

COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD SESSION
OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT 2006 -2008**

**THIRD PERIODIC REPORT
OF THE
PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE
ON
SOCIAL SERVICES**

RESOLUTION NO. 19 OF 2003

PERIOD:

SEPTEMBER 28, 2006 – AUGUST – 2008

**PRESENTED TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE**

ON

22ND JANUARY, 2009

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DECLARATION

This is the Third Periodic Report to the National Assembly on the status of the work of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services, pursuant to the requirements of paragraph 4(ix) of Resolution 19 passed by the National Assembly on May 15, 2003.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services (PSCSS)

- 1.1 The PSCSS is one of the four (4) Sectoral Committees which was established by Resolution No.19 of May 2003 of the National Assembly of the Eighth Parliament. Resolution No. 19 gives effect to the Constitutional provisions of Article 119B of the Constitution of Guyana.
- 1.2 The Committee has responsibility for the oversight of the Executive and authority to determine areas of government activity for scrutiny.
- 1.3 During the period September 28, 2006 to August 31, 2008 of the first session of the Ninth Parliament, the PSCSS continued with the execution of oversight of the Executive. Also during this period the Committee made significant strides in its work since both Members of the Committee and Executive acquired a better understanding of the role of the Committee within the context of Parliamentary oversight. Notwithstanding its achievements, the work of the Committee in some areas was stymied by a number of constraints.
- 1.4 This report highlights the issues raised, the concerns and suggestions discussed during the Committee's meetings with Ministers and public officials, and the visits made by the Committee to areas of concern. The recommendations contained herein emanated largely from the Committee's examination of the information obtained during its interactions

with the Members of the Executive and the staff of Ministries and Agencies, which fall under the purview of the Committee.

2.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

2.1 During the period September 28, 2006 to August - 2008, the membership of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services constituted the following seven permanent Members and two Alternate Members who were nominated by the Committee of Selection on December 14, 2006.

Members nominated on December 14, 2006

Members of the People progressive Party/Civic (PPPC)

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P	Member
Mr. Norman A. Whittaker, M.P	Member
Mrs. Shirley Edwards, J.P, M.P	Member
Mrs. Philomena Sahoye –Shurry, C.C.H, J.P, M.P	Member
Mr. Albert Atkinson, J.P, M.P	Alternate Member

Member of the People’s National Congress/Reform (PNC/R)

Ms. Amna Ally, M.P	Member
Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence	Member
Mr. Ernest B. Elliot, M.P	Alternate Member

Member of the Alliance for Change (AFC)

Ms. Chantalle L. Smith, M.P

Member

Change in Membership

The above named Members except for Ms. Chantelle Smith who tendered her resignation from the National Assembly on December 27, 2007 and was, by decision of the Committee of Selection replaced by Mrs. Latchmin Budhan-Punalall.

3.0 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

3.1 (a) At its first meeting on December 21, 2006 the Committee elected Ms. Amna Ally and Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal as the Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson, respectively.

(b) At elections held on November 30, 2007 Mrs. Chandarpal and Ms. Ally were elected Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, respectively of the Committee.

4.0 MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

4.1 During the period of reporting the Committee convened eighteen (18) statutory meetings.

The number and dates of the meetings are as follows:

Statutory Meetings

Meetings

Date of Meetings

1st Meeting

December 21,2006

2 nd Meeting	March 2, 2007
3 rd Meeting	March 16, 2007
4 th Meeting	April 13, 2007
5 th Meeting	May 11, 2007
6 th Meeting	May 25, 2007
7 th Meeting	June 8, 2007
8 th Meeting	June 22, 2007
9 th Meeting	July 13, 2007
10 th Meeting	November 16, 2007
11 th Meeting	November 30, 2007
12 th Meeting	January 11, 2008
13 th Meeting	25 th January, 2008
14 th Meeting	14 th March, 2008
15 th Meeting	11 th April, 2008
16 th Meeting	25 th April, 2008
17 th Meeting	7 th May, 2008
18 th Meeting	27 th June, 2008

5.0 FUNCTIONING OF THE COMMITTEE

5.1 The work of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services during the reporting period was consistent with its overall mandate and the list of functions stipulated in Resolution No. 19 of May 2003 (please see Appendix 1). The Work

Programme for the Committee during the period September 2006 – August 2008 is attached (Please see appendix II).

Mandate

5.2 The mandate of the Committee was derived from Paragraph 3 of Resolution No. 19 which emphasized that in the conduct of its scrutinizing function, the sectoral committees were empowered to ‘examine all policies and administration for each sector to determine whether the execution of government policy is in consonance with the principles of good governance and in the best interest of the people of Guyana”.

5.3 In order to discharge that mandate the Committee was empowered to scrutinize all areas of government activity, as well as to summon Ministers of Government and other public officials to provide information, to answer questions and give evidence.

