

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 1]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
FIRST LEGISLATURE CONSTITUTED UNDER THE
BRITISH GUIANA (CONSTITUTION)
ORDER IN COUNCIL, 1961

17th Sitting

Thursday, 15th March, 1962.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*]

Present

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

Members of the Government

People's Progressive Party

Ministers

Dr. the Honourable C. B. Jagan

*—Premier and Minister of Development
and Planning (Member for Corentyne
—East)*

The Honourable B. H. Benn

*—Minister of Natural Resources (Mem-
ber for Demerara Coast—West)*

The Honourable Ram Karran

*—Minister of Works and Hydraulics
(Member for Mahaica)*

The Honourable B. S. Rai

*—Minister of Home Affairs (Member for
Demerara Coast—East)*

The Honourable R. Chandisingh

*—Minister of Labour, Health and Housing
(Member for Lower Demerara River)*

Dr. the Hon. Charles Jacob, Jr.	— <i>Minister of Finance (Member for Vreed-en-Hoop)</i>
Dr. the Hon. F. H. W. Ramsahoye	— <i>Attorney-General (Member for Canals Polder)</i>
The Hon. E. M. G. Wilson	— <i>Minister of Communications (Member for Boerasirie).</i>

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. L. E. M. Mann	— <i>Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics (Member for Mahaicony).</i>
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Other Members

Mr. S. M. Saffee	— <i>(Member for Berbice—West)</i>
Mr. G. L. Robertson	— <i>(Member for Leonora)</i>
Mr. M. Bhagwan	— <i>(Member for Essequibo Islands)</i>
Mr. J. B. Caldeira	— <i>(Member for Pomeroy)</i>
Mr. M. Hamid	— <i>(Member for Demerara—Central)</i>
Mr. D. C. Jagan	— <i>(Member for Suddie)</i>
Mr. H. Lall	— <i>(Member for Corentyne—West)</i>
Mr. M. Shakoor	— <i>(Member for Corentyne River).</i>

*Members Constituting the Minority**(i) People's National Congress*

Mr. L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.	— <i>(Member for Ruimveldt)</i>
Mr. W. O. R. Kendall, Deputy Speaker	— <i>(Member for New Amsterdam)</i>
Mr. J. Carter	— <i>(Member for Werk-en-Rust)</i>
Mr. E. F. Correia	— <i>(Member for Mazaruni-Potaro)</i>
Mr. N. J. Bissemer	— <i>(Member for Campbellville)</i>
Mr. W. A. Blair	— <i>(Member for Berbice River)</i>
Mr. R. S. S. Hugh	— <i>(Member for Georgetown—South)</i>
Mr. J. G. Joaquim	— <i>(Member for Kitty)</i>
Mr. R. J. Jordan	— <i>(Member for Upper Demerara River)</i>
Mr. C. A. Merriman	— <i>(Member for La Penitence—Lodge)</i>
Mr. H. M. S. Wharton	— <i>(Member for Abary).</i>

(ii) United Force

Mr. P. d'Aguiar	— <i>(Member for Georgetown—Central)</i>
Mr. S. Campbell	— <i>(Member for North West)</i>
Mr. R. E. Cheeks	— <i>(Member for Georgetown—North).</i>

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

Mr. E. V. Viapree — Assistant Clerk of the Legislature.

ABSENT:

Mr. G. Bowman, Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources
(Member for Corentyne Central)

Mr. V. Downer—(Member for Berbice-East)

Mr. E. E. Melville—(Member for Rupununi) —on leave.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE
SPEAKER

LEAVE TO MR. BURNHAM

Mr. Speaker : Hon. Members, the hon. Member for Ruimveldt (Mr. Burnham) applied for leave to be absent from the sittings of the Legislature for a week from the 8th of March, but he is back with us already, and so he is welcome.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND
REPORTS

The following Papers were laid:

Report of the Proceedings of the second meeting of the Committee of Selection held on 31st January, 1962.

