

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 1]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
FIRST PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA.

6th Sitting

Thursday, 25th August, 1966

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Present:

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. A. P. Alleyne

Members of the Government

Ministers

The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.	- <i>Prime Minister</i>
Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid	- <i>Minister of Home Affairs</i>
The Honourable P. S. d'Aguiar	- <i>Minister of Finance</i>
The Honourable N. J. Bissember	- <i>Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)</i>
The Honourable R. E. Cheeks	- <i>Minister of Local Government</i>
The Honourable E. E. Correia	- <i>Minister of Communications</i>
The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin	- <i>Minister of Education and Race Relations</i>
The Honourable L. John	- <i>Minister of Agriculture</i>
The Honourable R. J. Jordan	- <i>Minister of Forests, Lands and Mines</i>
The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C.B.E.	- <i>Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation</i>
The Honourable C. A. Merriman	- <i>Minister of Labour</i>
The Honourable J. H. Thomas	- <i>Minister of Economic Development</i>

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. D. B. deGroot

Mr. O. E. Clarke

Mr. J. G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.

Mr. C. V. Too-Chung

- *Parliamentary Secretary,
Prime Minister's Office*

- *Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education
and Race Relations
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and
Hydraulics*

*Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Finance*

Other Members

Mr. W. A. Blair

Mr. J. Budhoo

Mr. W. G. Carrington

Mr. P. Duncan

Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley

Mr. H. Prashad

Dr. J. K. M. Richmond

Mr. R. Tello, Deputy Speaker

Rev. A. B. Trotman

Mr. H. M. S. Wharton, J.P.

Members of the Opposition

Dr. C. B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition

Mr. A. Chase

Mr. B. H. Benn

Mr. Ram Karan

Mr. R. Chandisingh

Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard

Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.

Mr. C. V. Nunes

Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye

Mr. E. M. G. Wilson

Mr. J. R. S. Luck

Mr. H. Lall

Mr. M. Khan, J.P.

Mr. Y. Ally

Mr. L. Linde

Mr. R. D. Persaud

Mr. M. Poonai

Mr. M. Bhagwan

Mr. G. Bowman

Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)

- Mr. E. V. Viapree

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)

- Mr. F. A. Narain.

Absent:

The Honourable M. Kasim, Minister of Works and Hydraulics - on leave

The Honourable D. Mahraj, Minister of Health

The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.,
Attorney-General and Minister of State

Mr. T. A. Sancho - on leave

Mr. M. Hamid, J.P. - on leave

Mr. D. C. Jagan

Dr. S. A. Ramjohn

Mr. E. M. Stoby

Mr. S. M. Saffee.

2.10 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

**LETTER OF THANKS FROM
MRS. CHAN-A-SUE**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have to announce that a letter has been received from Mrs. Eloise Chan-A-Sue, expressing her gratitude to Members of this hon. Assembly for the kind sentiments expressed on the occasion of the death of her husband, Mr. Charles Chan-A-Sue.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Leave of absence from today's sitting has been granted to the hon. Mohamed Kasim, Minister of Works and Hydraulics.

WELCOME TO MR. C. V. NUNES

I notice the hon. Member, Mr. C.V. Nunes, in his seat. I want to express a welcome to him

and I venture the hope that his term of service in this National Assembly will proceed uninterrupted. [Hon. Members: "Hear, hear."]

**PRESENTATION OF PETITION
PRIVATE BILL**

**CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE
IN GUYANA**

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Joaquin): On behalf of the Church of the Nazarene, I present a petition seeking permission to introduce in the Assembly the Private Bill intituled:

"An Act to incorporate the Church of the Nazarene in Guyana."

The Acting Clerk (Mr. Viapree): The Petition reads as follows:

"HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

- and -

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Humble Petition of:

REV. DAVID FRANKLIN BROWNING in his capacity as the Executive Officer of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene Jefferson, Missouri, United States of America.