6.0 COMMITTEE’S AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

6.1 The Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services has been given responsibility for the oversight of the following sectors and activities:

MINISTRY	RESPONSIBILITY
Culture, Youth and Sports	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Culture2. Archives & Museums3. Cinemas & Video Censorship

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. National Commemoration Committee 5. Youth Affairs 6. Sport
Education	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Primary, Secondary, Technical, Higher Education 2. Examination Local & Overseas 3. School Training 4. Book Distribution
Labor, Human Services & Social Security	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children Services 2. Adoption Services 3. Probation/Welfare 4. Operating an Advice Bureau for Women with Financial, Personal & Legal Problems. 5. Supervision of Government's Social Impact Amelioration Programme 6. Welfare of Senior Citizens 7. Social Security 8. National Relief 9. National Insurance Scheme 10. Co-op Society/Friendly Society

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Industrial Relations 12. Occupational Health & Safety 13. Statistical services 14. Recruitment & Placement
Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administrative Organisation 2. Public Services Personnel 3. Public Sector Training 4. Management services 5. Public Service Reform 6. Non PSC Administration Matters.
Amerindian Affairs	Amerindian Affairs
Attorney General & Legal Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General Legal Assistance of President 2. All Legal matters except where law assigns to another authority 3. Deeds Registry 4. State Solicitor 5. Public Trustee & Official Receivers Department
Office of the President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cabinet Matters 2. Defence/Territorial Integrity

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. National Security 4. State Solicitor 5. Public Information 6. National Art Collection.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health Services: Primary Health Care, Public Hospitals, Clinics etc. 2. Rehabilitation Services, Blood Bank, Pharmacy and Poison Boards etc.
Tourism Industry & Commerce	Consumer Affairs

6.2 During the period under review, the Committee, in keeping with its mandate and the Work Programme embarked on the following activities:

7.0 REQUESTED DOCUMENTATION

7.1 The Committee, for the purposes of its information and guidance requested the submission of certain documents from the following agencies with results as indicated.

Agency	Documents Requested	Comments
National Insurance Scheme	The number of pensioners that are being serviced at the different locations.	

Ministry of Education	(a) Schools to be educated on use of Traffic Lights in the City (b) Directory of School Boards (c) Functioning of School Boards (d) Manual for the Governance of Schools by Boards.	Received Received Received
Ministry of Human Services and Social Security.	Research on the problem of administering discipline in Schools	

8.0 **Presentations**

8.1 The Committee invited the following Officials and Ministers to appear before it and make oral presentations for the purpose of enlightening its Members on specific aspects of the operations of their agencies and Ministries.

(i) **The National Insurance Scheme (NIS)**

At its 5th Meeting of the Committee held on 11th May, 2007 the undermentioned delegation -

Mr. Patrick Martinborough - General Manager,

Mr. Terry Thomas – Assistant General Manager (Operations)

Ms. Holly Greaves – Research and Planning Manager,

Mr. D. Ramlall – Computer Manager, and

Ms. Doreen Nelson – Research and Information Systems Manager

appeared before the Committee and made an oral presentation on “*The Benefits of the National Insurance Scheme (NIS)*”

Following the presentation by the General Manager, the following issues were discussed and questions asked for the purpose of clarification.

- (ii) Goal of the NIS;
- (iii) Mission Statement;
- (iv) What the National Insurance Scheme Does;
- (v) How is the National Insurance Scheme Organised
 - Physically and Functionally
- (vi) Representation of Business
 - Who gets registered
 - Registration of Employees
 - Failure to register
- (vii) Enquiry about Contribution Records
 - Contribution records of employees
 - Drop in centers
- (viii) Processing of Pensions

Types of Pensions

Processing of old age pension

Extent of benefits

Qualifying Contributions

60 years

750 contributions

(ix) Processing of Medical Benefits

➤ Sickness

How to claim sickness benefit

Qualifying conditions

Industrial Injury benefit

How to claim for Injury Benefit

Extent of Benefits

(x) Decentralised Services

➤ Procedure for the Disabled Applicant

Alternative Arrangements for persons with disabilities

The presentation and the questions asked were recorded in the Verbatim Record of Proceedings. This can be accessed at the Parliamentary Library.

(ii) **Presentation by Ms. Bonita Harris**

Ms. Bonita Harris, Retired Mistress of Queens College, Ministry of Education, appeared before the Committee on May 25, 2007. She made a presentation on *“The Problem of Administering Discipline in Schools”*.

In her presentation Ms. Harris highlighted the following points:

Abuse of power by adults who are parents /guardians and even

the teachers of the children.

The absence of recreation from the curriculum guide in schools

Violence against children should be viewed as a crime

The high level of parental absence in the home contributes to indiscipline.

She emphasized that some children were often the victims of assault from their parents and teachers. Some of the offences of which the children were accused were also committed by adults e.g. lying, stealing, not helping, messing up, not eating, being disrespectful, cursing and fighting.

At the conclusion of the presentation, questions for the purpose of clarification were asked by Members.