Report of the Proceedings of the third meeting of the Committee of Selection held on 9th March, 1962. [*The Speaker.*]

Seventy-first Annual Report of the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Georgetown for the year ended 31st December, 1961. [*The Attorney-General on behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources.*]

Certificate and Report of the Director General of the Overseas Audit Service on the accounts of British Guiana for the year ended the 31st of December, 1959, together with the comments thereon of the Minister of Finance. (Sessional Paper No. 4/1962).

Overseas Service Aid Scheme (Sessional Paper No. 5/1962).

Report of the Executive Commissioner, Board of Commissioners of Currency, British Caribbean Territories (Eastern Group) for the year 1960. [*The Minister of Finance.*]

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Supplementary Appropriation (1960) Bill, 1962.

Development Fund (1960 Appropriation) Bill, 1962.

[*Presented by the Minister of Finance and read the First time.*]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS—

PURCHASE OF SKELDON
HOSPITAL

The Minister of Finance (Dr. Jacob): In accordance with Standing Order 21, I signify that His Excellency the Governor has recommended the following Motion for the consideration of the Legislature:

“Be it resolved that this Legislative Assembly approves the provision of Five thousand, four hundred and fourteen dollars, representing 10 per cent. of the price for the purchase of Skeldon Hospital from Messrs. Bookers Sugar Estates Ltd., to be operated by the Government for the residents of the area.”

2.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the policy of the Government has been to establish hospitals in rural areas of the country so that medical facilities may be more readily available for people in British Guiana. In keeping with this policy, Bookers Sugar Estates, Ltd., were approached early in 1961 with a view to the acquisition of the Skeldon Hospital by the Government. An amount of \$53,000 was voted in Supplementary Estimates in 1961 for the purchase of the Skeldon Hospital.

Negotiations were conducted with the Company under the following terms: Firstly, Bookers Sugar Estates, Ltd., will sell the Skeldon Hospital to the Government at a price it will cost the Company to erect a dispensary and quarters for the use of the Company. The cost of the dispensary was put at \$53,000. Secondly, the Estate authorities will transfer all of the equipment, drugs, and dressings required for the dispenser to their dispensary, and the remaining equipment will be taken over by the Government. Thirdly, Skeldon Estate will continue to supply the Hospital with electricity and pure water on the usual terms. Fourthly,

[Dr. JACOB]

the land on which the Hospital is sited will be sold or leased to the Government, with the provision that the Hospital will be maintained on that land. Lastly, the services of the Government Medical Officer in the area will continue to be available to Skeldon Estate as at present, after the Hospital is taken over by the Government.

It proved impossible to conclude the arrangements before the end of 1961, and the take over of the Hospital has only recently been completed. The amount required is 10 per cent. of the purchase price which has been increased by the sum of \$1,137.73 because the Company has now agreed to sell, and not to lease the land on which the Hospital is sited. The Agreement with Bookers Sugar Estates, Ltd., is that this 10 per cent. of the purchase price is to be paid over on the signing of the Agreement of Sale, and the balance to be paid within a period of six months thereafter.

Sir, that sets out the proposal, and the Motion seeks the approval of the Legislature for the payment of 10 per cent. of the purchase price of the Skeldon Hospital by the Government.

Question put, and agreed to.

UNITED NATIONS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

"Be it resolved that this Legislative Assembly authorises expenditure totalling Three thousand, eight hundred and forty-eight dollars, being this territory's estimated contribution to the cost of the United Nations Technical Assistance Programme in this country for the year 1961." [The Minister of Finance.]

Your Honour, in accordance with Standing Order No. 21 of the Standing Orders of this House, I signify that the Governor has recommended the Motion standing in my name for consideration

by the Legislature. I would like to make a slight amendment to the wording of the Motion by the substitution of the figures "1962" for "1961."

Mr. Speaker: Notice of that amendment was duly received.

Amendment agreed to.

Dr. Jacob: In the expanded Programme of Technical Assistance for economic development of underdeveloped territories, experts may be requested, individually or in teams, to advise and assist with a general or specific field of activity, or to train local counterparts in these underdeveloped territories.

