

BRITISH GUIANA

FIRST LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

FIRST SESSION

1961 - 1962

MINUTES of the Proceedings of the Eleventh Sitting of the Legislative Assembly of the Colony of British Guiana under the British Guiana (Constitution) Order in Council, 1961, held in the Chamber of the Legislature at the Public Buildings, Georgetown, Demerara,

AT 2.00 P.M.

on

WEDNESDAY, 31ST JANUARY, 1962.

PRESENT:

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. R.B. Gajraj.

(a) Members of the Government

People's Progressive Party

(i) Ministers

Dr. the Honourable C.B. Jagan,  
Premier and Minister of Development and Planning.  
The Honourable B.H. Benn,  
Minister of Natural Resources.  
The Honourable Ram Karran,  
Minister of Works and Hydraulics.  
The Honourable B.S. Rai,  
Minister of Home Affairs.  
The Honourable R. Chandisingh,  
Minister of Labour, Health and Housing.  
Dr. the Honourable Charles Jacob, Jr.,  
Minister of Finance.  
Dr. the Honourable F.H.W. Ramsahoye,  
Attorney-General.  
The Honourable E.M.G. Wilson,  
Minister of Communications.

(ii) Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. G. Bowman, Parliamentary Secretary to the  
Ministry of Natural Resources.  
Mr. L.E.M. Mann, Parliamentary Secretary to the  
Ministry of Works and Hydraulics.

(iii) Other Members

Mr. S.M. Saffee  
Mr. G.L. Robertson  
Mr. J.B. Caldeira  
Mr. V. Downer  
Mr. M. Hamid  
Mr. D.C. Jagan  
Mr. H. Lall  
Mr. M. Shakoor

(b) Members Constituting the Minority

(i) People's National Congress

Mr. L.F.S. Burnham, Q.C.  
Mr. W.O.R. Kendall  
Mr. J. Carter  
Mr. E.F. Correia

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Mr. N.J. Bissember  
 Mr. W.A. Blair  
 Mr. R.S.S. Hugh  
 Mr. J.G. Joaquim  
 Mr. R.J. Jordan  
 Mr. C.A. Merriman  
 Mr. H.M.S. Wharton

(ii) United Force

Mr. P. d'Aguiar  
 Mr. S. Campbell  
 Mr. R.E. Cheeks  
 Mr. E.E. Melville

Clerk of the Legislature - Mr. I. Crum Ewing.  
 Assistant Clerk of the Legislature - Mr. E.V. Viapree.

Absent:

Mr. M. Bhagwan - on leave.

PRAYERS

The Clerk read prayers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Reports on Election Petitions

Representation Petition Questioning the Election of Mr. Peter Stanislaus d'Aguiar, Member for Electoral District No. 18 - Georgetown Central.

His Honour the Speaker read and submitted the report on the above petition made by the Honourable Mr. Justice B.O. Adams in compliance with the provisions of section 35(1) of the Legislature (Appointment, Election and Membership Controversies) Ordinance, 1961 (No. 34).

The Honourable Mr. Justice Adams declared on the 20th of December, 1961, that Mr. Peter Stanislaus d'Aguiar was duly elected at the Election held in Electoral District No. 18 - Georgetown Central - on 21st August, 1961.

The Court found that -

- (a) No corrupt practice or illegal practice had been proved to have been committed by or with the knowledge of either candidate at the election.
- (b) Neither candidate at the election had been proved to be guilty by his agent of any corrupt or illegal practice in reference to the election.
- (c) No corrupt practices or illegal practices had, nor was there reason to believe that corrupt practices or illegal practices had extensively prevailed at the election to which the petition related.

Representation Petition Questioning the Election of Mr. Edward Eyre Melville, Member for Electoral District No. 35 - Rupununi.

His Honour the Speaker read and submitted the report on the above petition made by the Honourable Mr. Justice R.S. Miller in compliance with the provisions of section 35(1) of the Legislature (Appointment, Election and Membership Controversies) Ordinance, 1961 (No. 34).

The Honourable Mr. Justice Miller declared on the 29th of January, 1962, that Mr. Edward Eyre Melville was duly elected at the Election held in Electoral District No. 35 - Rupununi - on 21st August, 1961.

The Court found that on consideration of the whole case the petitioner failed in every respect to prove his allegations beyond all doubt and accordingly dismissed the petition.

Business Sub-Committee under Standing Order 65(1).

The Speaker announced that the Committee of Selection had met that day and had nominated the following Members to comprise the Business Sub-Committee in terms of Standing Order No. 65(1):

1. Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. B.H. Benn
2. Minister of Finance, Dr. the Hon. Charles Jacob, Jr.
3. Member for Western Berbice, Mr. S.M. Saffee
4. Member for Ruimveldt, Mr. L.F.S. Burnham, Q.C.
5. Member for Werk-en-Rust, Mr. John Carter.
6. Member for Georgetown North, Mr. R.E. Cheeks.

