

# Official Report

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2015-2018) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN*

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108<sup>TH</sup> Sitting

Wednesday, 12<sup>TH</sup> December, 2018

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*The Assembly convened at 10.15 a.m.*

*Prayers*

*[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]*

## **PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS**

The following reports were laid:

- (1) Value-Added Tax (Amendment of Schedule I Order 2018 – No. 49 of 2018.
- (2) Value-Added Tax (Amendment) Regulations 2018 – No. 12 of 2018.

*[Minister of Finance]*

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

## **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

## **MOTION**

**MOTION TO APPROVE THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER, 2019**

WHEREAS the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana requires that Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for any financial year should be laid before the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution also provides that when the Estimates of Expenditure have been approved by the Assembly an Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the Assembly providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet that expenditure;

AND WHEREAS the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the financial year 2018 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2018-11-26.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2019, of a total sum of two hundred and seventy seven billion, four hundred and thirty one million, nine hundred and sixty eight thousand dollars (**\$277,431,968,000**), **excluding twenty three billion, two hundred and eighty seven million, and forty three thousand dollars (\$23,287,043,000)** which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.  
*[Minister of Finance]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, we will continue our consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for 2019. The House will resolve itself into committee to undertake this work.

*Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.*

*In Committee of Supply.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, you will recall the announcement I made before we rose yesterday. We are now on the third day of our consideration and, this morning, we will start with Agency 40, Ministry of Education.

**Agency 40: Ministry of Education** *[10.19 a.m.]*

## **Current Expenditure**

### **Programme: 401 – Policy Development and Administration - \$1,773,993,000**

**Ms. Selman:** Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister say what is responsible for the dramatic increase in budgetary provision for “Other”, and, maybe, could she provide, in writing, the other goods and services that will be purchased by utilising this budgetary provision?

**Minister of Education [Dr. Henry]:** In response to the question, there are seven items that are catered for with this allocation; the first being the clearing of containers of books and the cost of miscellaneous goods by the Book Distribution Unit (BDU), and that will be in excess of \$4 million.

We are also catering for advertisements in all four daily newspapers and appearances on television by staff.

The third item would be to pay part time staff to input information into the Human Resources Information Database System. We are moving to an electronic database for human resource. That is something that we had not done in the past, and, therefore, additional sums would have been allocated for that.

We are going to be rolling out the Electronic Management Information System software to additional secondary schools.

We will also maintain network infrastructure; we are going to be updating the antivirus solution and monitor network; and we are also going to be doing payment to the evaluators and the Ministerial Tender Board members, who will benefit from a stipend. There will be three evaluators that will be attending these meetings, and they will be paid per sitting.

The sixth item that we are going to be doing is subscription cost for analytic solution, which is a software that we use for monitoring and evaluation by the Planning Unit.

The final item to be covered with this allocation would be licensing for publishers for text, where we will be piloting e-books in schools.

**Ms. Manickchand:** A follow-up on that: Is there any money provided under this line item for the enhancement and/ or addition to the present website, which was created in the first place to bring about some sort of equity across the country so that everyone could access the Ministry's programmes and publications, and not just those who can afford to purchase copies from stores. Nothing new has been published on that site for a very long time.

**Dr. Henry:** First of all, let me say that new things have been published and that new things will continue to be published, some of which you will repost. However, I want to point out that allocations would have been provided for the maintenance of the network infrastructure, and that takes into consideration the Ministry of Education's website.

**Ms. Selman:** Line item 6302: Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister indicate or tell me what type of training budgetary allocation covers under this line item?

**Dr. Henry:** This line item caters for workshop stipend. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Office here will be hosting a number of workshops for the Commission, and some of these would include capacity building workshops. It is focusing on two big programmes; man and the biosphere and it are also looking at the Sandwatch Project for the community development workers, *et cetera*.

The Procurement Unit is also another important unit, and it will also be conducting training for staff throughout the Ministry. The Procurement Unit will conduct training which would provide capacity building, give relevant guidance and valid certification to staff, which are related to procurement issues. These are the big trainings that will be occurring under this programme.