(iii) Hon. Priya Manikchand, Minister of Human Services and Social Security

At the 6th Meeting of the Committee held on Friday, May 25, 2007 the Hon. Priya Manikchand assisted by the following team of advisers

Mr. Trevor Thomas-Permanent Secretary

Mr. Dindial Singh-Senior Social Services Officer

Mr. Neil Bacchus-Personal Assistant to Minister

made an oral presentation on the topics:

1. Public Assistance – the procedure for removing recipients, on the attainment of age fourteen (14),
2. Whether letters were sent to the parents of children on Public Assistance, advising them as to the age at which their entitlement to Public Assistance would cease.

The Honorable Minister in her presentation among other things advised the Committee that:

- (i) a number of persons who had attained the age of fourteen (14) years were still in receipt of Public Assistance
- (ii) the process for removing persons from the list of recipients of Public Assistance was largely guided by the advice of the “Board of Local Guardians” for each community. The Board has the authority to assess the circumstances of both the applicant and the family already in receipt of Public Assistance and advise the Social Services Officer from the Ministry accordingly.

At the conclusion of the presentation, questions for the purpose of clarification were asked by Members. A verbatim Record of the Proceedings can be accessed at the Parliamentary Library.

(iv) **Dr. Frank Anthony, Minister of Culture Youth and Sport.**

At the 7th meeting of the Committee held on June 8, 2007 the under mentioned delegation:

Dr, Frank Anthony –Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports

Mr. Keith Booker-Permanent Secretary

Mr. Conrad K. Plummer- Chairman of the National Sports Commission

Mr. Neendkumar, M.P.- Director of Sports

Mr. Carl Brandon- Director of Youth

Mr. Franklyn Lynch- (ag) Director of Training

appeared before the Committee and the Hon. Minister made an oral presentation on the following topics:

1. Job Creation for Youth
2. Regulations for Track and Field events in Sports.

In his presentation the Hon. Minister explained that:

(1) **Job Creation for Youths**

His Ministry was not responsible for the creation of jobs. It was however; involved in the development of Youths in various areas of skill. Some school drops outs benefitted from such skills training at the Kuru-Kuru Training Centre, the Sophia Training Center and the New Opportunity Corps.

(2) **Regulation for Track and Field Events**

- (a) While the National Sports Commission was involved in oversight it did not have regulatory functions.
- (b) The International Athletic Federation was the governing body for athletics and the local agency was an affiliate of that body.
- (c) The National Sports Commissions has relationships with about 28 associations.

At the conclusion of the presentation questions were asked for the purpose of clarification.

A Verbatim Record of the Proceedings can be accessed at the Parliamentary Library.

(vi) **Hon. Shaik Baksh, Minister of Education**

At the 9th meeting of the Committee held on Friday 13th July, 2007 the Honorable Shaik Baksh assisted by Mr. Vibert Hart – Co-ordinator, School Board Secretariat made an oral presentation on the topic:

“The functions of School Board vis-a-vis and other related matters given the level of conflict between School Administration and School Boards.”

In his approach to the topic he stated that:

- (a) except for a few isolated cases he was unaware of the existence of any other significant cases of conflict between School Boards and Administrations. He however, acknowledged that there were some areas of concern to his Ministry in relation to school administration.
- (b) The provision for the establishment of School Boards was to be found in the President's College Act No.11 of 1990
- (c) Schools with Boards were to be found in each of the ten geographical Regions with Region 4(Georgetown) having the majority of them
- (d) The establishment of School Boards was intended to facilitate the decentralization of the management of some Secondary schools.
- (e) The Ministry, in collaboration with school Board Members and School Administrators, was in the process of completing a "Manual for the Governance of Schools by Boards" (That Manual has since been completed and can be accessed at the Parliamentary Library).
- (f) The Ministry was working continuously at reducing any form of conflict between Boards and Schools' Administrators.

At the conclusion of the presentation questions were asked for the purpose of clarification.

A Verbatim Record of the Proceedings could be accessed at the Parliamentary Library.

(vii) **Hon. Manzoor Nadir, Minister of Labour**

At the 13th meeting of the Committee held on 25th January, 2008 the Hon. Manzoor Nadir and a team of advisors comprised of the following officers:

Mr. Trevor Thomas - Permanent Secretary

Mr. Bertrand Mc Arthur – Deputy Permanent Secretary

Mr. Mohamed Akeel - Chief Labour, Occupational Safety and Health Officer.

Ms. June Anne Brassington - Personal Assistant to Minister

Ms. Donna Shortt-Gill - Public Relations Officer

Ms. Corleen Cadogan - Labour, Occupational Health and Safety Officer

Mr. Charles Ogle – Labour, Occupational Health and Safety Officer

Mr. Ivelaw Henry – Statistics Head, and

Ms. Myrna Joseph – Deputy Labour, Occupational Health and Safety Officer

appeared before the Committee and made a power point presentation on the topic:

“The Ministry’s concern and activities in the area of Occupational Health and Safety.”

