

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 49TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2012-2013) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 1.00 P.M.
ON TUESDAY, 16TH APRIL, 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

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

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

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

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

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. Bulkan, 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.

Ms Rennita L. Williams, 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 2.47 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read the prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Replies

1. **JOINT GUYANA-BRAZIL WORKING INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP**

Member Asking: **Mr. Ronald Bulkan, M.P.**

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

Could the Hon. Minister say-

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- (i) Which Regional Government/Private Sector/Civil Society/Amerindian Representatives of Regions 4, 8, 9 and 10 are Members of the joint Guyana-Brazil working infrastructure group, which met in Guyana on 20th – 21st February, 2013?
- (ii) If no Regional Representatives in each of the four above categories (RDC, Private Sector, Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples) are not represented on the joint Guyana-Brazil working infrastructure group, why not?
- (iii) Which representatives of Opposition Members of the National Assembly are Members of the joint Guyana-Brazil working infrastructure group, which met in Guyana on 20th -21st February, 2013?
- (iv) If no representatives of the Opposition Members of the National Assembly are Members of the joint Guyana-Brazil working infrastructure group, why not?
- (v) Does the Government of Guyana consider it important to include Opposition Members?

(Notice Paper No.168 (Q 105 Opp 103) published on 2013-03-25)

Answers:

- (i) The Regional Administration of Region 9 is represented on the Joint Working Group.
- (ii) The Joint Working Group is a technical one and comprises representatives from State Agencies of the Republic of Guyana and the Federative Republic of Brazil. The Regional Administration of Region 9 is included.
- (iii) The Joint Working Group is a technical one and does not include legislators from either of the two countries.

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(iv) See response to (iii)

(v) As mentioned before this is a joint technical working group. However, at the appropriate time the Government will be engaging the relevant stakeholders.

2. TRAIL BETWEEN LINDEN AND LETHEM

Member Asking: **Mr. Ronald Bulkan, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Public Works**

Could the Hon. Minister advise that further to and recalling the study carried out by Conservation International, Guyana and others for the IDB on the possible environmental consequences of converting the present trail between Linden and Lethem to an all-weather highway (in the Brazilian sense), how have these findings been taken up in the discussions?

(Notice Paper No.169 (Q 106 Opp 104) published on 2013-03-25)

Answer:

“The Government of Guyana has always attached critical importance to upgrading the trail between Linden and Lethem to an all-weather road. In fact, the National Development Strategy identifies this road project as the essential North-South link in the overall national transport network of Guyana.

The Government of Guyana, through the Ministry of Public Works, completed a feasibility study in 2012 for upgrading the trail between Linden and Lethem to an all-weather road. This study was funded by the Inter-American Development Bank, executed by SNC Lavalin of Canada, an International Consultancy Firm in collaboration with VIKAB, Guyana, a local partner, and received numerous specialist inputs such as from Conservation International (Guyana). The

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study included detailed assessments of the potential social and environmental impacts of the construction of an all-weather road, and has identified strategies to be pursued in eliminating and/or mitigating these impacts.

At the same time, the Government of Guyana has diligently pursued under the auspices of the initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA) for the recognition of the Linden-Lethem Road Project as essential to the physical integration of our continent. This has resulted in the Linden-Lethem Road Project being selected as one of thirty one from over five hundred other projects for inclusion in the Integration Priority Project Agenda of Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

The positive results of the feasibility study and the inclusion of the Linden-Lethem Road Project in UNASUR's Integration Priority Project Agenda have advanced the realization of this project. At this time, a technical working group of officials from Guyana and Brazil are tasked with developing a strategy for the realization of upgrading the trail between Linden and Lethem to an all-weather road. The working group includes officials of Guyana's Environmental Protection Agency and Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment to ensure that social and environmental aspects of the potential road project are considered prominently."

3. **TRAIL-LINK BETWEEN NORTHERN BRAZIL AND THE ATLANTIC COAST OF GUYANA**

Member Asking: **Mr. Ronald Bulkan, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Public Works**

Could the Hon. Minister state that with regard to persistent calls over the years for a rail link in order to carry faster and heavier traffic between Northern Brazil and the Atlantic Coast of Guyana, what comparative studies in both engineering and economics have been carried out in connection with this IIRSA-Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America-link?

(Notice Paper No.170 (Q 107 Opp 105) published on 2013-03-25)

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Answer:

“The Government of Guyana has diligently pursued under the auspices of the initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA) for the recognition of the Linden-Lethem Road Project as essential to the physical integration of our continent. This has resulted in the Linden-Lethem Road Project being selected as one of thirty one from over five hundred other projects for inclusion in the Integration Priority Project Agenda of Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

The Government of Guyana, through the Ministry of Public Works, completed a feasibility study in 2012 for upgrading the trail between Linden and Lethem to an all-weather road. The study was funded through the Inter-American Development Bank’s Integration Infrastructure Fund, which was established to support cross-border projects designed to reduce transport and logistics costs to expand trade.