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

1. That the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene Jefferson, Missouri, United States of America is a Christian Organisation incorporated, organised and existing under and by virtue of the Laws of Missouri, United States of America and through its Foreign Missions has become established and has been working among the people of this country continuously since 1948, when the Rev. Leland Rogers was appointed a Missionary in this country.
2. At present there are eleven organised Churches located in the towns and villages, four full congregations without present church buildings and forty-seven Sunday School groups of which twelve are ready for the establishment of churches and full congregations.
3. The enrolled membership at date is 712 and the Sunday School enrolment numbers 3,400.
4. The establishment is staffed at present by five Missionaries,
 - Rev. David Franklin Browning
 - Rev. Samuel M. Taylor
 - Rev. Everet Wayne Knox
 - Rev. Peter C. Burkhart
 - Rev. Jerry Larkin Demetreall of whom are appointed Marriage Officers.
5. The organisation has acquired by special licence the property shown in the attached schedule for the establishment of churches, offices and residence for its personnel.
6. The organisation desires to acquire further property in Guyana to expand its churches, mission work and establish training facilities among its congregation. Thus it requires to incorporate the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene in Guyana under the name and style of the General Board of the Church of the Nazarene, Guyana, with power to acquire and dispose of property and to obtain the other benefits and obligations of such incorporation in Guyana.
7. Your Petitioner respectfully requests permission to have introduced into the National Assembly the following Bill, viz.,

"A BILL intituled AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE IN GUYANA".

AND IN DUTY BOUND WILL EVER PRAY.

Dated 11th August, 1966.

Petitioner

The General Board of the Church of the Nazarene Registered Office 230 Almond Street, Post Office Box 170, Georgetown.

Samuel M. Taylor,

Attorney

Frank R. Allen

Counsel for Petitioner."

Question -

"That the Promoters be allowed to proceed with the Bill" -

put, and agreed to.

PRESENTATIONS OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Papers were laid -

Minutes of the First Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on the 17th of August, 1966 - [Mr. Speaker.]

Financial Paper No. 2 of 1966 - Schedule of Additional Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending August, 1966, totalling \$2,509,747.00 [The Minister of Finance.]

In terms of Standing Order No. 69, the Minister of Finance named Monday, the 29th of August, 1966, as the day for the consideration of the Financial Paper.

- (a) Crown Lands (Amendment) Regulations, 1966, made under section 17 of the Crown Lands Ordinance, Chapter 175,

by the Governor-General on the 25th of July, 1966.

- (b) Petroleum (Prospecting and Winning) (Amendment) Regulations, 1966 (No. 7) made under section 4 (1) of the Petroleum (Production) Ordinance, Chapter 199, by the Governor-General on the 8th of August, 1966, and published in the Gazette on the 13th of August, 1966. [The Minister of Forests, Lands and Mines.]

Third Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the British Guiana Electricity Corporation for the year ended December 31, 1963. [The Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation.]

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS

Mr. Khan: I beg to ask the hon. Minister of Labour Question No. 1 standing in my name on the Order Paper: Is it true that Government Contractors are required to follow Government regulations in respect of fair wages and other benefits for their workers?

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Merriman): Contractors employed by Government are required to observe the provisions of any existing law which might apply to their workers or themselves. Apart from this, they are required, as a condition of the contract, to comply with the Fair Wages Rules, 1946.

Mr. Khan: I should like to ask the Minister whether it is an established practice that, before any contract is awarded, these conditions ought to be fulfilled, namely a contract for fair wages and other benefits for the workers.

Mr. Merriman: I do not understand the question that before the contract is completed the contractor has to satisfy the conditions.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karan: Is there any means of checking on these contractors? Is the Minister aware of the fact that contractors are carrying out contracts without fair wages being observed for their workers?

Mr. Merriman: All contractors who undertake work with Government are examined as to their honesty of purpose. When contracts are executed, contract officers check to see if contractors comply with regulations.

Mr. Hubbard: Can the hon. Minister say what tribunal determines the honesty of purpose of a contractor?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Khan: Prior to the execution of a contract, are there not certain requirements which the contractor must conform to before the contract is given out, one of them being to ensure fair wages and other benefits for the workers?

Mr. Merriman: I said that, in order to be listed, a Government contractor has to give such indications.

OVERTIME TO MINISTERS' CHAUFFEURS

Mr. Khan: I beg to ask the Minister of Labour Question No. 2 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

- (i) Is Government aware that chauffeurs employed by Ministers and paid from Government funds are dissatisfied that they are being called upon to work abnormally long and unusual hours, without their being paid for overtime?
- (ii) What steps will Government take to ensure that these chauffeurs are not unconscionably exploited either -
 - (a) in respect of the non-payment of overtime rates, or
 - (b) by their being made to carry out unusual or humiliating duties?