The Hon. Minister stated that his Ministry’s functions in the area of Occupational Health and Safety were aimed at:

- (1) enforcing compliance with the law on safety and health at work places.

In this regard, the measures employed were the use of seminars and

lectures, inspections and surveys at places of work and the prosecution of offenders.

- (2) In the year 2007 the Ministry combined the former Occupational Safety and Health Unit and the Labour Unit. This department was headed by the Chief Labour Occupational Safety and Health Officer.
- (3) There is a National Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health which comprises of persons of different skills from all industries as well as an active Secretariat. Thereafter the Minister informed the Committee on the work sites accident statistics for the year 2007.

A Statistical description on the activities of the Ministry was also made use of.

At the conclusion of the presentation questions were asked for the purpose of clarification.

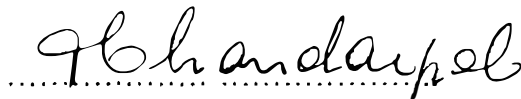
A Verbatim Record of the Proceedings can be accessed at the Parliamentary Library.

9.0 PROGRAMME OF VISITS

- 9.1 Resuming its programme of visits the Committee visited the following agencies/schools
 - (a) the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) Local Office (Fort Wellington, West Coast Berbice) – (August 6, 2007)
 - (b) the Helena Primary School, Mahaica East, Coast, Demerara - (April 11, 2008)

- (c) the Covent Garden Secondary School – East Bank , Demerara – (April 11, 2008)
- (d) the Lenora Secondary School, Lenora, West Coast Berbice – (May 23, 2008)

The details of those visits and recommendations made were recorded in short reports which are to be found at Appendices.


.....
Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P.
Chairperson

EIGHT PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA

SECOND SESSION (2002-2003)

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

RESOLUTION NO. 19

WHEREAS Article 119 B of the Constitution provides:

‘ .

There shall be parliamentary sectoral committees established by the National Assembly with responsibility for the scrutiny of all areas of Government policy and administration including (I) natural resources (ii) economic services (iii) foreign relations and (iv) social services

RESOLVED,

- 1. The Sectoral Committees shall consist of seven (7) members, four (4) representing the Government and three (3) representing the Opposition. The Government and Opposition are entitled to elect one alternate member each for each Sectoral Committee.**

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of each sectoral committee elected from opposite sides of the National Assembly and would alternate with two (2) Sectoral Committees each to be chaired by the Government Opposition respectively.

3. The committees shall, in the discharge of their scrutinising role, examine policies and administration, for each sector, to determine whether the executive government policy is in consonance with the principles of good governance and the best interest of all the people of Guyana.

4. The committees shall have the authority to:

- i Determine areas of government activity for scrutiny or specific examination;
- ii Request the Minister assigned responsibility for the sector to submit written or oral information, including government documents and records about any specific area of government policy and administration;
- iii Review existing legislation on government policy and administration for any of the sectors;

- iv** Summon persons to give evidence, scrutinise government documents, papers and records;
- v** Visit any government activity or project in Guyana as agreed and arranged by the Committee;
- vi** In the discharge of their mandate, utilise the services of experts, specialists and other sources of advice as they determine;
- vii** Establish a timeable for the conduct of their work;
- viii** Make recommendations to the National Assembly on legislation or any other action to be taken on matters falling within their purview;
- ix** Submit periodic reports to the National Assembly on their work; and
- x** Invite comments, from the Minister assigned responsibility for the sector on their recommendations or reports.

5. The National Assembly, notwithstanding the current work programme of any sectoral committee, may request the committee to give prompt attention to a particular aspect of the policy or administration of the government for a sector

6. The provisions of Standing Order No. 70A shall apply to the Sectoral Committees

AND FURTHER RESOLVED,

7. The Gazetted ministerial responsibilities shall be allocated to each Sectoral Committee in the manner set out in Schedule 1.

(Passed by the National Assembly on 15th May, 2003)


.....
S. E. ISAACS

Clerk of the National Assembly

**S. E. ISAACS
CLERK OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

APPENDIX 2

Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services- 2007 Work Programme

Ministry and the Minister Responsible	No. of Activities	Presentation and Visits	Assumed Time Frame March to August			
			May	June	July	Aug
Human Services and Social Security Hon. Minister Priya Manickchand	1) NIS	1) Invite the Public to submit written submissions on the NIS Education Programme	11 th			
		2) Presentation by NIS Officials on its Education Programme and issues affecting senior citizens.	11 th			
		3) Visit to NIS Locations		—	—	6 th
	2) Public Assistance Benefits	4) Presentation Hon. Minister Priya Manichand	25 th		—	
	3) Enquire about the compliment of staff and equipment for Senior Citizen Homes, and providing subvention for them.	5) Visit to the Senior Citizens Homes				
4) Homelessness and the Street Children attributed to increased violence in the society						
5) Distribution of School Uniforms for the unprivileged children.						