Members approved of the nominations.

Committee of Selection.

The Speaker drew attention to the vacancy in the Committee of Selection consequent on Mr. Henry being no longer a Member of the Legislative Assembly and invited nominations to fill the vacancy.

On a motion by Mr. Benn seconded by Mr. Mann, Mr. Bhagwan, Member for Essequibo Islands, was appointed.

Receipt of Christmas Cards, 1961.

The Speaker announced the receipt of Christmas Cards from the following persons and Bodies:

- His Excellency the Governor and Lady Grey
- The Commissioner in the U.K. for the West Indies,  
B.G. and British Honduras.
- Hon. Raymond A. Njoku, Chairman, C.P.A. General Council.
- Deputy Prime Minister, Trinidad, and Mrs. C.G.D.  
La Corbiniere.
- U.K. Information Office, Georgetown.
- Public Affairs Officer, U.S.I.S. Georgetown and Mrs.  
D.C. Horan.
- Minister and Staff, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics,  
Georgetown.
- Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Lands and Fisheries,  
Trinidad, and Mrs. Mohammed.

Mr. George Bowman, Parliamentary Secretary to  
the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Madras Branch, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

Uttar Pradesh Branch, Commonwealth Parliamentary  
Association.

Federation of Malaya Branch, Kuala Lumpur,  
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS, ETC.

(a) By His Honour the Speaker:

Report of the Director of Audit on the Accounts  
of British Guiana for the year ended 31st  
December, 1960. (92/AD. 6/60).

(b) By the Minister of Natural Resources:

Annual Reports of the Director of Land Develop-  
ment for the years 1958, 1959 and 1960.  
(No. 24/9 VII)(Circulated).

(c) By the Minister of Home Affairs:

- (i) Electoral Provisions (Registration)  
Regulations, 1961 - No. 3.  
(EL. 3/2)(Circulated).
- (ii) Electoral Provisions (Registration)  
(Amendment) Regulations, 1961 - No. 9.  
(EL. 3/2)(Circulated).
- (iii) Representation of the People (Amendment)  
Regulations, 1961 - No. 11.  
(EL. 3/2)(Circulated).
- (iv) Representation of the People (Remuneration  
of Officers)(Amendment) Regulations,  
1961 - No. 15.  
(EL. 3/2)(Circulated).

(d) By the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing:

Public Health (Mosquito Control)(Amendment)  
Regulations, 1961 - No. 24.  
(37/10/10)(Circulated).

(e) By the Minister of Finance:

- (i) Report of the Accountant General for  
the year 1960. (T. 28).
- (ii) Order No. 1 of 1962 made under section 8  
of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309,  
on the 3rd day of January, 1962, and  
published in the Gazette on the 13th  
of January, 1962.  
(G. 330/60)(Circulated).
- (iii) Draft Recurrent Estimates, 1962.  
(Circulated).
- (iv) Draft Development Estimates, 1962.  
(Circulated).

(f) By the Minister of Communications:

Report of the Director General of the Overseas Audit Service on the Accounts of the British Guiana Transport and Harbours Department for the year ended 31st December, 1959, together with the Governor's comments thereon.

(TH. G. 1518/50)(Circulated).

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

Question No. 5.

Mr. Jordan asked the Minister of Communications the following question:

QUESTION: Is the Honourable Minister aware that although it is reported on Page 15 in the Development Programme 1960/64 Progress Report for the Quarter ended 30th June, 1961, under Post Office, that the external distribution system at Mackenzie for Telephone subscribers' apparatus has been completed, a number of residents in Wismar, Christianburg and North Mackenzie have applied for telephones and have been told that none are available? If the answer is in the affirmative, what steps does the Minister propose to take to make telephones available to these would-be subscribers?

The Minister of Communications gave the following reply:

ANSWER: The Mackenzie Exchange caters for a maximum of 400 subscribers. At present the Exchange is serving 391 subscribers, including 30 in the Wismar-Christianburg area. The subscribers in the Wismar-Christianburg area are connected by means of a 30 pair submarine cable between Mackenzie and Christianburg and it will therefore not be possible immediately to increase the number of subscribers in that area.

There are nine spare exchange numbers which are being reserved for Private Branch Exchange purposes.

The need for the enlargement of the Mackenzie Exchange was foreseen several years ago and an extension scheme was prepared in detail. Owing to lack of funds, however, the project had to be deleted from the Development Estimates in 1959.

In order to meet the pressing demand for more telephones in new areas additional line plant had to be installed in 1961. This additional line plant merely enabled existing spare exchange equipment to be used to provide the additional services required and did not constitute an enlargement of the capacity of the exchange.

Proposals for the expansion of the Mackenzie Exchange are included in the general proposals under consideration for the extension of telecommunications services all over the country.

#### STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

The Honourable R. Chandisingh, Minister of Labour, Health and Housing informed the Assembly that he would make a statement at the next sitting or the subsequent sitting concerning the recent illness and deaths of residents in Essequibo.