In requesting assistance for the Programme, governments of underdeveloped territories assume the responsibility for that part of the cost of assistance which can be paid in their own currencies. The services for which local governments pay include transportation, subsistence and the provision of accommodation. In addition, the governments receiving this technical aid have to assist to the extent of 12.5 per cent. of the estimated total cost of expert services provided under the Programme.

The amount of \$3,848 which the Motion requests the Legislature to authorise represents the assessment in respect of the year 1962 of this territory's contribution to the cost of expert services. The Executive Chairman of the Technical Assistance Board has assessed the local cost at this figure in relation to the Programme for this year. Adjustment, of course, will be made at the end of the year to the actual amount that will be payable by this Government.

Question put, and agreed to, as amended.

OVERSEAS SERVICE AGREEMENT

"Be it resolved that with reference to Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1962, this Legislative Assembly approves the provision of funds to the amount of Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to defray expenditure incurred under the provisions of the Overseas Service Agreement Ordinance, 1961, (No. 27)." [The Minister of Finance.]

Dr. Jacob: Your Honour, in accordance with Standing Order No. 21 of the Standing Orders of this House, I signify that the Governor has recommended the Motion standing in my name for consideration by the Legislature.

The Government has approved of the acceptance of the Overseas Aid Scheme, and the details are embodied in Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1962, which has been circulated to hon. Members. The legislation covering the scheme was enacted in June, 1961. The objects of the Overseas Aid Scheme are to enable Overseas Governments and Administrations to retain the services of officers they need, to encourage certain officers to stay if their services are required and, in the case of territories approaching Independence, to recruit officers in the interests of the economic and social progress of these territories until such time as the territories can build up their local Public Services.

These arrangements are not meant to be a deterrent to the policy of Guianization in this country. The essential features of this scheme are set out in the Sessional Paper but, perhaps, it would be well for me to enumerate them briefly. In this Scheme the United Kingdom Government will be responsible for meeting the expenses or, rather, the entire cost of the inducement pay to these Overseas officers. Secondly, the United Kingdom Government will assume full responsibility for the share of a pension or gratuity attributable to the inducement element of the salaries paid

to these Overseas officers. Thirdly, the United Kingdom Government will pay children's educational allowances similar to those payable to members of the United Kingdom Civil Service who are posted Overseas. Fourthly, the United Kingdom Government will meet half of the cost of passages to be provided under this Scheme. Fifthly, the United Kingdom Government will share with the local Government the cost of any scheme for special retirement benefits to those officers who may qualify under this Scheme.

It is intended that the initial duration of the Agreement shall be 10 years, starting from April 1, 1961. Renewal after this initial period would be a matter for determination and negotiation in the light of the circumstances then obtaining. As the local services are built up, so will the need for the help of skilled manpower from abroad decline.

The day-to-day administration of the Scheme will be the responsibility of this Government who will exercise that responsibility within the general limits agreed upon with the Government of the United Kingdom. The financial procedures under this Scheme are broadly similar to those used for Colonial Development and Welfare Schemes. That is, the United Kingdom Government will reimburse this Government quarterly, in advance, on the basis of estimates of expenditure of the scheme.

The one last point I wish to make is that the cost of the allowances payable under the Scheme will be shown in the Annual Estimates of Expenditure in accordance with Section 4 of the Overseas Service Agreement Ordinance, 1961. But it should be noted that most of the expenditure will be recoverable from the United Kingdom Government, and there will, therefore, be a corresponding revenue item for the reimbursements.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker : Hon. Members, that is all the business on the Order Paper for today. Before I adjourn the Assembly, however, may I take this opportunity of reminding you of the meeting of the local branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which has been called for three o'clock. It would be convenient, I am sure, to all Members if we started earlier. But I might remind Members of the Legisla-

ate are also members of the local branch. They were summoned for three o'clock. If they should arrive before then, by common consent, we would be able to start before. If not, we shall not be able to start before the hour they have been given notice of.

ADJOURNMENT

now adjourn to a date to be fixed." [Mr. B. H. Benn.]

Adjourned accordingly at 2.35 p.m.