Education Hon. Minister Sheik Baksh	<p>1) The separation of functions and co-ordination of the School Boards</p> <p>2) Problems of Discipline in Schools: Administering Discipline in Schools.</p>	Presentation by Ms. Bonita Harris	25 th		—	
Home Affairs Hon. Minister Clement Rohee	(1) Traffic Issues	<p>Invite the Public to interact on these issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Prescribed Bus Stops > Traffic lights and the European Union on the > Transport System. 				—
Culture, Youth and Sport Hon. Minister Dr. Frank Anthony	<p>(1) Regulations for Track and field events in Sports,</p> <p>(2) Job Creation for Youths</p>	Presentation by Hon. Minister Dr. Frank Anthony.		8 th		
Labour Occupational Health and Safety Hon. Manzoor Nadir	1) The Ministry's concern and activities in the area of Occupational Health and Safety					

Committees Division
Parliament Office
Public Buildings
Georgetown
8th June, 2007

APPENDIX 3

Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services (PSCSS)

REPORT

Introduction

On Monday 6th August 2007 the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services (PSCSS) visited the Fort Wellington National Insurance Scheme Local Office. The meeting was organized for Members of the Committee to meet and become aware of some of the problems of the Claimants of NIS Old Age Pension and Survivors Benefits within the District.

The Members of the Committee and Staff arrived at the NIS Local Office at 9:25 a.m and commenced the meeting after a brief introduction to the staff of the office and the Claimants who were waiting in the waiting room.

Members of the Committee who attended the Meeting were:

Ms. Amna Ally	- Chairperson
Mrs. Volda Lawrence	- Member
Mr. Albert Atkinson	- Member
Mr. Ernest Elliot	- Member
Mr. Norman Whittaker	- Member
Mrs. Claudia Daniels- Greenidge	- staff of the Committee.

Members of the Staff of the NIS were:

Mr. Terry Thomas	- Assistant General Manager
Mr. Marlon Fraser	- Acting Office Manager of the Local Office
Ms. Jennifer Hazel	- Area Manager of New Amsterdam

The Committee heard the views and recommendations of several Claimants. Some of the issues raised were addressed and some of them were noted by the Assistant General Manager, NIS and his Local Office Manager (Acting).

The NIS Local Office at Fort Wellington is responsible for several villages and over two hundred Claimants and Pensioners. Of these Claimants sixteen (16) persons complained and were willing to seek an appeal for their grievances.

Problems raised and Recommendations by Pensioners and Claimants

1. Pensioners complained that the official date on which payments were made was too long a waiting period and the Clerk was not efficient in controlling the day's work. The waiting time was too long for more than 200 regular Claimants.

2. The Local Office server a wide area, from Blairmont to Mahaicony and several claims could be dealt with more efficiently if there were more NIS Offices and Staff, some of which could deal with the non- financial matters of the NIS.
3. Recommendations were made that the pensioners should be paid on the first working day rather than the first Monday of each month.
4. Another recommendation was that NIS pension should go 50% higher.
5. Mr. Joylall Bepat requested that Survivor's Benefit should be paid urgently. Claims forms were sent in but there were delays in the processing.
6. Enquiry about the Survivor's Benefit of one Claimant revealed that while the information was on the Local Office computer, the claim was in Georgetown for clarification. The Claimant questioned the need for the staff to send persons to the city for information from the NIS Head Office.
7. Appeal on a case for an "Invalid" Claimant was heard and the delay in the appeal case continued.
8. One pensioner was waiting in the office for a follow up on the field investigation concerning his grant which required a report from the NIS Local Office.
9. Appeals were made to NIS and it was found that the work on the appeal for the pensioner who had met the required contribution was being slowly conducted.

Response by the Assistant General Manager (AGM) Mr. Terry Thomas

The AGM stated that (a) the local office was going to ensure that the two small centres at Weldaad and Bath Settlement Villages would collect the NIS life certificates and books of claimants for urgent attention.

(b) that there would be a separation of the Tellers, one to attend to the Claimants for pensions and the other to attend to the non- financial matters brought by members of the public.

(c) there is a Reform Committee examining issues relative to the vouchers and payments at the moment. However, for the payment of the pensions on the first working day of the month it would have to be put to Parliament as it is a policy issue.

In respect of the proposal to change the day for payment of pensions from the first Monday to the first day of the month, the AGM stated, that this would require a policy decision.

The AGM advised Claimants and Pensioners to submit appeals urgently and this would be followed up in September 2007. Those persons who had queries with respect to survivor's benefit were advised that clarification could be sought through the Local Office computer networking. Appeals vary in time based on case by case, especially those from the tribunal. However, those for the case for an "Invalid" Claimant and Pensioner who had 1250 contributions were under examination.

The pensioner with the delayed report was asked to await follow up action to the issue promised during the day by the Area Manager.

Follow up by PSCSS Members

Members of the Committee undertook to follow- up the following:

The need for improvements in the manner and the timeliness with which the NIS Head Office responds to request from Claimants through their Local Office. It should be the onus of the Claimant to be seeking assistance/ information from Georgetown Office.