Mr. Merriman: The Answer is as follows: Chauffeurs are employed by individual Ministers, who are paid a chauffeur allowance monthly by Government to be used towards the expenses of employing a chauffeur. Representatives of the General Workers' Union, which is seeking recognition to bargain for the chauffeurs, met the Minister of Labour and discussed certain representations for an increase in wages, payment of overtime and the provision of uniforms.

Mr. Luck: The hon. Minister said that they met with him. Will the hon. Minister of Labour not confirm that his colleagues, hon. Ministers of the Government, threatened their chauffeurs with dismissal for asking for these minimum decent conditions of employment? If this is so, what has been the result of the representations made to him by these people?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Luck: I will repeat the question. Representations on behalf of these people have been made to the hon. Minister of Labour. [The Prime Minister: "Question!"] I should like to know what has happened as a result of these representations.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Bhagwan: As a further supplementary question: Will the Minister inform this House (i) How many chauffeurs are now employed by Ministers? (ii) What wages are now being paid to them? (iii) What overtime earnings do they get? (iv) What is the position with respect to the granting of uniforms?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Wilson: Will the Minister say whether some of the duties of the chauffeurs employed by Ministers are to wash their dogs - [Laughter.] - attend to their gardens and drive their wives to the markets? [Mr. Checks: "What's wrong with that?"]

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Khan: Can the Minister say, upon the determination of the representations which have been made by the union to the Ministry of Labour, whether chauffeurs will be paid for overtime work prior and subsequent to these representations? If they are not going to be paid, will the Minister tell us why?

Mr. Merriman: I do not know if the hon. Member is anticipating the reply to the second part of the Question.

Mr. Khan: May I ask the hon. Minister to answer the second part of Question 2?

Mr. Merriman: The Answer to the second part of the Question is as follows: As you are aware no minimum wages are prescribed for private car chauffeurs. As was pointed out to the representatives of the union, however, Government has increased the chauffeur allowance payable to Ministers from \$90.00 to \$120.00 per month with effect from 14th December, 1964, and the rate of \$120.00 per month, which was the least paid to the chauffeurs of Ministers, is more than the minimum wage prescribed for hire car chauffeurs. The union was also advised to take up with the individual employer the question of payment for unusually long hours of work where this obtained and also the supply of uniforms, if this was a requirement for the job. No representations were received nor reference made to duties which might be termed unusual or humiliating to a chauffeur.

Mr. Luck: Will the Minister of Labour not deplore statements allegedly coming from Ministers, published in the newspapers, that they would dismiss their chauffeurs rather than pay them overtime? [The Prime Minister: "Do not worry with the *Mirror*."] These statements are published in the *Guyana Graphic*. [The Prime Minister: "The *Mirror*."] As Minister of Labour, will the Minister indicate to this House what are the normal hours of work for these chauffeurs, so that overtime payment may accrue after those hours have been observed?

Mr. Merriman: That supplementary question is not relevant to the Question before the House.

Mr. Khan: In keeping with the Answer given to the second part of Question 2, and in view of the abnormally long hours that chauffeurs employed by Ministers have to work, will the Minister say whether any consideration will be given for them to be paid overtime?

Mr. Merriman: If I am so informed, I will give consideration, but I am not aware of it, as I previously said.

Mr. Khan: I did not hear that answer.

Mr. Merriman: If this is so, I will consider it.

Mr. Ram Karran: Will the Minister indicate whether it is the function and duty of the chauffeurs to drive Ministers' wives to the markets? [Mr. Cheeks: "What is wrong with that?"]

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Merriman: I thought it was a condition of duty during the early part of 1964.

**WATER FOR FAIRFIELD -
DE KENDEREN - COTTAGE AREA**

Mr. Khan: I beg to ask the hon. Minister of Local Government Question No. 3 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

- (i) Will the Minister state how soon will the water pipelines be rejoined or repaired in the Fairfield-De Kenderen-Cottage area so as to provide pure water for the residents of those areas?
- (ii) Will the Minister state how soon will Government provide piped pure-water services to the residents of the Craig-Hope-Friendship areas on the East Bank of Demerara?