There is also one other area that we will focus on in this area, and that will be the Special Projects Training. That will be training related to the National School Feeding Programme, and training for the School Feeding Programme. Those are the areas to which training is speaking.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Again, on line item 6284, would the Minister be willing to layover to the House, before the end of this week, the new items that were published on the website that parents, students and teachers could use, and the dates of publication? That is the first question.

Secondly, on line item 6291, National and Other Events, I see a significant increase from the money actually spent in 2018, for 2019, and an even more significant increase when compared to the actual money spent in 2017. Could the Minister kindly explain why there is an increase and what will be celebrated under this line item?

**Dr. Henry:** For this line item and for this 2019 allocation, the Ministry intends to have an education exposition. This is the first time we will be hosting such an event, and, therefore, allocations were made under this line item for that.

In addition, over the years we have always had issues related to the financing of the National Schools' Championship, and so we have decided to increase the allocation for that. This allocation would also cover the usual other national events that we take care of, such as Education Month and Mashramani, there will also have a book drive, and, certainly, we will observe some of the international days that are designated by the United Nations.

**Ms. Manickchand:** I did not get an answer on whether we could get, laid over for the Education website, the new publications uploaded and when they were uploaded. We just want it laid over. If the Hon. Minister could say, when she stands up, that she will or that she will not, depending on what she wants to say, then that would be an answer.

Following up on line item 6291, the Education Month Exposition 2018, which I think will be incredible to show case all that we can do and have, was scheduled to happen this year, as far as the press reports went. Is it because of a lack of money that it did not happen?

Secondly, the Hon. Minister mentioned "Education Month". Is it because of a lack of money in 2018 that "Education Month" was practically not celebrated and led one newspaper to comment that it was cancelled.

Thirdly, the Minister mentioned international days such as the International Literacy Day on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2018. Again, this year, we saw that go with no celebration and with very little done. Is it because of a lack of money in 2018 that these days were not observed?

**Dr. Henry:** First of all, in relation to Education Month, we observed Education Month in what we believe was a fitting way, and the sums allocated were adequate to do what we had intended to get done in terms of our calendar of activities for 2018.

*10.30 a.m.*

With regards to the Education Month Exposition 2018, we felt that given the industrial action by many of our teachers during the beginning of the new school year, it would not have been appropriate to go ahead with the hosting of that event. In so far as the other activities are related which were observed by the United Nations, in my own deliberate judgement, I felt that they were adequately celebrated to the extent that we wanted to celebrate them. In so far as the laying over of the documents are concerned we would be more than pleased to have that laid over to you as soon as they become available by my relevant technical staff.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Line item 6281 – Security Services: In 2017 you would have expended \$87,478,000, in 2018 it is expected that you will spend \$90,563,000, and in 2019 the budgeted allocation is \$69,552,000. Could you say what caused that decrease, Hon. Minister? Secondly, could you also say is it for 24 hours security services? Does it cater for the new or the increased rate for security guards?

**Dr. Henry:** The first part of the question has to do with the cost and why there is a reduction. I would like to point out that in the previous years, on weekdays, we would have gotten services at the rate of \$450 per hour and for overtime and weekend rates we would have gotten services at a rate of \$675 per hour, respectively. The current contract that we are on however as of 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2018, we would have gotten a reduced rate which is \$285 per hour for weekdays and \$570 per hour for overtime on weekends. Hence this is the reduction in the security cost and we could have only used that information to forecast a smaller number.

In so far as the number of hours are concerned in relation to security provided for our administrative buildings under Programme 01, most of them are 24 hours. I believe that there are two or so that are not 24 hours and I will be happy to provide you with specific information for building by building, the number of hours for security provided to each building that is catered for under this line item if that will suffice.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Under the same line item 6281: Could you say, is it the same security provider that we had in 2017, 2018 and which you propose to have in 2019? Could we have the name of that security provider?

**Dr. Henry:** We have had a change in the service provider based on the procurement tender procedure that was observed. I could not determine at this time what security system would be in place for 2019, until we would have gone out and observed due process and when that information becomes available, you, like any other Guyanese will have access to that information.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Line item 6301 – Education Subventions and Grants: Would the Hon. Minister say to us, who would be the beneficiaries of school uniform assistance at the nursery education level, primary education level, and secondary education level?

