

AMENDING THE ORGANIC ACT OF VIRGIN ISLANDS

NOVEMBER 28, 1941.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. KOCIALKOWSKI, from the Committee on Insular Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 5925]

The Committee on Insular Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 5925) to amend the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands of the United States, approved June 22, 1936, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

The following letter from Mr. E. K. Burlew, Acting Secretary of the Interior, sets forth the policy of the Department of the Interior with respect to this legislation:

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, November 27, 1941.

Hon. LEO KOCIALKOWSKI,
*Chairman, Committee on Insular Affairs,
House of Representatives.*

MY DEAR MR. KOCIALKOWSKI: I have received your letter of November 3 requesting a report on H. R. 5925, a bill to amend the Organic Act of the Virgin Islands of the United States, approved June 22, 1936.

Under section 20 of the organic act in its present form, the Governor of the Virgin Islands or his representative is required to attend meetings of the local legislative bodies. This requirement is unique; to my knowledge, in no other State, Territory, or possession of the United States is it mandatory for the executive or his deputy to attend legislative sessions. It is undesirable in that it frequently necessitates hasty decisions and has the effect of committing the Governor on pending legislation as to the merits of which he has not had an opportunity to give adequate consideration. Moreover, it tends to break down the separation of the executive and legislative branches of the Virgin Islands government and the system of checks and balances between those branches, which are essential aspects of our constitutional form of government.

H. R. 5925 would make attendance by the Governor or his representative at legislative sessions permissive rather than mandatory. I approve of the bill and recommend that it receive the favorable consideration of your committee.

The Director of the Bureau of the Budget has advised that there would be no objection to the submission of this report.

Sincerely yours,

E. K. BURLEW,
Acting Secretary of the Interior.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 2a of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

SEC. 20. * * * He [shall] *may* attend or may depute another person to represent him at the meetings of the legislative authorities herein established, and may give expression to his views on any matter before such bodies.