The need for clarity on established grounds of appeals especially in relation to NIS pension on the grounds of invalidity.

Survival Benefit for one Claimant was at the Local Office from May to August and the Committee requested of the Assistant General Manager that the Survivor Benefit be processed urgently.

The New Amsterdam Office Manager, Ms. Jennifer Hazel, promised the Committee she would follow up checks with the Local Office to have Mr. Miguel Ancil, a Claimant's case rectified.

Appeals vary in time based on the case but it was necessary that the Georgetown Claimants should not be always placed in first place appointment to the Local Office appointments.

The Committee promised to clarify with the Local Office which should reinforce the principle that the contributions should be verified and the Local Manager follow up the cases he promised.

*Committees Division
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Public Buildings
Brickdam Georgetown
2nd November, 2007*

APPENDIX 4

REPORT OF THE DELEGATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES (PSCSS) WHICH VISITED THE LEONORA SECONDARY SCHOOL ON FRIDAY, 23RD MAY, 2008

On Friday, 23rd May, 2008, a delegation of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visited the Leonora Secondary School.

The delegation comprised Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., Chairperson of the Committee and Mrs Latchmin Budhan-Punalall, M.P., with Mr. Oscar Moore, Clerk of the Committee.

The purpose of the visit was to examine the application of Government policy and administration by the Administrator of the school.

Arrival at the School

The delegation arrived at the Leonora Secondary School at 14.20 hours. In the absence of the Headmistress, Mrs. Cicely Margaret Springer who had stepped out briefly in response to an official call, the delegation was received by the DHM (ag) Ms Shivaugh Cadogan.

After reciprocal introductions, Mrs. Chandarpal explained the origins of and purposes for the establishment of the four Parliamentary Sectoral Committees viz:

- (a) Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Foreign Relations;
- (b) Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Economic Services;
- (c) Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Natural Resources; and
- (d) Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services.

and the specific purpose of the Committee's visit.

During the activities which followed the Headmistress joined the Deputy Headmistress and took the Committee on a conducted tour of the school. Members of staff and the pupils at each class were introduced to the Members of the delegation and advised as to the purpose of the visit.

After an assemblage of the students, they were addressed by Mrs. Chandarpal and Mrs. Budhan-Punalall. In the addresses they were encouraged to be obedient and studious in the course of their self-development and in preparation for service to Guyana. At one point when five students were invited to say what were their ambitions for life after school, their intimations were –

- (a) Engineer;
- (b) Lawyer
- (c) Teacher;
- (d) Fashion Designer; and
- (e) Doctor

The students were congratulated on their choices and encouraged to strive to achieve their goals. They were also advised to give consideration to the subject of agricultural farming seeing that there was a worldwide shortage of food, as a result of which the government was emphasizing a “Grow More Food” programme.

Following the tour of the school there was an in depth discussion with the Head Mistress, Deputy Headmistress and Ms. Cheryl Chase, Regional Education Officer, who had joined the meeting.

During the discussion the following issues were considered worthy to note

1. **STUDENTS**

(a)	<u>Student Population</u> (Boys -- 201) (Girls -- 258)	459
(b)	<u>Accommodation</u> The Upper Flat The Lower Flat	300 159
(c)	<u>Student Attendance</u> (Forms 1 – 5)	85%
(d)	Absenteeism	15%
(e)	Late Attendance	30%

The reason for both (d) and (e) was explained as the distance between the residences of the students, (as far as Vreed-en-Hoop and Crane) and the School.

- (f) School Drop Outs (average) 5%

2. **DISCIPLINE**

Good conduct averaged 80%

The parents of indisciplined students were usually invited to discussions with the Teachers. However, on occasions when the letters of invitation were sent to parents

through the students, the letters were not delivered. As a consequence, contact with parents was being made by telephone, where possible. Parents often doubted the complaints of indiscipline which were made about their children. That gave the impression that the children were well-behaved at home.

Often the children who were indisciplined came from single- parent homes.

3. **USE OF ILLEGAL DRUGS**

The number of reported cases was negligible.

4. **SKILLS TRAINING**

There was need for the provision of skills-training opportunities for out of school youths. Idleness often led them to in appropriate activities.

5. **CXC PASSES**

In the year 2007, the school achieved 75% passes with two top performers obtaining ten (10) and six (6) subjects, respectively .In recent years there has been improved performance in English Language. In mathematics, there was a small improvement.

6. **STUDENTS HEALTH CARE**

- (a) Three (3) students were found to have defective vision. One received eye-surgery;
- (b) where defective vision was detected, students were put to sit on the front benches;
- (c) rotation in seating arrangements, back to front and vice versa was implemented on the basis of observation e.g. idleness, in-attention and poor vision.

