

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
OF THE 38TH SITTING OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION
(2006-2007) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA HELD
AT 2.00 P.M.
ON THURSDAY, 27TH DECEMBER, 2007
IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Hari N. Ramkarran, S.C., M.P., Speaker of the National Assembly

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT (42)

1. People's Progressive Party/Civic (41)

2. The United Force (1)

The Hon. Samuel A.A. Hinds, M.P., (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Upper Berbice), Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications (Absent – on leave)

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

The Hon. Shaik K.Z Baksh, M.P., Minister of Education

The Hon. Dr. Henry B. Jeffrey, M.P., Minister of Foreign Trade and International Co-operation

The Hon. Dr. Leslie S. Ramsammy, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne) Minister of Health

The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P., (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo), Minister of Amerindian Affairs

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

*The Hon S. Rudolph Insanally, O.R., C.C.H., M.P., Minister of Foreign Affairs

The Hon. Harry Narine Nawbatt, M.P., Minister of Housing and Water

***Non-elected Minister**

2.

The Hon. Robert M. Persaud, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne),
Minister of Agriculture

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

The Hon. Kellawan Lall, M.P., Minister of Local Government and Regional Development

*The Hon. Doodnauth Singh, S.C., M.P., Attorney General and Minister of
Legal Affairs (Absent – on leave)

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

The Hon. B. H. Robeson Benn, M.P., Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

**The Hon. Manzoor Nadir, M.P., Minister of Labour

The Hon. Priya D. Manickchand, M.P., (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Minister of Human Services and Social Security

The Hon. Dr. Desrey Fox, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Education

The Hon. Dr. Bheri S. Ramsaran, M.D., M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Health

The Hon. Jennifer I. Webster, M.P., Minister in the Ministry of Finance (Absent – on leave)

The Hon. Manniram Prashad, M.P., Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Mr. Donald R. Ramotar, M.P.

Ms Gail Teixeira, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Harripersaud Nokta, M.P.

Mrs. Indranie Chandarpal, M.P., Chief Whip

Ms Bibi S. Shadick, M.P., (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

Mr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, M.P.

Mr. Albert A. Atkinson, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni) (Absent – on leave)

***Non-Elected Minister**

****Elected Member from the United Force**

3.

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

Mr. Bernard C. DeSantos, S.C., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Shirley V. Edwards, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Mohamed F. Khan, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam)

Mr. Odinga N. Lumumba, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Moses V. Nagamootoo, J.P., M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Mohabir A. Nandlall, M.P.

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

***Mr. Steve P. Ninvalle, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

Mr. Parmanand P. Persaud, J.P., M.P., (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supernaam)

Mrs. Philomena Sahoye-Shury, C.C.H., J.P., M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

***Mrs. Pauline Sukhai, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary

Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, M.P.

Mr. Norman A. Whittaker, M.P., (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini) (Absent – on leave)

Members of the Opposition (28)

(i) Members of People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana (22)

Mr. Robert Corbin, M.P., Leader of the Opposition

Mr. Winston Murray, C.C.H., M.P.

Mrs. Clarissa S. Riehl, M.P., Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Mr. E. Lance Carberry, M.P., Chief Whip

Mrs. Deborah J. Backer, M.P.

Mr. Anthony Vieira, M.P. (Absent)

***Non-elected Member
4.

Mr. Basil Williams, M.P.

Dr. George A. Norton, M.P.

Mrs. Volda A. Lawrence, M.P.

Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

Ms Anna Ally, M.P.

Mr. James K. Mc Allister, M.P. (Absent – on leave)

Mr. Dave Danny, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Aubrey C. Norton, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mr. Ernest Barnabas Elliot, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)

Mrs. Judith David-Blair, M.P., (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)

Mr. Mervyn Williams, M.P., (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)

Ms Africo Selman, M.P.

Dr. John Austin, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)

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

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

Mr. Desmond Fernandes, M.P., (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)

(ii) Alliance for Change (5)

Mr. Raphael G.C. Trotman, M.P.

