

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 61ST 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, 25TH JULY, 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 (Absent – on leave)

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

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 (Absent – on leave)

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 (Absent)

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 (Absent – on leave)

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 (Absent)

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) (Absent)

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-Williams, 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 Hermina Gilgeours, Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (a.g.)

COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

The Sitting commenced at 2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read the prayers.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Replies

1. **AGREEMENT/CONTRACT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA
AND TELEVISION GUYANA INC.(TVG)**

Member Asking: Mrs. Catherine Hughes, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

6.

- (i) Can the Hon. Minister provide copies of the Agreement/Contract between the Government of Guyana and Television Guyana Inc. (TVG) for the use of TVG's teleport/transmission facilities to broadcast the Learning Channel?
- (ii) Can the Hon. Minister state when the tender for the provision of this service was advertised and in which media?
- (iii) How much money has been paid over to Television Guyana Inc. (TVG) to date for the provision of these services?
- (iv) What is the duration of this contract/contractual arrangement – yearly, monthly or indefinite?
- (v) How many persons are employed by the Learning Channel and from which communities are they?
- (vi) Does the Learning Channel (the Company) possess its own satellite receivers/dishes?
 - (a) If yes, in which geographical location/communities are they located?
 - (b) If yes, when were these purchased? From whom were they purchase and at what cost? Would the Hon. Minister provide copies of such Purchase Agreements?
- (vii) How many antennas does the Learning Channel utilise and in what geographical areas?
- (viii) In what geographical areas does the Learning Channel utilise the equipment of Digicel, GT&T or any other network for the broadcast of its programming?

(Notice Paper No.188 (Q 114 Opp 112) published on 2013-06-06)

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7.

The Minister of Education 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).

2. **DEATHS WHICH OCCURRED AT GOVERNMENT-FUNDED DORMITORIES/HOSTELS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE HINTERLAND REGIONS**

Member Asking: Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P.,
Leader of the Opposition

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

- (i) Could the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly of the names of persons who have died by suicide or other causes in Government-Funded Dormitories/Hostels attached to Secondary Schools in the Hinterland Regions of Guyana between January, 1999 and April, 2013?
- (ii) Could the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly of the actual dates, the names of the schools of each of these events?
- (iii) Could the Hon. Minister inform the National Assembly whether inquiries have been conducted into any or all of these events and whether, as a result of the findings of those inquiries, if any, there has been remedial action to prevent recurrences?
(Notice Paper No.190 (Q 116 Opp 114) published on 2013-06-06)

The Minister of Education 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).

9.

4. **THE LEARNING CHANNEL**

Member Asking: Ms Amna Ally, M.P.,
Opposition Chief Whip

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

- (i) Could the Hon. Minister list the locations in Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 which are reached by the Learning Channel?
- (ii) Could the Hon. Minister furnish the National Assembly with a programme guide that is disseminated to those Regions?

(Notice Paper No.203 (Q 126 Opp. 124) published on 2013-07-03)

The Minister of Education 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).

5. **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Member Asking: Ms Amna Ally, M.P.,
Opposition Chief Whip

Minister Answering: The Minister of Education

- (i) Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly whether the IT equipment given to Secondary Schools is in use and functional?
- (ii) Could the Minister list the schools where IT equipment is not functional?
- (iii) How soon will such equipment be functional?

(Notice Paper No.204 (Q 127 Opp. 125) published on 2013-07-03)

The Minister of Education 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).

6. THE CARIBBEAN PRESS

Member Asking: **Mr. Trevor Williams, M.P.**

Minister Answering: **The Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport**

- (i) Could the Hon. Minister state if there is an establishing document governing the mandate, mission and management of the Caribbean Press? If yes, please provide a copy. If no, why not?

- (ii) Could the Hon. Minister say if there is an annual or biennial plan of action for the management of the Press? If yes, please provide a copy. If no, why not?