7. **STAFF ESTABLISHMENT**

<u>Complement</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Shortage</u>
3 (male)	16	8
<u>21 (female)</u>		
<u>24</u>		

8. **TEACHER /STUDENT RATIO**

- (a) General – 1 teacher to 20 students
- (b) Agricultural Division-1-400
- (c) Science-2-400

9. **TEACHER VACANCIES**

- 1 Science Teacher
- 1 Agricultural Science Teacher
- 1 Spanish Teacher
- 4 Heads of Divisions
- 1 Secretary (Non Teaching Post)
- 1 Senior Master/Mistress

10. **TOILET FACILITIES**

There was one toilet available to both male and female teachers.

11. **COMPUTER**

The school possessed only one computer that was located in the office.

12. **PARENT/TEACHERS ASSOCIATION**

There was a functioning Parent Teachers Association, a meeting of which was held only two days before the visit of the delegation.

The experience was that the parents, who could benefit most, seldom attended meetings. That delegation recommended that the Schools Welfare Officer should be invited to the meetings.

13. **SCHOOL BOARD**

The school was not a Board administered one.

14. **BUILDING**

The building was in good condition having been refurbished only two years ago. It was not Government owned but rented from the Maha Sabha Organisation.

Over time the school population had outgrown it. This resulted in very little space between classes on both floors. There was need for a new building.

15. **FENCE**

The fence and gate were in need of urgent repairs. Because of the state of disrepair, animals and vandals frequently entered the compound.

16. **DEPUTY HEADMISTRESS**

The substantive Deputy Headmistress, Ms. Jean Moffett has been on secondment to the Guyana Elections Commission, (GECOM) for the past two (2) years. Because of the

lengthy period, Members of the delegation expressed the view that the Ministry should consider appointing someone to fill the post.

17. **VENDORS**

The vendors operated under permission from the Maha Sabha. The School administration was, however, responsible for the inspection of their Food Handlers Certificates and the supervision of standards.

18. **CONCLUSION**

The delegation promised to follow up those issues which needed attention and were within the Committee's scope of authority.

*Committees Division,
Parliament Office,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam Georgetown.
24th June, 2008*

APPNEDIX 5

REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES (PSCSS)

INTRODUCTION

On Friday, 11th April, 2008 the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services (PSCSS) visited the Helena Primary School. The meeting was organized for Members of the Committee to meet with the school administration to observe and discuss the problems as well as the challenges.

The visiting delegation of the Committee comprised:

Ms. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P	- Chairperson
Mr. Ernest B. Elliot, M.P	- Member
Ms. Latchmin Budhan – Punalall, M.P	- Member
Ms. Savitah Samwaroo	- Assistant Clerk of Committee

The delegation of the Committee and Staff Member arrived at the School at 10: 15 a.m. There were reciprocal introductions of the Members of the Committee's delegation and the Headmistress and staff.

During the interview which followed the delegation posed questions and made recommendations to the Headmistress, Ms. Ira Tiwari. Some of the issues raised were answered and some of them were noted by the Headmistress.

The following issues were noteworthy:

- (a) The Helena Primary School has a population of five hundred and seven (507) students and a compliment of fifteen (15) Teachers.
- (b) Each class accommodates twenty five (25) to twenty eight (28) students.
- (c) There are remedial classes in place for students with slow learning ability. Those classes comprise forty (40) students from grades three (3) to four (4) and two extra staff members are assigned thereto.

EXISTENCE OF A PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)

In response to a query by the delegation, the Headmistress advised that until last year (2007) there was a Parent Teacher Association in place.

INVOLVEMENT IN EXTRA CURRICULA ACTIVITIES

On an annual basis the students of Helena Primary School are involved in activities such as the Mash Parade.

MEASURES IN PLACE FOR ABSENTEES

The Committee suggested that the headmistress should:

- a) consider the preparation of personal letters to parents of students who were absent from school, inviting them to a meeting to discuss their children's welfare.
- b) discuss with the Regional Education Officer the possibility of having the one hundred (100) students from Mahaica Primary transferred to Helena Primary School.

OLD STUDENT ASSOCIATION

It was recommended that measures such as the establishment of an Old Students' Association for the raising of funds to facilitate the acquisition of goods and services for the benefit of the school's should be considered.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIBRARY

The delegation was informed that the School did not have a students' library. It was therefore suggested by the delegation that the Headmistress:

- (a) should consider writing businessmen in the community inviting their donations for the building of shelves for the school's library.
- (b) Should write the Georgetown Reading and Research Centre (GRRC) requesting donations of books for the school's library.

SUPPLY OF BISCUITS AND MILK

The Headmistress complained to the delegation that the supply by the Ministry of Education, of Milk and Biscuits for students had been discontinued. As a result of this information the delegation decided to follow up the issue with the Ministry.

GRANTS RECEIVED

The delegation was informed that the Helena Primary School did not receive any grant from the Ministry of Education. It was, therefore, agreed by the delegation that the Clerk would be requested to write the Ministry of Education enquiring of the reason(s).