Mr. Khemraj Ramjattan, M.P. (Absent)

Mrs. Sheila Holder, M.P.

Ms Latchmin Budhan Punalall, M.P.

Mr. David Patterson, M.P.

3. Guyana Action Party/Rise Organize and Rebuild (1)

Mr. Everall N. Franklin, M.P.

OFFICERS (2)

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 2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read Prayers.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS-

By the Minister of Finance:

- (a) Dollar Credit Line Agreement between the Export-Import Bank of India and the Government of Guyana signed on November 7, 2006 for US\$2,100,000 for funding of the Traffic Signaling System Project.

(Circulated)

- (b) Exchange of Notes signed on November 10, 2006 between the Government of Japan and the Government of Guyana regarding 100% cancellation of eligible commercial debt of the Government of Guyana to the Government of Japan for US\$591,326.98 on the basis of the conclusions reached in the agreed Minute during the consultations between the representatives of the Government of Guyana and the Government of the creditor countries concerned held in Paris on January 14, 2004.

(Circulated)

6.

- (c) Debt Forgiveness Agreement signed on November 23, 2006 between the Government of the Republic of Cuba and the Government of Guyana to cancel the debt which originated as a result of a Credit Agreement signed on March 18, 1986 between the former Guyana National Co-operative Bank (GNCB) and Banco Nacional de Cuba (BNC) for an amount of US\$1,471,319.07 to finance Cuban exports of pharmaceutical products and the subsequent Amendment signed on May 15, 1994.

(Circulated)

- (d) Dollar Credit Line Agreement between the Export-Import Bank of India and the Government of Guyana signed on November 11, 2004 for US\$19,000,000.00 for the Construction of a Cricket Stadium.

(Circulated)

- (e) Loan Contract No. 1752/SF-GY between the Government of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank signed on January 31, 2007 for US\$19,800,000 for the Citizen Security Programme.

(Circulated)

- (f) Loan Contract No. 1730/SF-GY between the Government of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank signed on February 22, 2007 for US\$18,070,000 for the Georgetown Solid Waste Management Program (GSWMP).

(Circulated)

- (g) Guarantee and Counter-Guarantee Contract No. 1731/SF-GY between the Government of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank signed on February 22, 2007 for US\$2,500,000 for the Georgetown Solid Waste Management Program (GSWMP).

(Circulated)

7.

- (h) Loan Contract No. 1745/SF-GY between the Government of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank signed on March 20, 2007 for US\$15,000,000 for the Modernization of the Justice Administration System (Policy-Based Component).

(Circulated)

- (i) Loan Contract No. 1746/SG-GY between the Government of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank signed on March 20, 2007 for US\$10,000,000 for the Modernization of the Justice Administration System (Investment Component).

(Circulated)

- (j) Loan Contract No. 1750/SF-GY between the Government of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank signed on March 20, 2007 for US\$18,000,000 to support the Competitiveness Program (Policy-Based Component).

(Circulated)

- (k) Loan Contract No. 1751/SF-GY between the Government of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank signed on March 20, 2007 for US\$9,000,000 to Support the Competitiveness Program (Investment Component).

(Circulated)

- (l) Loan Contract No. 1803/SF-GY between the Government of Guyana and the Inter-American Development Bank signed on July 11, 2007 for US\$27,000,000 for the Transport Infrastructure Rehabilitation Program.

(Circulated)

8.

- (m) Protocol on Remitting the Debt of the Guyanese Government owed to the Chinese Government signed on July 10, 2007 between the Government of Guyana and the Government of the People's Republic of China for an amount totalling Renminbi Yuan 107,206,060.43 and Pounds Sterling 610,000 (equivalent to approximately US\$15,275,496).

(Circulated)

- (n) Sales Contract No. SA 131122 and Internal Approval Document No. VOP-2007-DOC between the PDVSA Petroleo, S.A.(PDVSA) and Guyana Energy Agency (GEA) signed on January 23, 2007 to supply the Government of Guyana with crude oil, refined oil products and LPG of up to 5,200 barrels per day on an annual basis.

