

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 55th SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST
SESSION (2012-2013) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON WEDNESDAY, 24TH 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 (Absent)

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 (Absent – on leave)

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**

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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

Ms Deslyn West, Table Officer

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 2.24 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read the prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker made the following announcements:

(i) Article in Stabroek News re Voting against Estimates for Region # 7

“Hon. Members in today’s edition of the Stabroek News, Wednesday, 24th April, 2013, at page 22 the headline states, “Estimates for Region 7

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6.

passed with Opposition abstention” and it has a photograph of the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development.

I am assured by the Deputy Speaker, that at no time when the vote was put for Region 7 expenditures, both Current and Capital, that there was any abstention by any component of the Opposition or the whole. They may have been quiet, but there was no vote taken to have deemed them to have abstained. I have since satisfied myself that quietness should not be misinterpreted for a refusal to participate in the vote because it does and would have sent the unwanted message that there was something wrong with the vote or the expenditures budgeted for Region 7. I thought that I should correct that.”

(ii) Events pertaining to the Sitting on 23rd April, 2013

“Events as they unfolded last evening. I have since seen and heard statements, some of which are attributed to the Speaker and staff of the Parliament Office. I wish to state that unlike the rules of the High Court of Guyana and in particular Order 26, Rules 11 and 12, which we lawyers use, there is no reference in the Standing Orders of the National Assembly of Guyana for a slip rule. The slip rule really is that if there is an error the Court or Judge may make a correction to that and that is provided for in the High Court Rules. These Rules allow for errors to be corrected or they give a general power to the Court to amend. We have no such rules in our Standing Orders. The business of making amendments to the Estimates is a very serious and precise one and it must be approached carefully and clinically. In last night’s instance, the vote was taken and the point was raised afterwards by the Government’s Chief Whip. After consultation with the Clerk, I ruled that it was not possible to go back to correct what had been voted on. I dealt with what was placed before this House and I applied the relevant Standing Orders.

7.

If the figures were wrong, then neither the Speaker nor the staff can be blamed for that. The Standing Orders are clear that an amendment cannot be made for a sum greater than the amount budgeted. Also, based on my Ruling of just last week that the Standing Orders must be strictly interpreted and applied, I was obliged to rule as I did. Prior to my ruling, I cautioned that the consequences of voting against the entire programme would be the result that several other line items would be struck down and the vote was proceeded on.

Finally, I will take no responsibility for any mistakes and neither would sit back and allow myself, the Clerk or any member of the Parliament Office to be made scapegoats or pawns of convenience in this sordid matter.”

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Replies

1. NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION PASSED AGAINST REO, REGION NO. 8

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

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development**

Could the Hon. Minister inform Members of the National Assembly what actions he has taken in relation to the No-Confidence Motion that was passed against REO Harsawack of Region No. 8?

(Notice Paper No.173 (Q 110 Opp 108) published on 2013-03-25)

The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development did not pass copies of the answer to the above question to the Clerk of the National Assembly for circulation to Members at that sitting as required by Standing Order No. 22(4).

8.

2. **PROTOCOL RELATING TO AN APPOINTED OFFICIAL OF A REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION**

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

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development**

Could the Hon. Minister inform Members of the National Assembly what is the protocol relating to an appointed official of a Regional Administration committing the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development for the provision of goods and services and in particular, if Mr. Harsawack is empowered to commit the Region in the absence of approval of the RDC?

(Notice Paper No.174 (Q 111 Opp 109) published on 2013-03-25)

The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development did not pass copies of the answer to the above question to the Clerk of the National Assembly for circulation to Members at that sitting as required by Standing Order No. 22(4).

3. **COMMUNITY SERVICES ENHANCEMENT PROJECT**

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

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development**

In 2006, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and Government of Guyana initiated the project named at the caption and which had as its purpose/objective, to prepare four communities for their upgrading to municipalities, these being, Bartica, Charity, Parika and Supenaam.

9.

- (i) Could the Hon. Minister provide the relevant details for the Communities Services Enhancement Project, which was initiated in 2006 and give information on its current status?
- (ii) Could the Hon. Minister say which other communities have been added to the four previously identified and for similar upgrading in status, if any?

(Notice Paper No.175 (Q 112 Opp 110) published on 2013-03-25)

The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development did not pass copies of the answers to the above question to the Clerk of the National Assembly for circulation to Members at that sitting as required by Standing Order No. 22(4).

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS-

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

Mr. Desmond Trotman, M.P., made a statement re a letter he received from Hon. Clement Rohee, M.P., Minister of Home Affairs on his Budget Presentation for 2013.

Letter from Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P.