- (iii) Former President Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo committed US\$100,000 (\$20M) in 2008 to the establishment of what eventually became the Caribbean Press. Could the Hon. Minister indicate how much has been spent in total on the Press from 2009 to 2012?

- (iv) Could the Hon. Minister say what was the remuneration paid, if any, to Consultants in establishing the Press and who were they?

- (v) Could the Hon. Minister state what are the books edited, proofed, layouts, designed and printed?

- (vi) Could the Hon. Minister state what are the specific administrative costs associated with the Press?

11.

- (vii) Could the Hon. Minister state what are the costs on average – mean of high figure and low figure – associated with the production of a single title? What is the mode average?
- (viii) Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly what were the full editorial services costs associated with the Press in 2010 to 2012, by year?
- (ix) Could the Hon. Minister indicate what were the full layout and design costs associated with the Press in 2010 to 2012, by year?
- (x) Could the Hon. Minister indicate what were the full printing costs associated with the Press in 2010 to 2012, by year?
- (xi) Could the Hon. Minister state what was the full shipping and storage costs associated with the Press in 2010 to 2012, by year?
- (xii) Could the Hon. Minister provide the National Assembly with an exact breakdown of the books that were distributed in Guyana, by title, location and number of copies, as of 20th June, 2013?

(Notice Paper No.205 (Q 128 Opp. 126) published on 2013-07-03)

Answer:

See Appendix

At 2.12 p.m., the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary, in accordance with Standing Order No. 11(1), moved a motion for the adjournment of the Assembly to 2.00 p.m. on 7th August, 2013.

12.

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Moses Nagamootoo
Ms Gail Teixeira
Mr. Basil Williams
Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon

Thereafter, the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs replied.

The motion for the adjournment of the Assembly was put and negatived on the following division:

AGAINST

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

FOR

Mr. Jafarally
Mr. Damon
Dr. Persaud
Rev. Gilbert
Dr. Mahadeo
Mr. Seeraj
Mr. Neendkumar
Mr. Lumumba
Mr. Chand
Ms Shaddick
Mrs. Chandarpal
Mr. Nadir
Ms Teixeira
Bishop Edghill
Mr. Baksh
Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai

Ms Kissoon
 Mr. Trotman
 Ms Selman
 Mr. Allicock
 Ms Wade
 Mr. Felix
 Mrs. Hastings-Williams
 Mr. Scott
 Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon
 Mr. Greenidge
 Mrs. Backer
 Dr. Norton
 Mr. B. Williams
 Ms Ally
 Dr. Roopnarine
 Brig. (Ret'd) Granger

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Ms Webster
 Ms Manickchand
 Mr. Benn
 Dr. Anthony
 Mr. Ali
 Dr. Ramsarran
 Dr. Westford
 Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett
 Mr. Nandlall
 Mr. Rohee
 Mr. Hinds

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

Attempt to Postpone the Sitting of the National Assembly

A request by Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition, to move the adjournment of the Assembly to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, to wit, an attempt by the Government to postpone the Sitting of the National Assembly, was disallowed by the Speaker. Notwithstanding, Brig. (Ret'd) Granger was allowed to make a brief explanatory statement on the matter.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS

BILLS – Second Readings

ITEM 1 - 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 2 - 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)

ITEM 3 - FISCAL TRANSFERS BILL 2012 – Bill No. 20/2012 published on 2012-08-09

Due to the absence of the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the second reading of the following Bill, which was referred to a Special Select Committee on 9th August, 2012, was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to provide for the objective criteria for the allocation of resources to local authorities and for matters connected therewith.

(Read a first time and committed to the Special Select Committee on 2012-08-09)

ITEM 4 - MUNICIPAL AND DISTRICT COUNCILS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2012 – Bill No. 19/2012 published on 2012-08-09

Due to the absence of the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the second reading of the following Bill, which was referred to a Special Select Committee on 9th August, 2012, was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Municipal and District Councils Act.