**Dr. Henry:** That will be addressed when we get to the respective programme. This is Programme 01 and this is for administration. We would not be paying school uniform for nursery until we get to Programme 03. When we get to Programme 04 which is for the primary level, you can ask your question there and of course there is Programme 05 which is for the secondary level. I will ask that you hold onto your question and when we get to the appropriate programme I will be more than happy to take your question, Sir.

**Ms. Manickchand:** I believe that we are ready for this programme to be put.

**Mr. Chairman:** Pardon?

**Ms. Manickchand:** I believe, we, on this side of the House are finished with our questioning for this programme and are ready for this programme to be put.

**Mr. Chairman:** I see. Thank you.

*Programme: 401 - Policy Development and Administration - \$1,773,933,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 401 - Policy Development and Administration - \$390,400,000**

**Ms. Selman:** Project code 2609400 – Education Sector Improvement Project: Could the Hon. Minister provide a description, with specifics of course, of what the integrated curriculum reforming Mathematics, Science, English and Social Studies for nursery, primary and grade's seven to 11 entails?

Could the Hon. Minister also indicate or provide us with a timeline as to when the reform will commence?

**Dr. Henry:** In so far as the curriculum reform is concerned, we have already commenced the process. The curriculum framework would have been developed and firmly adopted; that is subcomponent 1.1.

There is curriculum writing that is initiated at nursery, primary and secondary levels. There will be 76 persons trained in terms of writing, enrichment specialist and subject specific review committees and these will be actively engaged. There will be teacher training of educators from the schools selected to be part of the pilot of the renewed curriculum. The first pilot for grade's one and two for the renewed curriculum will be undertaken in 2019. Education Officers will be trained in 2019 to monitor implementation of the renewed curriculum and that will be in pilot schools.

Then, there is subcomponent 1.2 which speaks to teachers training. The Ministry will conduct in 2019 a master coding exercise for classroom observations. They will also conduct classroom observer training in the use of what they refer to as the teach instrument. They would establish a baseline percentage for teachers from pilot schools, meeting the standards for students centre teaching practices which would be according to the teach instrument.

Then, of course there is subcomponent 1.3 which is the national assessment capacity. They will train staff who are attached through the National Centre for Educational Resource Development (NCERD) and use the results on mathematics and language arts assessment. They will get that data from the continuous improvement that they are working on in relation to examinations. They will also procure what is a marking equipment and the accompanying software.

Then there is component 4 which speaks to teaching and learning materials and they will purchase a second tranche of equipment in 2019.



When you get to subcomponent 2.1 there will be strengthening in terms of teaching capacity and so at least 20 lecturers will be trained on course delivery through the University of Michigan. They will begin the piloting of the student evaluation system and that will be the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Guyana. They will begin applying the developed assess strategy, and they will utilise the soft online examination portal within the schools of the faculty of health sciences.

There is subcomponent 2.2 which will be improving the learning environment and all designs and reviews completed and adopted for the health sciences building at the level of the University of Guyana.

Then there is component 1 which is the integrated curriculum reform. There will be the Core Technical Committee and Subject Specialist Committee which has already been established. There will be a consultancy firm contracted to design the curriculum framework and that took place on 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 and to date the following would have been completed. The inception reports, the curriculum reform blueprint, and the curriculum writing process documents have all been completed.

Capacity building sessions were conducted already for Senior Education Officers from June 2018. The Subject Specific Committee and the Core Technical Committee began operating from July, 2018 and the curriculum writers as of November 2018. That of course was facilitated by the curriculum consultants.

Third - there is beginning of the writing of the curriculum proper which has already commenced from grades one to nine.

Fourth - there is the procurement of equipment which would include copiers, printers, risograph *et cetera* and these have been delivered to NCERD already to facilitate the work necessary for curriculum writing, as the institution is a central hub for the curriculum writing.