THE PHASING OUT OF MAHAICA PRIMARY SCHOOL

The Headmistress was advised to discuss with the Regional Education Officer the possibility of phasing out the Mahaica Primary School, since it housed only one hundred (100) students whose performance levels were low. Those students could be transferred to the Mahaica and/or the Helena Primary Schools.

DEFICIENCY IN CHILDREN

The delegation encouraged teachers to be alert in observing the behavior of students in order to discover hearing and sight deficiencies.

ROTATION OF STUDENTS

The delegation noted that there was a rotation system, in the seating arrangements, in place for students.

TOILET FACILITIES

The delegation was made aware that the toilet facilities were inadequate for the students.

DISTRIBUTION OF EXERCISE BOOKS

The delegation was told that the Helena Primary School had not received exercise books for the term.

CONCLUSION

The delegation promised to follow-up those issues which needed attention and were within the Committees scope of authority.

*Committees Division
Parliament Office
Public Buildings
Brickdam Georgetown
21st April, 2007.*

APPENDIX 6

REPORT OF THE DELEGATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES (PSCSS) WHICH VISITED THE COVENT GARDEN SECONDARY SCHOOL ON FRIDAY, 11TH APRIL, 2008.

Introduction

On Tuesday 11th April, 2008 a delegation of the PSCSS visited the Covent Garden Secondary School, Covent Garden, East Bank Demerara in pursuance of the Committee's mandate of:

“Responsibility for the scrutiny of all areas of Government policy and administration”.

- (1) The visiting delegation comprised of Mrs. Philomena Sahoye Shury, MP, and Mrs. Shirley Edwards, MP and Mr. Oscar E. Moore, Clerk of Committee. Ms. Anna Ally, M.P asked to be excused from the delegation.
- (2) The delegation and staff member arrived at the School at 10.15 a.m. There were reciprocal introductions of the Members of the delegation and the Head Mistress, Ms. Julie Duncan and her Deputy (Acting) Ms. Camlawatte Balroop.
- (3) The Head Mistress informed that Mr. Jagasar, District Education Officer (Secondary) who should have been a member of the Welcome Committee had left before the arrival of the delegation because of advice he received, on his cell phone that the visit had been called off. The Members of the delegation stated that they had no knowledge of the source of the information.

During the activities which followed the delegation posed questions and made recommendations to the Head Mistress.

The following issues were note worthy:

The Covent Garden Secondary School has a student population of 749 comprised of 457 girls and 292 boys and staff of complement of 43, actual 35 shortage of 8.

School Board

The school was managed by a Board. The life of the Board had, however, expired on 31st January, 2008.

Parent Teachers Association

There was a vibrant P.T.A

Attendance Pattern at School

There was an 80% attendance

CXC Passes

The school achieved CXC passes in excess of 60%. Two students had excelled.

Absenteeism was primarily due to:

- (1) The financial inability of parents to meet transportation costs
- (2) Single parent households
- (3) In some cases the family included a father, but the supervision of the children was left essentially to the mother.

Late Coming

This deficiency was in the vicinity of 25% and was mainly due to transportation. Many of the pupils came from as far as Kuru Kuru.

Teaching Staff

The administrative staff was short of its complement of staff. The complement was 43 and the actual of 35.

Building

The building was in good condition having been recently refurbished.

Over-crowding of Classes.

The classes were large and overcrowded .More space was an urgent need. This had resulted in classes being accommodated in sections of the corridor thereby exposing the students to the elements.

There were 208 students in Form 1, forty (40) students should be in remedial classes, however, because there were no remedial teachers those students had to be accommodated in Forms 1, 2 and 3.

Teacher/Students Ratio.

Generally there was an average of 40 students per teacher.

Agricultural Division- 30 students per teacher

Science Divisions- 10 students per teacher

Discipline and Welfare

Discipline-was challenging but manageable.

There was no School Welfare Officer but help was usually received from the Social Services Ministry.

Intake from Primary

Students' intake from the Primary level was good.

Health

There was no Student Health Care Nurse or Health Visitor. Assistance was at times received from the:

- (a) Environmental Officer
- (b) The Lions Club, in relation to eye examinations and treatment.
- (c) There was no accommodate available space to a sick-room
- (d) stench previously experienced from the stock feed factory was no longer a major problem.
- (e) water in the trench smells at times and was always black
- (f) portable water supply was fairly good once the well and overhead tanks were in working order
- (g) there were three vendors-their standards of service were satisfactory
- (h) the supply of milk and biscuits has been discontinued for some time .

Furniture

The Home Economics, Laboratory and Staff rooms were in need of furniture. There was an urgent need for a refrigerator in the staff room, also a microwave-cooker, as the meals provided by the Canteen were not always hot.

The Laboratory was in need of Microscopes, slides for projectors-sensitive to the action and movement.

Conclusion

The delegation promised to follow up those issues which needed attention and were within the Committee's scope of authority.

Committees Divisions,
Parliament Office
Public Buildings,
Georgetown.