The Minister of Local Government (Mr. Cheeks): The Answer to the first part is:

- (a) The pipeline in the Fairfield-De Kenderen-Cottage area was resited when the public road was being reconstructed. It has since been damaged, and sections removed, by persons unknown.

The pressure of the wells supplying the area is too low to provide a satisfactory

flow throughout the line and this is believed to be the reason why the line has been broken in several places. Government is pursuing the question of replacing the pipes and introducing a pressurised system.

An adequate supply can be provided if one of the wells is pumped but the residents would have to pay for the cost of maintenance and operation.

The Answer to the second part of the Question is:

- (b) Craig, Hope and Friendship formerly received a pressurised supply of water from the Government owned well at Friendship, which is on privately owned land.

In February, 1964, as a result of an incident between the owner of the land and the Pure Water Supply Department, pumping operations had to be discontinued.

Arrangements were, however, made for Craig Village District to be supplied from the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee's distribution system at Grove while Hope and Friendship continued to receive water from the Friendship well, by gravity flow.

During the early part of this year the residents of Hope and Friendship made representations for an improved pure water supply, and agreed to pay for private connections.

It was decided to give effect to this and the land on which the well is situated has now been leased to Government and it will now be possible for pumping operations to recommence.

It is expected that work in the area will commence shortly.

Mr. Khan: With respect to the first part of the Question, obviously the hon. Minister did not know what he was talking about. I should like to know whether the Minister is not aware that the well between the junction of Fairfield and de Hoop has sufficient pressure to feed the pipelines right through to Cottage.

Mr. Cheeks: I am advised that that is not so. That system is not pressurised.

Mr. Khan: Is the Minister aware that when these pipelines were resited, they were not resited in such a way as to give a continuity of flow, and as a result, there is no water? I should like to know whether the hon. Minister is aware that the pipelines were not sited correctly, as a result of which, residents are suffering?

Mr. Checks: The Answer to that is that the residents themselves have broken the lines. In some cases, parts have been removed. If the Member goes there he will see that.

Mr. Khan: Will the Minister tell this House if he is aware of the fact that when the road was being widened, all the pipelines had to be dug up and, consequently, parts were removed from the main section and transferred to the Mahaica section by the Pure Water Supply Division?

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

Mr. Wilson: The Minister said that water can be provided if one of the wells is pumped, but residents will have to pay the costs of maintenance and operation. Does the Minister mean that water will not be supplied until they can pay? [**Mr. Bissember:** "Do you infer that?"]

[*The hon. Minister offered no reply.*]

Dr. Ramsahoye: Could the hon. Minister tell this House when it was discovered that the pipelines were broken?

Mr. Checks: The pipelines were discovered broken some months ago. They were repaired and shortly after they were found broken again. The "cocks" as they are called, were removed.

Mr. Wilson: Will the Minister admit that it is because of the incompetence of his Ministry that water was not available at Wismar for the delegates -- [*Laughter.*]

TRANSPORT & HARBOURS DEPARTMENT

Mr. Lall: I beg to ask the Minister of Communications Question No. 4 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

- (i) How many persons in the Transport and Harbours Department are designated as Grade II Supervisors on the New Amsterdam Wharf?
- (ii) Are all the persons so graded being paid the salaries of Grade II Supervisors?
- (iii) If any Grade II Supervisors are being paid the salaries of Grade III Supervisors, will the Minister state the reasons therefor?

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Correia):

- (i) There are no employees designated Supervisors at the New Amsterdam Stelling, but there are Clerks and it is presumed that these are the persons to whom the Question refers. It is normally the case that one (1) Grade II Clerk is posted for duty at the New Amsterdam Stelling.

At present, owing to temporary transfers and postings, that Grade II Clerk is serving at Stanleytown Stelling and a Grade III Clerk has been posted to New

Amsterdam as a temporary measure. There is, therefore, no person designated as Grade II Clerk at the New Amsterdam Stelling for the moment.

- (ii) and In the light of the
(iii) Answer to the first Question, the second and third Questions do not apply.

Mr. Ram Karran: Would the hon. Minister say how long this condition will continue and when these Clerks will be paid?

Mr. Correia: The appointment is a temporary one and it will be adjusted as soon as the department can find a Clerk to fill that position.