Fifth - the Ministry of Education Planning Unit would be advising on the sampling frame for the random selection of the pilot schools for component 1. We would have worked in Region 4 and 9. We have already selected those schools in those areas for the pilot programme. The bank theme will create pairs of schools for pilot and control.

Sixth - the teach classroom observation tool used to measure student centred teaching approaches. That was already introduced, and it has been modified for Guyanese local content and context. Personnel's have been trained and certified in its use and the certification process occurred between February to November, 2018.

Then, there is also the Analytic Grade Marker which would engage in August 2018 to work with and build capacity in the Assessment Unit at NCERD, which is, of course, to do marking using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) data analysis and assessment creation.

*10.45 a.m.*

Of course, there is another component which speaks to the strengthening of the teaching capacity and improving the learning environment. That is centred primarily on the University of Guyana – facility of Health Sciences. I could lay over and provide you with as much information as you require, but, that is the extent of information I currently have with me.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Yes please, your honour we would like to have that laid over. We on this side are very cognisant of the time limitations. We expect of the entire House to be cognisant of that. We would like to see that reflected in both questions and answers.

Project code 2406600 – Land Transport: Could the Hon. Minister layover the vehicles that are going to be purchased, type of vehicle, and for what use? If that was described in Volume 3, I would not have any need to ask. I would been able to get the answer there. This Volume 3 states that it is to purchase vehicles and a truck, and the purpose is for improved transportation. That says nothing to us.

**Dr. Henry:** While the question is asked that the information be laid over. In view of the fact that we have the Press here and that this would be recorded in the records, I would like to state that the vehicles that we are referring to would be a 15-seater bus and that is for 21 Brickdam. Could I answer, or do I need your protection, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister, I did not hear the request you made. What is it you that are saying?

**Dr. Henry:** Mr. Chairman, I am saying notwithstanding the request to lay over the document, given that this is not a lot of information, we have both the media here, and it needs to be part of the Hansard, I would like to read this into the record.

I am saying that we will also procure two mobile units which is to provide support to our school health system which is psychosocial support. We will also buy a canter truck, which will provide support to the Book Distribution Unit to ensure that our students need are better met.

**Mr. Chairman:** What I would ask, Hon. Members to do, is if they should, if I may quote a phrase, 'read something into the records', it should be done with the knowledge that we are working on certain time limit and that we should try to stay within it. I thank you.

**Ms. Selman:** Project code 2609400 - Education Sector Improvement Project: To say that I am not asking questions for the media, but, I am asking questions for the teachers. I myself am a teacher as you do know. I would like to ask the Minister to lay over the policy document....

*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we are not fighting there. Why are we doing that? Let us try to get back to where we were and how we started this morning. Let us just have the question and let us go ahead with it.

**Ms. Selman:** Could the, Hon. Minister, lay over the policy document in relation to the curriculum reform? Could the Hon. Minister further provide for us the criteria which was or will be used for the selection of teachers who will benefit from a part of the training process?

Could I ask would it be a side by side with the development of the curriculum reform, are we going to be having new teaching materials, a reform or an advancement on the easy path series; which to some extent could be considered, especially in Social Studies a bit out dated? Could we look forward to new materials?

**Dr. Henry:** Certainly, the document will be laid over as I indicated before when I spoke on curriculum reform. I will be happy to provide all of the documentation.

The second point I wish to touch on is that of the easy path. At this point in time we could not determine what modifications would be made. As the curriculum reform process is being under

taken, we will observe the recommendation made by the Consultant. It may or may not be revised. I think those were the two questions I got out of the commentary just now.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Project code 2609400 - Education Sector Improvement Project: Could the Hon. Minister say what criteria was used to select the 72 trainers and not the teachers? My Colleague asked the criteria for the teachers, but I am asking for the criteria for the 72 trainers that have already been selected. Could you give us a breakdown as per region where these trainers are from? Thank you.

**Dr. Henry:** The 72 persons are also teachers. The whole curriculum reform involves and pretty much is around the teachers and people who work in the education sector. They are already person who are on staff and they are not new recruits into the Ministry.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Follow-up: I understand quite clearly that there are teachers who are in the teaching profession. The Hon. Minister did not mention the criteria used. There are any teachers throughout the country. What criteria was used to select the 72 persons?