(Circulated)

- (o) Financial Paper No. 3/2007 – Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totaling \$1,459,063,444 for the period 2007-11-21 to 2007-12-21.

(Circulated)

- (p) Financial Paper No. 4/2007 – Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totaling \$7,939,310,524 for the period ending 2007-12-31.

(Circulated)

REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES-

By Ms Amna Ally, M.P. (Chairperson of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services:

The Second Periodic Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services.

(Circulated)

9.

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE-

For Written Reply

GOVERNMENT'S ALTERNATIVE ENERGY PROGRAMME

Member Asking: Mrs. Sheila Holder, M.P.

Minister Answering: The Prime Minister and Minister of Public Works and Communications

What is the status of the Government's alternative energy programme and specifically on the following:-

- (a) Wind-mill project government was perusing at Hope?
- (b) Hydro-electric scheme at Amelia Falls? and
- (c) Alternative energy programme?

(Notice Paper No. 194 (Q143 Opp140) published on 2007-11-26)

Answer:

Government remains committed to fostering the development of energy by private developers/investors from renewable resources including wind, solar, biomass and hydro and endorses the benefits associated with alternative energy sources viz:

- Reduction in global warming and the greenhouse gas effect;
- Reduction in foreign exchange associated with the importation of fuel;
- Reduced dependency on fossil fuel and protection from unpredictable and rising fuel prices on the world market; and
- Promotion of a 'green image'.

Our current laws allow for fiscal incentives to apply for importation of equipment used for renewable energy projects.

10.

- (a) With regards to development of wind power, Government entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with DELTA CARIBBEAN N.V. of Curacao in October, 2001 which granted the developer exclusive rights to conduct feasibility studies and wind measurements at Hope Beach. The developer fulfilled the objectives of the MOU and is currently negotiating a Power Purchase Agreement with the Guyana Power and Light Inc., including price for power and other technical requirements.

The wind farm is expected to have 13.5 MW of power installed and its production will average approximately one-third of that capacity which will be sold to the national grid. In addition, the developers will finance part of the 69 KV transmission line. Commercial Operation Date for the wind power is fourteen months from the date of contract signing, which is anticipated by mid 2008.

- (b) Synergy Holdings Inc., headed by an overseas based Guyanese has demonstrated sustained interest for more than ten (10) years in developing the Amaila Falls Hydroelectric Project (AFHEP). In July, 2002 Synergy Holdings was granted the rights to develop the AFHEP under the terms of an Interim Licence which currently expires in April, 2008. The Interim Licence requires Synergy Holdings to complete certain activities, including negotiation of engineering; procurement and construction (EPC) contract and conclude financial closing and pre-closing activities for the development of the AFHEP prior to the grant of a Final Licence. The project constitutes the development of a 100 MW hydroelectric power plant to supply electricity to the national grid and 296 kilometers high voltage transmission line.

Synergy Holdings has associated with Sithe Global which is part of the Blackstone group. That group will contribute financial resources (equity) and technical expertise. Government has set a deadline of August, 2008 for financial closing. The construction period is expected to last three (3) years from financial closing. There are certain perceived risks which are being monitored, namely:

11.

- Escalating capital cost is threatening the viability of the project; and
- While equity funding is principally in place – total financing for the Project is to be determined.

In addition to the Amaila Falls Hydroelectric Project, Government has also received considerable interest in the development of the Country's hydro power resources. The attached spreadsheet (see APPENDIX) provides information on possible exploitation of certain sites.

(c) Other alternative energy programmes include development of solar systems. The support offered by Government has resulted in increased installation of photovoltaic systems, particularly in hinterland communities. Some of the more recent assistance provided by or planned by Government include:

- Under the Unserved Areas Electrification Programme – Hinterland Project Preparation Component, solar home systems will be installed on each residence and communal building in : (i) Capoey – Region 2 (62 systems); (ii) Muritaro – Region 10 (69 systems); (iii) Kurukabaru – Region 8 (104 systems); and Yarakita – Region 1 (104 systems). The sustainability of these systems will be assessed over a 6 – 12 months period and if the results prove positive, solar systems will be installed in additional communities.
- Installation of a 2400 watts photovoltaic system in Wauna to enhance economic activity, particularly relating to peanut production.
- One 1500 watts, 120 VAC photovoltaic system was installed at the Kato Health Post in August, 2005. This system provides electric lighting on the inside and on the outside of the building and power outlets for the operation of medical equipment.