The feasibility study alternative road options, but not rail. The previous pre-feasibility study has identified a marginal economic feasibility for a paved road project, so that it was not likely that a more expensive rail project would be feasible. The feasibility study corroborated this finding since a paved road project was found to be feasible at an estimated cost of two hundred million United States Dollars, well below what would be required to construct a rail link. Notwithstanding this, the construction of a rail link can be considered if substantial new generators of goods are created in Northern Brazil.”

4. **TRAIL-LINK BETWEEN SURINAME AND BRAZIL**

Member Asking: **Mr. Ronald Bulkan, M.P.**

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

Could the Hon. Minister advise that given negotiations between Suriname and Brazil for one or more similar linking highways are already well-advanced, what coordination mechanisms are in

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place, are under discussion, or are planned in order to prevent duplication and wastage of resources as well as unnecessary and social damage?

(Notice Paper No.171 (Q 108 Opp 106) published on 2013-03-25)

Answer:

The Minister of Foreign Affairs has ascertained that the information provided by the Member is incorrect in so far as it relates to negotiations being “well advanced.”

**5. VISIT BY THE MINISTER OF AMERINDIAN AFFAIRS TO THE NORTH
PAKARAIMAS**

Member Asking: **Mr. Ronald Bulkan, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Amerindian Affairs**

Could the Hon. Minister say-

- (i) Why the duly elected Regional Democratic Council of Region No. 8 was not invited to nominate at least one (1) of its Members to be a part of Minister Sukhai’s delegation, which visited the North Pakaraimas and a continuation of the one started in 2012 and why the Hon. Minister chose instead to have two Members from the appointed element of the Regional Administration to accompany her?
- (ii) Could the Hon. Minister also state why she chose appointed people of the Regional Administration instead of RDC councilors to accompany her?

(Notice Paper No.172 (Q 109 Opp 107) published on 2013-03-25)

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Answers:

- (i) The Policy followed for any intending Ministry of Amerindian Affairs Ministerial Visit/Outreach to the Regions is that the Ministry of Local Government is duly informed. By virtue of that notification, from time to time as scheduled; officials from the Region do accompany the Minister's Outreach Team.

For the Region 8 outreach, the above protocol was followed.

- (ii) I had no part in selecting appointed people of the Regional Administration for the visit to the North Pakariamas, Region #8.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) **GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS**

MOTION

BUDGET SPEECH 2013 – MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2013

Before the Assembly commenced the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 2013, the Speaker gave a Ruling on, "The Admissibility of a motion in the name of Hon. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P. to amend 2013 Budgetary Estimates"

The following Members spoke to the Speaker's Ruling:

Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan

The Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs

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The Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2013.

In Committee of Supply

The following Agencies and Programmes in the Estimates of Expenditure were considered and approved by the Committee as presented with the respective amounts allocated thereto:

04 - MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Current Expenditure

041 Development of Foreign Policy

042 Foreign Policy Promotion

043 Development of Foreign Trade Policy

Capital Expenditure

041 Development of Foreign Policy

042 Foreign Policy Promotion

043 Development of Foreign Trade Policy

Assembly resumed

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.45 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.53 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

In Committee of Supply

The following Agencies and Programmes in the Estimates of Expenditure were considered and approved by the Committee as presented with the respective amounts allocated thereto:

52 - MINISTRY OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Current Expenditure

- 521 Main Office
- 522 Ministry Administration
- 523 Attorney General's Chambers
- 524 State Solicitor
- 525 Deeds Registry

Capital Expenditure

- 521 Main Office
- 522 Ministry Administration
- 524 Office of the State Solicitor
- 525 Deeds Registry

55 - SUPREME COURT

Current Expenditure

- 551 Supreme Court of Judicature
- 552 Magistracy

Capital Expenditure

- 551 Supreme Court of Judicature
- 552 Magistrates' Department

56 - PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

Current Expenditure

- 561 Public Prosecutions

Capital Expenditure

- 561 Public Prosecutions

14.

Assembly resumed

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 7.32 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 8.02 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

In Committee of Supply

The following Agencies and Programmes in the Estimates of Expenditure were considered and approved by the Committee as presented with the respective amounts allocated thereto:

21 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Current Expenditure

- 211 Ministry Administration
- 213 Fisheries
- 214 Hydrometeorological Services

Capital Expenditure

- 211 Ministry Administration

- 212 Crops and Livestock Support Services
- 213 Fisheries
- 214 Hydrometeorological Services

Assembly resumed

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

At 9.52 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Standing Order No. 10(1) was suspended to enable the Assembly to continue with its consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 2013 uninterrupted.

In Committee of Supply

The following Agencies and Programmes in the Estimates of Expenditure were considered and approved by the Committee as presented with the respective amounts allocated thereto:

41 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Current Expenditure

- 411 Main Office
- 412 National Education Policy
 - Implementation & Supervision

- 413 Ministry Administration
- 414 Training and Development
- 415 Education Delivery

Capital Expenditure

- 411 Main Office
- 412 National Education Policy
 - Implementation & Supervision
- 413 Ministry Administration
- 414 Training and Development
- 415 Education Delivery

Assembly resumed

ADJOURNMENT

At 11.57 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Wednesday, 17th April, 2013.

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

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

16th April, 2013.