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Bharrat, are you asking a question?

**Mr. Bharrat:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** What is the question?

**Mr. Bharrat:** What is the criteria used for selecting the 72 trainers?

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes. That is all.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Thank you.

*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I am appealing to the better side of all Hon. Members to resist the temptation to enter into other than the better side of you. Hon. Ms. Selman, do you wish the floor?

**Mr. Bharrat:** Mr. Chairman, I had asked a question that the Hon. Minister did not respond to.

**Dr. Henry:** In response to the criteria used to select the persons, they had to be trained graduate teachers, with more than five years' experience and service, and they would have had to have exemplary records. Those were the main criteria used.

**Mr. Bharrat:** There was a second part of the question with the breakdown as per region with the 72 persons.

**Mr. Chairman:** I take it that that could be laid over. Is that what you are asking?

**Mr. Bharrat:** If the Minister has it. It is just a breakdown by region and not the individual persons.

**Dr. Henry:** I will lay that over.

*Mr. Chairman hit the gavel*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I do not know that what we are doing here could evoke such cross talk. Hon. Member, there was a question asked by Mr. Bharrat. Hon. Mr. Bharrat, could you repeat the question.

**Dr. Henry:** I answered it. I said I was going to lay that document over. I have answered all of the questions proposed by the member.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Bharrat, would you ask the question?

**Mr. Bharrat:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The question was, could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of the 72 persons by region.

**Dr. Henry:** Again, I am going to repeat, I will lay that over.

*Programme: 401 – Policy Development and Administration - \$390,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current expenditure**

#### **Programme: 402 - Training and Development - \$2,020,422,000**

**Ms. Manickchand:** Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: This has moved from a mere \$5 million up. Minister, would this line item cater for the reproduction of the materials used in the

very successful Early Childhood Education Programme that was just lauded by the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ms. Alice Albright?

**Dr. Henry:** It is not catered for here.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Line item 6292 - Dietary:\_The provision catered for here is just a mere \$2 million more than was used last year. We have been told that the feeding programme is going to be expanded significantly and that is why we have withdrawn the \$10,000 'Because We Care' cash grant. Is this in anyway going to cater for that expansion?

**Dr. Henry:** I am little surprised we would get a question like that under this programme, because this is under Training and Development and it caters for the students at the Cyril Potter College of Education.

As far as I am aware, they were not ever in receipts of any \$10,000 cash voucher. I believe that this is adequate to continue to pay our students at the Cyril Potter College of Education. It is dietary for our students there.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Line item 6281 – Security Services:\_Could the Hon. Minister say if the security under this head is being paid at the rate as the security service under Programme 401- Policy Development and Administration?

**Dr. Henry:** Yes.

*11.00 a.m.*

**Mr. Bharrat:** Follow-up: on the same line item, if it is the same rate Hon. Minister, in 2018 the budgetary allocation proposed to you is \$42,144,000 and the budgetary allocation for 2019 is \$47,024,000. In comparison to the Programme: 401 - Policy Development and Administration there was a decrease of \$20 million. Is it the same rate that the security would be paid?

**Dr. Henry:** Each programme rolls on its own fact, so to speak. What is happening here, under this programme, we now have the Special Education Needs Building which is located at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) and if you have a new building you would have to provide additional security and that was not catered for in previous years when that building did not exist. Notwithstanding there be a lower rate, when you have additional building, you have to take that

into consideration and that explains why there is an increase in the cost even though the rates would have been reduced. The number of buildings would have increased.

*Programme: 402 –Training and Development- \$2,020,422 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Capital Expenditure**

### **Programme: 402 – Training and Development- \$153,334,000**

**Ms. Manickchand:** We only have one question under this project code. Project code 2607200 - Resource Development Centre: This provision for smart classrooms, does it relate directly to the Cyril Potter College of Education? If yes, that will be the end of our questioning on the matter.