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P., made a statement re. a letter from Mr. Carl B. Greenidge, M.P., about the withdrawal of the 2013 Estimates of Expenditure.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) **GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS**

MOTION

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

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

(Moved by the Minister of Finance on 2013-03-25)

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:

24 - MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Current Expenditure

- 241 Ministry Administration
- 242 Natural Resource Management
- 243 Environmental Management

Capital Expenditure

- 241 Ministry Administration
- 242 Natural Resource Management
- 243 Environmental Management

**23 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM,
INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE**

Current Expenditure

- 231 Main Office
- 232 Ministry Administration
- 233 Commerce, Industry and
Consumer Affairs

Capital Expenditure

- 231 Main Office
- 232 Ministry Administration
- 233 Commerce, Industry and
Consumer Affairs

Assembly resumed

The Minister of Finance made a statement on Mr. Carl Greenidge's letter re the format of the 2013 Estimates of Expenditure.

Mr. Basil Williams and Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan also spoke on the matter.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 5.20 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 6.40 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

The Speaker gave a Ruling on his power with respect to the format of the 2013 Estimates of Expenditure.

12.

The Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

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:

45 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND WATER

Current Expenditure

451 Housing and Water

Capital Expenditure

451 Housing and Water

03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Current Expenditure

031 Policy and Administration

Capital Expenditure

031 Policy and Administration

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan moved the following amendment which was put and carried on the following division:

“ **Agency Code 03** – Ministry of Finance Capital Expenditure

Line Item 031 – Policy and Administration

Account Code and Description 031/3401000– Low Carbon Development Programmes be reduced to one billion (1,000,000,000) dollars”

FOR

Mr. T. Williams
 Ms Marcello
 Dr. Ramayya
 Mrs. Garrido-Lowe
 Mrs. Hughes
 Mr. Nagamootoo
 Mr. Ramjattan
 Ms Ferguson
 Mr. Morian
 Ms Williams
 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

AGAINST

Mr. Jafarally
 Mr. Damon
 Dr. Persaud
 Rev. Gilbert
 Dr. Mahadeo
 Mr. Seeraj
 Mr. Neendkumar
 Mr. Lumumba
 Mr. Chand
 Bibi Shaddick
 Mrs. Chandarpal
 Mr. Nadir
 Ms Teixeira
 Bishop Edghill
 Mr. Whittaker
 Mr. Baksh
 Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai
 Mr. G. Persaud
 Ms Manickchand
 Mr. Benn
 Dr. Anthony
 Mr. Ali
 Dr. Ramsarran
 Dr. Westford
 Mr. R. Persaud
 Dr. Singh
 Mr. Nandlall

14.

Dr. Norton

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. B. Williams

Ms Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brig.(Ret'd) Granger

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Dr. Ramsammy

Mr. Rohee

Mr. Hinds

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Assembly resumed

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

At 10.02 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.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

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:

Capital Expenditure

031 Policy and Administration

Thereafter, Line Item 031 – Policy and Administration was passed as amended.

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03 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Current Expenditure

032 Public Financial Management

Capital Expenditure

032 Public Financial Management

Assembly resumed

The Minister of Finance reported that the Committee of Supply had considered the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2013 and had approved of them as amended.

Thereafter, the motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2013 was put and carried.

BILL – FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

ITEM 2 - APPROPRIATION BILL 2013 – Bill No. 10/2013 published on 2013-03-26

With the Leave of the Speaker, and on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Standing Order Nos. 13 and 54 were suspended to enable the Appropriation Bill 2013 to be introduced at this stage and to be further proceeded with at that sitting.

On motions by the Minister of Finance, the following Bill was introduced and was read the first, second and third times and passed as amended:

16.

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of Guyana for the fiscal year ending 31st December, 2013, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.

BILL – Second Reading

ITEM 3 - FISCAL ENACTMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2013 – Bill No. 11/2013
published on 2013-04-09

The Minister of Finance moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Income Tax Act and the Property Tax Act.

(Read a first time on 2013-04-09)

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan spoke to the motion.

The Bill was then read a second time.

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

In Committee

Clauses 1 to 5 were passed as printed.

The Schedule was passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Finance, the Fiscal Enactments (Amendment) Bill 2013 was read a third time and passed as printed.

EXPRESSION OF THANKS

The Minister of Finance expressed thanks to Members of his staff, staff of the Parliament Office and the Media.

The Speaker joined the Minister of Finance in expressing thanks to staff of the Parliament Office, staff of the Ministry of Finance, staff of the various Ministries and Departments and the Media.

The Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs also joined in expressing thanks to everyone who participated in the consideration of the 2013 Estimates of Expenditure.

LABOUR DAY AND INDIAN ARRIVAL GREETINGS

Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition, extended best wishes to all workers on May Day and the descendants of Indian Immigrants on Arrival Day

The Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs joined the Leader of the Opposition in extending holiday greetings for May Day and Arrival Day.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10.27 p.m., on a motion by the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m., on Tuesday, 7th May, 2013.

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

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

24th April, 2013.