Mr. Ram Karran: Would the hon. Minister tell us whether the Chief Civil Engineer in the Transport and Harbours Department is being replaced by an expatriate?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Linde: Is the Minister aware of the serious dissatisfaction over the receipt of wages?

Mr. Correia: I have not heard of any serious dissatisfaction of payments received by Clerks.

Mr. Wilson: Is the Minister saying that Grade II Clerks are satisfied? Is he saying that?

Mr. Correia: I have no reason to believe that there is any dissatisfaction.

Mr. Lall: Is it true to state that workers who were promoted as Grade I Clerks several years ago are still being paid as Grade II Clerks?

2.40 p.m.

Mr. Correia: I am not aware of that.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT OF MR. RAMPHAL, C.M.G., Q.C.

Mr. Wilson: I beg to ask the hon. Prime Minister Question No. 5 standing in my name:

- (i) Is the Honourable S.S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C., Attorney-General, employed on contract by the Government?

If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Prime Minister say for how long?

- (ii) Is Mr. Ramphal to receive a gratuity or other form of superannuation benefit and/or compensation at the end of his term as Attorney-General?

- (iii) Is Mr. Ramphal to be provided with, at Government's expense, a free house or an allowance in lieu thereof?

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): The Answer to the Question is:

- (i) No.
- (ii) No.
- (iii) No.

Mr. Luck: I hope we are getting truthful Answers regarding this matter. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether Mr. Ramphal did not live in Government quarters for at least six months before he occupied his own residence?

The Prime Minister: In order to facilitate the hon. Attorney-General, while his present residence was being reconstructed and he could not find a suitable residence to rent, he was accommodated by Government in a certain building which was once occupied by the brother of the hon. Member.

Mr. Luck: Will the hon. Prime Minister say what was the rent paid for this residence which was occupied by Mr. Ramphal?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of the rental value of the residence.

Mr. Luck: The rent for the house, which was computed for income tax purposes in relation to somebody else, was \$240. I would like to ask the hon. Prime Minister whether the sum of \$240 has been computed in the hon. Mr. Ramphal's income for the purpose of income tax, less such rent as he may actually have been paying?

His taxable income must now be increased by \$240, less the \$60 rent that he has been paying. Has this been done?

The Prime Minister: I am not aware of what rental was paid. The hon. Attorney-General lives in his private house for which he receives no allowance.

Mr. Luck: Will the hon. Prime Minister give this House the assurance that, in relation to the period when the hon. Attorney-General was living in the house of the Credit Corporation, he will be treated no differently, in law, from any other person who may have occupied that house?

The Prime Minister: Under my administration, no one is above the law.

KITTY RAILWAY STATION

Mr. Ally: I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Communications Question No. 6 standing in my name: Will the Minister state when construction of the proposed new Railway Station at Kitty will be started?

Mr. Correia: Government does not have any plans for the construction of a new Railway Station at Kitty.

Mr. Ram Karran: Is the hon. Minister aware that the accommodation at the Railway Station is inadequate?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House) (Mr. Bissember): May I draw Your Honour's attention to the time? It is now 2.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: I have observed that.

**UNEMPLOYED AND
UNDEREMPLOYED PERSONS
IN GUYANA**

Mr. Ally: I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Labour Question No. 7 standing in my name: What was the number, as at 31st March, 1966, of -

(a) unemployed persons

(i) in Georgetown?

(ii) in the areas outside of Georgetown?

(b) underemployed persons?

Mr. Merriman: There is no information available on the number of persons who were unemployed or underemployed at 31st March, 1966. However, data showing the position in March, 1965, can be obtained from the Report on Manpower Requirements and the Labour Force, 1965, which was published in June, 1966. This Report used two bases for measuring the labour force and its various characteristics; one measuring the situation over a period of one week and the other over a period of one year, both periods terminating on 20th March, 1965. The following position was disclosed in the Report:-

(a) Unemployed persons during "Survey Week" (i. e. week ended 20th March, 1965)

George-		
town		8,830 persons
Other Areas -	<u>27,814</u>	"
		<u>36,644</u> persons

Unemployed Persons during Year ended 20th March, 1965

George-		
town	-	8,800 persons
Other Areas -	<u>18,336</u>	
		<u>27,136</u> persons

(b) Underemployed is a subjective term depending on the nature of a person's gainful occupation and the amount of annual earnings a person would be content to live on. For these reasons no attempt was made in the survey to determine the proportion of persons who would have considered themselves underemployed during the year ended 20th March, 1965. However, the table below shows the level of employment among the persons who worked during the year according to the number of months worked:

Number of Months Worked	Persons
Less than one month	1,968
One to three months	20,793
Four to six months	35,421

[MR. MERRIMAN]

Seven to nine months	30,564
Ten months and over	75,572
Not stated	1,594
	<u>165,912</u>

The Employment Exchange only attempts to place in employment those persons who are unemployed and who are registered at the Exchange.