**Dr. Henry:** It relates to NCERD.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, I must confess to be, a little bit, not discomforted, but I have a question. When a Hon. Member gets up and say, “this is all the question that is going to be asked” and no one else can speak. I was confronted with it yesterday and I was confronted with it today. I am not asking for comments from anyone, not yet. What I enquired was whether there was any notification that someone will speak for everyone in the consideration of the estimates or in any other consideration. I understand that we have not been in receipt of any such information. Whatever is the internal or external arrangements for Members on both sides of the House, it would be helpful if the Chairman is made aware of this so he is saved the question he asks himself every time he would hear “this is all that we have to ask” or “this is the end of our questions on this matter.” Hon. Members, that is all that I am saying. I will leave it to you to determine how that is to be done. Thank you.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am not asking for a reply to what I just said. I am merely advising Members. That is all.

*Programme: 402 –Training and Development- \$153,334,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Current Expenditure**

### **Programme 403- Nursery Education- \$2,196,947,000**

**Ms. Manickchand:** Line item 6224- Print and Non-Print Materials: This has moved significantly from the provisions last year. Is this to cater for a national roll out of the very successful Early Child Hood Education Programme that was centred in the hinterland and riverine areas that we know has been extremely successful which was intended to be rolled out. Are materials going to be purchased for a national roll out under this head?

**Dr. Henry:** Why there is such a large increase is in part due to that and due to the introduction of animation at the nursery level.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Line item 6292 - Dietary: I also saw an increase in this item. Could the Minister explain this increase?

**Dr. Henry:** This caters for the expansion of the breakfast programme and the hot meal programme. It is a lengthy list and I can layover it if that would be sufficient.

**Ms. Manickchand:** I did complain in the Budget presentation that \$2 billion had gone back. I saw that the money in 2018 was not utilised. In fact, more than \$200 million was not utilised to feed our nursery babies. I am wondering which schools did not get fed or if it was determined to be enough to feed everyone and why would you need the increase now?

**Dr. Henry:** All the schools that were already on the programme we were able to have the work done and they were fed. However, the expansion had to be curtailed because that programme had to be audited. We had to wait until we got the guidance from the Auditors, based on what was happening then to move forward. That is why there was a delay as far as that programme is concerned.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Effectively, the programme was not executed. This programme provides juice and biscuits to our nursery student. Could the Hon. Minister say if there is a competitive bidding for this for the provision of these items?

**Dr. Henry:** It has been sole sourced as has been the case for many, many years from Banks DIH Ltd. and Demerara Distillers Limited (DDL).



**Ms. Manickchand:** Could the Minister clarify, did another company won the bid for the juice provision and was that then given to the company that has it presently? Does this have anything to do with the then Permanent Secretary (PS) not being a PS anymore?

**Dr. Henry:** We are currently with DDL. That is the company that is providing us with the juice.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Line item 6294 - Other: There is an allocation of \$850 million. However, in 2018 \$158,857,000 was used and in 2017 \$520 million. Could you say what special programme was catered for in 2018 under this head?

**Dr. Henry:** In 2018 we had to procure learning resource tool kits. We are not going to be procuring that in 2019. We do not need to budget for that.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Line item 6224 - Other: We said that the schools will now benefit nationally from the Early Childhood Education Programme that saw incredible success, could the Minister layover to us in writing which schools across the country will benefit from that?

**Dr. Henry:** I will lay it over. It is all the schools. I can point out.

*Programme: 403 –Nursery Education-\$2,196,947,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme 403- Nursery Education- \$70,500,000**

*Programme: 403 – Nursery Education - \$70,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme 404- Primary Education- \$3,690,455,000**

**Ms. Manickchand:** Line item 6224 - Print and Non-Print Materials: Minister, last year you said that it was too early, in your tenure, to have paid attention to the making of the workbooks in the ‘Atlantic Readers’ which was the intention when those books were first written.

I have noted that there is a Second Edition now and the only thing that seems to have changed is that my forward and my face has been removed. We obviously had time to fix some things. Is this line catering for the publication of the Atlantic Readers Workbooks which are being used nationally across this country by public and private schools alike?

