana in accordance with Article 164 of the Constitution of Guyana.

(Notice Paper No. 133 (M 56 Opp.33) published on 2013-01-16)

The Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs spoke to the motion.

The motion seeking leave of the Assembly to have the Bill be read a first time was put and carried on the following division:

FOR

Mr. T. Williams
Ms Marcello
Dr. Ramayaa
Mrs. Garrido-Lowe
Mrs. Hughes
Mr. Nagamootoo
Mr. Ramjattan
Ms Ferguson
Mr. Morian
Mr. Allen
Mr. Jones
Mr. Adams
Ms Baveghems
Mr. Sharma
Mr. Bulkan
Mr. Bond
Ms Kissoon
Mr. Trotman
Ms Selman
Mr. Allicock
Ms Wade
Mr. Felix
Ms Hastings
Mr. Scott

AGAINST

Mr. Jafarally
Mr. Damon
Dr. Persaud
Rev. Gilbert
Dr. Mahadeo
Mr. Seeraj
Mr. Neendkumar
Mr. Chand
Ms Shaddick
Mrs. Chandarpal
Mr. Nadir
Ms Teixeira
Bishop Edghill
Mr. Whittaker
Mr. Baksh
Mrs. Campell-Sukhai
Ms Webster
Mr. G. Persaud
Mr. Benn
Dr. Anthony
Mr. Ali
Dr. Ramsarran
Dr. Westford
Dr. Singh

35.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon
Mr. Greenidge
Mrs. Backer
Dr. Norton
Mrs. Lawrence
Mr. B. Williams
Dr. Roopnarine
Brig. (Ret'd) Granger

Mr. Nandlall
Mr. Rohee
Mr. Hinds

32

27

Thereafter leave was granted and the Clerk read aloud the title of the Bill.

ITEM 8 - THE FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY (AMENDMENT)

BILL 2013 – Bill No. 5 of 2013

Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P., moved 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 Fiscal Management and Accountability (Amendment) Bill 2013 – Bill No. 5 of 2103:-

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act 2003.

(Notice Paper No. 134 (M 57 Opp.34) published on 2013-01-16)

The Minister of Finance spoke to the motion.

/...36

The motion was then put and carried.

Thereafter leave was granted and the Clerk read aloud the title of the Bill.

ITEM 9 - RESTORATION OF GEORGETOWN

At the request of the Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P., consideration of the following motion was deferred:

WHEREAS Georgetown is the capital city of Guyana, commonly known as ‘Garden City of the Caribbean’;

AND WHEREAS the expanded boundaries of the city of Georgetown have placed severe strain and pressures on the drainage systems. In addition the heavy siltation of canals, the dumping of refuse and various other kinds of items which block drains, the lack of maintenance of the outfall channels have all led to poor drainage of the city;

AND WHEREAS refuse collection and disposal have reached a critical point where large amounts of garbage are being dumped on street corners, open spaces and canals, creating public nuisance and health hazards;

AND WHEREAS many construction sites continue to block drains and dispose of waste on city parapets and in many instances create stagnant pools of water that encourage the breeding of mosquitoes;

AND WHEREAS the Georgetown City Council is unable to carry out its mandate as prescribed in the Municipal and District Councils Act of 1969 and the Local Democratic Organs Act of 1980, due to the severe under-collection of taxes, rents and fees as well as the miserly subvention received from Central Government,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly of the Parliament of Guyana commits its support towards the restoration of our Capital City, Georgetown;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly calls upon the Government to:

- (i) Utilize every machinery, work force, and agencies at its disposal and command in conjunction with the Georgetown City Council, Members of the National Assembly, the business and commercial sector, NGOs, Clubs and citizens in the removal of garbage, abandoned vehicles and builders waste as well as the desiltation of canals and alleyways over the next three (3) months in an effort to “Restore Georgetown to the Garden City of the Caribbean”; and
- (ii) That the Government establishes a Committee consisting of Members of Parliament, Officials of the Georgetown City Council, Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and the Ministry of Transport and Hydraulics to monitor the progress of the restoration of Georgetown and report to the National Assembly within four (4) months of the establishment of the Committee.

(Notice Paper No. 135 (M 58 Opp.35) published on 2013-01-22)

ADJOURNMENT

At 11.20 p.m., a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs to adjourned the Assembly to 2.00 p.m., on Thursday, 21st February, 2013 was put and negatived.

At 11.23 p.m., Mrs. Backer, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, seconded by Mrs. Volda Lawrence, M.P. moved an amendment to the Prime Minister's motion for the Assembly to adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Thursday, 14th February, 2013, was put and carried.

.....
HON. RAPHAEL G.C. TROTMAN, M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

7th February, 2013.