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS - First Reading.

(i) DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION (DECLARATION OF AREA) BILL, 1962.

(L.A. Bill No. 1/1962 published 6.1.62)

The Minister of Works and Hydraulics on behalf of the Government presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE MERGING OF THE NORTHERN KLIEN POWDEROYEN DRAINAGE AREA AND THE NORTH KLIEN POWDEROYEN (EXTENSION) DRAINAGE AND IRRIGATION AREA.

(ii) GENEVA CONVENTIONS (SUPPLEMENTARY PROVISIONS) BILL, 1962.

(L.A. Bill No. 2/1962 published 6.1.62).

The Attorney-General on behalf of the Government presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ORDINANCE TO SUPPLEMENT THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS ACT, 1957, OF THE UNITED KINGDOM AS EXTENDED TO BRITISH GUIANA BY THE GENEVA CONVENTIONS ACT (COLONIAL TERRITORIES) ORDER IN COUNCIL, 1959, SO AS TO ENABLE FULL EFFECT TO BE GIVEN IN RELATION TO BRITISH GUIANA TO CERTAIN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS DONE AT GENEVA ON THE TWELFTH DAY OF AUGUST, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINE.

(iii) LEGISLATURE (REMUNERATION OF MEMBERS) BILL, 1962

(L.A. Bill No. 3/1962 published 22.1.62).

The Minister of Finance on behalf of the Government presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ORDINANCE TO MAKE PROVISION FOR THE PAYMENT OF REMUNERATION, TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES TO MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE, THE SPEAKER OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

(iv) APPROPRIATION BILL, 1962.

(L.A. Bill No. 4/1962 published 31.1.62).

The Minister of Finance on behalf of the Government presented the following Bill which was read the first time:

A BILL intituled AN ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE THE SUPPLIES GRANTED IN THE CURRENT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE.

The Minister gave notice of his intention at a later stage to move a motion for the suspension of the relevant Standing Order to proceed to the second reading of this Bill and to present his Budget Statement.

PUBLIC BUSINESSBILL - Second Reading.Item 1 - APPROPRIATION BILL, 1962 - Bill No. 4/1962.

On a motion by the Minister of Finance the relevant Standing Orders were suspended to enable him to move the second reading of the BILL intituled AN ORDINANCE TO APPROPRIATE THE SUPPLIES GRANTED IN THE CURRENT SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE, and to present his Budget Statement.

The Minister of Finance then moved the second reading of the Bill and read his Budget Statement (Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1962) copies of which were afterwards circulated to Members.

Arising out of the Tax proposals in the Budget Statement, the Minister of Finance presented the following Bills which were read the first time:

- (i) TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1962.  
(L.A. Bill No. 5/1962 published 31.1.62)
- (ii) AUCTIONEERS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1962.  
(L.A. Bill No. 6/1962 published 31.1.62)

The Minister also laid on the table -

- (i) Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations, 1962. (No. 1)
- (ii) Provisional Collection of Taxes Order, 1962. (No. 4).
- (iii) Customs Duties (Amendment) Order, 1962. (No. 5).

In order to afford Members and the general public the fullest opportunity to consider the Government's proposals as set out in the Budget Speech, the resumption of the debate on the second reading of the APPROPRIATION BILL, 1962, was fixed for 2.00 p.m. on Monday, 12th February, 1962.

In terms of Standing Order 21 the Governor's recommendations, signified by the Minister of Finance, covering all financial matters arising out of the Budget, were laid over.

MOTION

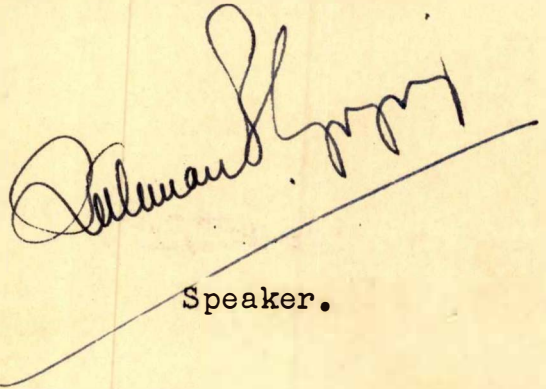
Item 2 - MOTION TO AUTHORISE THE PAYMENT OF SALARY AND TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES TO MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY.

On a motion by the Minister of Finance the Assembly adopted the following Resolution:

RESOLVED, That pending the enactment of the necessary legislation, this Legislative Assembly authorises the payment of salary and travelling allowances to Members of the Legislature for the month of January to an amount not exceeding twelve thousand dollars.

ADJOURNMENT

At 4.25 p.m. on a motion by the Minister of Natural Resources, the Assembly was adjourned to 2.00 p.m. on Thursday, 1st February, 1962.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'S. J. ...', is written over a long horizontal line that serves as a signature line.

Speaker.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS,  
Georgetown.

1st February, 1962.