*11.15 p.m.*

**Dr. Henry:** But we are working to procure the workbooks in 2019. So, that might very well come as a welcome gesture.

**Ms. Manickchand:** That sounded very heartening, “But we are working to procure...” There is a budgetary provision here. I would like a direct answer. Is this \$150 million going to procure, publish and distribute the workbooks to our primary school students across the country? It seems like a very small amount to me.

**Dr. Henry:** I am going through the list of books that we will be procuring, and yes, we will be procuring the workbooks in 2019.

**Ms. Manickchand:** In that case, then please Mdm. Minister, could you kindly layover for us the volume, how many, the quantity of each workbook? Starting from Grade 1 to Grade 6, what is the quantity of each workbook that you will be procuring? On the intended distribution, which schools are the books going to under this item? That would be a straight yes or no answer.

I come to the second question under this line, Your Honour. The Auditor General was very clear in a special report done, in collaboration with other Caribbean countries, about textbooks and how they are procured and stored. Is this amount catering for the rectification of all the errors found in that report in the Book Distribution Unit?

**Dr. Henry:** First of all, the Book Distribution Unit does not come under this programme. It is under Programme 1. So, the question is not well positioned. But having said that, nonetheless, I would like to say that most of the deficiencies identified were already being worked on, post 2015. And it is my intension to continue to work to remedy the deficiencies until we have a system that is working well. So, that would be the response.

**Ms. Manickchand:** That is encouraging to hear too, because earlier we heard that the report was wrong.

Line item 6292 – Dietary: I see again, in 2018, \$1.097 billion was allocated, budgeted, and appropriated and the Ministry was unable to spend it. I am assuming that this is where the Ministry buys biscuits...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, you have to ask a question.

**Ms. Manickchand:** As instructed please, Your Honour. Could the Minister say why the Ministry was unable to feed our primary school children, even as we know that more than 7,000 parents have lost their jobs and would have probably needed this more than ever before?

**Dr. Henry:** Thank you for the question. I wish to proffer the same answer I did for the previous programme. But just to reemphasise, the fact is that no student who benefitted from the School Feeding Programme in the past would have been taken off. What was affected was the expansion, and therefore, the number of students that we anticipated to be add, for 2018, we were not able to because the programme had to be audited. Therefore, that is the explanation for this. Thank you.

**Ms. Manickchand:** So, Minister, when the nation was told that the students would not be given their \$10,000 cash grant because it would be used to feed more children, that effectively, did not happen. Is that so?

**Dr. Henry:** Thank you for that question, because it allows me to bring out the point that the expansion started but not to the extent to which we wanted it. So, yes, we would have said to the nation that we intend to expand the School Feeding Programme and we did just that. We will continue to expand the programme further until we address those that are most vulnerable and disadvantaged. We will go to every vulnerable child and in every vulnerable community in this country. That is our intention.

**Ms. Manickchand:** I am very encouraged by that. I am not sure what capacity has changed between then and now, but we will see if it unfolds by next year.

I see that it is about \$300 million more being asked for in this year's budget. Because I know that this is a programme that goes up to Grade 2, I am specifically asking for the areas where sugar

estates were shut down - where parents have said clearly to the nation that they are unable to fund their children's education, which includes meals - if this amount is going to take any special consideration and cognisance of those areas? Hon. Minister, you just declared with much passion that you will go to every area that is vulnerable.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, what is the question?

**Ms. Manickchand:** I am asking if this allocation is aimed at the vulnerable children of the sugar workers who were fired.

**Dr. Henry:** I wish to state that sugar workers children were given special consideration as they fall into the category of children that will also require the support.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Under the same line item 6292, Dietary, could the Hon. Minister provide to this House or layover the disaggregated sum or amount which is targeting the hinterland schools?

**Dr. Henry:** We have the hot meal programme for the hinterland schools, and I can certainly provide you with all the information that is available on that. Thank you.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Line item 6294 – Other: There is, I think, a 50% increase here; actually, more than that. Could the Hon. Minister layover what is included in Other and how much is allocated to each category here?

**Dr. Henry:** I would be happy to layover that document. But I want to say that, basically, this caters for the introduction of robotics into our primary schools throughout this country. So, that would be laid over.