(Read a first time and committed to the Special Select Committee on 2012-08-09)

ITEM 5 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2012 – Bill No. 12/2012 published on 2012-07-31

Due to the absence of the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the second reading of the following Bill, which was referred to a Special Select Committee on 9th August, 2012, was deferred:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the Local Government Act.

(Read a first time and committed to the Special Select Committee on 2012-07-30)

ITEM 6 - LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION BILL – Bill No. 13/2012 published on 2012-07-31

Due to the absence of the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the second reading of the following Bill, which was referred to a Special Select Committee on 9th August, 2012, was deferred:

16.

A BILL intituled AN ACT to establish the Local Government Commission, as provided for by Article 78A of the Constitution, to provide for the Commission's functions and procedure, and for connected and incidental purposes.

(Read a first time and committed to the Special Select Committee on 2012-07-30)

(ii) PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

MOTION

ITEM 7 - APPOINTMENT OF A COMMISSION OF INQUIRY TO INVESTIGATE THE INCIDENCE OF MARITIME AND RIVERINE INCIDENTS, INJURIES AND DEATHS

Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, M.S.S., M.P., Leader of the Opposition, moved the following motion:

WHEREAS the Constitution of the Co-operative of Guyana prescribes at Article 40(1) that "Every person in Guyana is entitled to the basic right to a happy, creative and productive life, free from hunger, ignorance and want;"

AND WHEREAS several persons have been robbed of their potentially "happy, creative and productive" lives by suffering injury, pain and discomfort; by being killed, or losing personal possessions and property as a result of accidents caused by negligence or as a result of deliberate acts on this country's waterways or coastal waters;

AND WHEREAS it is apparent that riverine traffic is increasing in volume, composition and complexity; that there is competing use of the waterways between riverine villagers who are obliged to rely on boats, sometimes canoes, corials and balahoos to go about their daily lives and other users including barges and tugs carrying commodities and other vessels involved in trade;

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 authorising 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,”

BE IT RESOVLED:

That the National Assembly declares its concern over the incidence of maritime and riverine incidents, especially those which result in the loss of human life; expresses its sympathy with the victims – and to the families of the victims – of maritime and riverine accidents and asserts the responsibility of the State to protect all of its citizens; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly calls upon the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, in accordance with the Commission of Inquiry Act, Chapter 19:03, to appoint a Commission of Inquiry to inquire into maritime and riverine incidents which have occurred since 1st January, 1999, to determine the extent of such incidents and to make recommendations for safe travel and the protection of life on this country’s waterways and coastal waters.

(Notice Paper No. 197 (M 77 Opp.47) published on 2013-06-24)

The Minister of Public Works spoke to the motion.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

At 4.32 p.m., the sitting was suspended for refreshments.

RESUMPTION OF SITTING

At 5.40 p.m., the sitting was resumed.

18.

The Assembly resumed the debate on the motion.

The following Members also spoke to the motion:

Mr. Winston Felix

The Minister of Agriculture

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Joseph Harmon

Thereafter Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger replied.

The motion was then put and carried.

(iii) **COMMITTEES BUSINESS**

MOTION

ITEM 8 - ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE DEEDS REGISTRY (AMENDMENT) BILL 2012 – BILL NO. 11 OF 2012

At the request of the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (Chairman of the Special Select Committee on the Deeds Registry (Amendment) Bill 2012), consideration of the following motion was deferred:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Report of the Special Select Committee on the Deeds Registry (Amendment) Bill 2012 – Bill No. 11/2012 be adopted.

(Notice Paper No. 226 (M 78 Committee 4) published on 2013-07-18)

EMANCIPATION GREETINGS

The Speaker extended Emancipation Greetings to all Guyanese, especially those of African descent. Brig. (Ret'd) David Granger, Mr. Trevor Williams and the Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs joined the Speaker in extending Emancipation Day Greetings to all Guyanese.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6.35 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, 7th August, 2013.

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

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam,
Georgetown.

25th July, 2013.