12.

- In December, 2004 one 1500 watts photovoltaic system was installed at the Multipurpose Hall in Paruima, Region 7. That system provides lighting to enhance economic activities.

PUBLIC BUSINESS-

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

BILL – Second Readings

ITEM 1 - NATIONAL REGISTRATION (AMENDMENT) BILL 2007- Bill No. 27/ 2007
published on 2007-12-05

The Minister of Health, on behalf of the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, moved the second reading of the following Bill:

A BILL intituled AN ACT to amend the National Registration Act.

(Read a first time on 2007-12-06)

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mr. Basil Williams

Mr. Donald Ramotar

Mr. Raphael Trotman

The Minister of Labour

Mr. Robert Corbin

Thereafter the Minister of Health replied.

The Bill was then read a second time.

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

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13.

In Committee

Clauses 1 and 2 were passed as printed.

Clause 3

The following amendment which was moved by Mr. Robert Corbin and seconded by Mr. Basil Williams was put and carried:

“After the words ‘computerised database’ insert the words ‘of the information from the originals of the registration record’ ”.

Clause 3 was then passed as amended.

Clause 4

The following amendment which was moved by Mr. Robert Corbin and seconded by Mr. Basil Williams was put and negatived:

“Deletion of Clause 4”

Clause 4 was then passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Health, the National Registration (Amendment) Bill 2007 was read a third time and passed as amended.

ITEM 2 - VALUATION OF PROPERTY FOR RATING PURPOSES (VALIDATION)

BILL 2007 – Bill No. 29/2007 published on 2007-12-05

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

A BILL intituled AN ACT to declare and validate the valuation of property in the City of Georgetown for rating purposes.

(Read a first time on 2007-12-06)

/...14

The following Members spoke to the motion:

Mrs. Clarissa Riehl

Mr. David Patterson

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO. 10(1)

At 4.00 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Health, Standing Order No. 10(1) was suspended to enable the Assembly to continue beyond 4.00 p.m., to conclude its debate uninterrupted.

Mr. Bernard DeSantos also spoke to the motion.

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

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 and 2 were passed as printed.

Clause 3

The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development moved the following amendment which was put and carried:

“Delete the words ‘30th day of September, 1996’ in line 3 and insert the words ‘1st day of January, 1997’ ”

Clause 3 was then passed as amended.

Clause 4 was passed as printed.

Assembly resumed

On a motion by the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the Valuation of Property for Rating Purposes (Validation) Bill 2007 was read a third time and passed as amended.

(iii) COMMITTEE BUSINESS

MOTION

ITEM 3 - SECOND PERIODIC REPORT OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SERVICES

Ms Amna Ally, M.P. (Chairperson of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services) moved the following motion:

BE IT RESOLVED:

That the Second Periodic Report of the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services be adopted.

(Notice Paper No. 205 (M53 Opp 14) published on 2007-12-19)

The Minister in the Ministry of Health spoke to the motion.

The motion was then put and carried.

NEW YEAR'S GREETINGS

The Speaker extended New Year's Greetings to Members of Parliament, the Clerk of the National Assembly and his staff, the Press and the Hansard staff.

Mr. Robert Corbin and the Minister of Home Affairs joined the Speaker in extending New Year's Greetings to Members of Parliament, the staff of the Parliament Office and the Press.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.20 p.m., on a motion by the Minister of Home Affairs, the Assembly was adjourned to a date to be fixed.

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HON. HARI N. RAMKARRAN, S.C., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

PARLIAMENT OFFICE,
Public Buildings,
Brickdam.

27th December, 2007.