Mr. Speaker: The next Item please; we have to close Questions.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL ORGANISATIONS BILL

The Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar): I beg to move that this Item be deferred.

Question put, and agreed to.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

INADEQUATE NOTICE OF MEETINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan): I should like to raise, in this Assembly, a matter regarding the privileges of Members of this House. I refer the persistent and consistent late notice for summoning meetings of this Assembly. Notification for today's meeting reached me only on the evening of last Tuesday. When I approached some of my colleagues of this House, I found that some of them did not receive their notices of the meeting until Wednesday. In fact, the Secretary of the P.P.P. par-

liamentary group, Mr. Luck, did not receive his papers until he came to the House this afternoon.

A Member of this House who resides in Berbice, Mr. Poonai, has not yet received his papers. We have also two Members who are living in remote areas in the country: one lives in the Berbice River; he is here accidentally and not because he had received any notice of this meeting; and another Member lives in the Moruka River who is not here today, no doubt, because of the fact that he has not received any notice of this meeting.

2.50 p.m.

Only last week I had to speak to you, sir, by telephone in connection with another meeting, namely, the meeting of the Committee of Selection, notice of which, according to the notification, was written on the 15th August for a meeting summoned for the 17th August. Clearly this is not good enough. As I pointed out, there are many Members of the Assembly who come from remote areas and some are practising at the Bar. As the Prime Minister would know, Judges and Magistrates are not always willing to give leave of absence to Barristers or to allow postponement of cases.

I would urge you, sir, to request the Leader of the Government Business at all times to give adequate notice of these meetings, so that the work of this Assembly can be carried out properly and so that the Members, at least those of the Opposition, can come here well prepared for whatever subject may be under discussion. I do hope that these lapses will not continue in the future.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House will you say something?

Mr. Bissenber: I do not concede that there have been any lapses on the part of the Government.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition has spoken to me on several occasions, not about non-receipt of notifications. In some cases we have tried to meet him. I have in mind two cases. On one occasion he was campaigning in the Essequibo district and Government's business was urgent. We met him and did not sit on the Monday planned.

Without going into the matters in detail, I may say that every effort is being made for members of the Opposition to be notified in good time. It is not correct, as stated in the letter of the Leader of the Opposition to you, sir, which was copied to me, that the Standing Orders make provision for notice. The Standing Orders make no provision and we follow the practice in England, which we consider is to give reasonable time. We always try to give reasonable time to the hon. Members of the Opposition, so that the business of the House can be proceeded with. I undertake in future to ensure that reasonable time is given to Members before they attend the sittings of the House.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

REVISION AND/OR MODIFICATION OF STANDING ORDERS

"Whereas the Standing Orders as in force in the

previous House of Assembly prior to the 26th May, 1966, are still in force as the rules of procedure of the present National Assembly;

And Whereas the aforesaid Standing Orders need revision and/or modification:

Resolved, That the said Standing Orders be referred to the Standing Orders Committee of the National Assembly for the necessary revision and/or modification."

[**Mr. Bissenber.**]

Mr. Bissenber: Under paragraph 7(4) of The Guyana Independence Order 1966, provision was made for the Standing Orders of the then House of Assembly to be effective for the present National Assembly. It has become imperative, not only because of representations made by my colleagues on this side of the House, but also because of the additional number of Members in this House, that these Standing Orders should be revised or amended.

I therefore move that the present Standing Orders be referred to the Standing Orders Committee for any necessary revision and/or modification. The report will be submitted to the Assembly in the normal course.

Question put, and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 29th August, 1966, at 2 p.m." - [**Mr. Bissenber.**]

Adjourned accordingly at 2.54 p.m.