**Mr. Chairman:** The last question Mr. Bharrat.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service: Hon. Minister, could you say if the \$1.739 million budgeted for 2019 is adequate to maintain the David 'G' school buses?

**Dr. Henry:** Actually, this is just one vehicle, a bus that is attached to the Department of Education, 68 Brickdam, Georgetown. The number of the bus is PSS 8468. It has nothing to do with David 'G' 5Bs programme.

*Programme: 404 – Primary Education – \$3,690,455,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 404 – Primary Education – \$138,375,000**

*Programme: 404 – Primary Education – \$138,375,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 405 – Secondary Education – \$4,018,231,000**

*Programme: 405 – Secondary Education – \$4,018,231,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 405 – Secondary Education - \$ 1,400,335,000**

**Ms. Manickchand:** Your Honour, I was completely disallowed from asking anything under secondary education – the entire Opposition was. We stood twice. And Your Honour said he was not ready.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Ms. Manickchand, we are now dealing with Capital Expenditure – Programme 405.

Hon. Members, we must be clear about some things. The Chairman does not pause when he is calling out a particular programme. After the programme is presented the Hon. Member gets up, the Chairman notices the Member and gives that Member the floor. When no one gets up, the Chairman proceeds.

Hon. Member Ms. Manickchand rose before the Chairman was finished. I asked her to reclaim her seat.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** An indication she wanted to speak.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I am not asking for explanations. Hon. Member Mr. Ganga Persaud, you will rise when the Chairman addresses you.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am advising you right now that you will not disrupt the proceedings here.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** I am not disrupting the proceedings.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, please resume your seat.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Thank you, Sir.

*[Ms. Teixeira rose.]*

*11.30 a.m.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira, you will allow the Chairman to finish what he was saying. Please take your seat.

How Members will conduct themselves henceforth, if a Member has a question to ask when the programme is presented, that Member gets up and the Chairman calls on the Member at that time. If a Member is not interested in asking a question, then the Member will not rise. Thank you.

Ms. Teixeira, are you rising on a Point of Order?

**Ms. Teixeira:** Yes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, please.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I do not know if I can bring a Point of Order on you though, but I am raising a point of order.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not think you can at this stage, but go ahead.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Yes, I believe I cannot, but I need to make a point on the floor, Sir, however it is done. You were putting a question, the Member jumped up while you were doing that, you told the Member to sit and the Member did. You then proceeded to put the matter to the vote. You told the Member to sit, therefore you knew there was an interest on our side to ask questions on that item. You may have paused, but it was a very short pause before you put the question. If a Member stands, even if you say to sit, you know the Member's intention is to ask a question.

I am asking you, Sir, to please return to pages 168 and 169, Programme 405, as you were originally at and let us ask what questions we can. We have a short period of two hours which we are trying to manage as best as we can, because we intend to discuss all the programmes. We are managing on our side as best as we can within the timeframe given. Therefore, we are asking that you consider that Programme 405 be put back on the floor for questions, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Ms. Teixeira. I will accede to your request.

### **Recommittal of Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 405 – Secondary Education – \$4,018,231,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Please proceed with the questions. Hon. Ms. Manickchand, you have the floor.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Thank you very much, Sir. Line item 6291, National and Other Events, I see there is an increase in this allocation, could the Hon. Minister explain why?

**Dr. Henry:** This will cater for the Exposition, because it is catered for under the various levels.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Hon. Minister, the Exposition was catered for last year. There was a public announcement and the amount that you got last year is completely spent. Is it that it was not budgeted for last year although it was announced that it would happen?

**Dr. Henry:** It was not budgeted for in 2018.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Line item 6224 - Print and Non-Print Materials: The Ministry of Education is actually asking for or has allocated a smaller amount for 2019. Could the Minister say, one, whether this is the line item under which texts books are purchased for the secondary school

students of Guyana? Two, whether any writing of secondary school textbooks has been started, and three, whether this caters also for the exercise books that are distributed to our children?

**Dr. Henry:** It caters for exercise books and it does cater for textbooks; there will be no writing of textbooks in 2019.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Could the Hon. Minister kindly say if the Ministry of Education has ceased the practice of buying exercise books from overseas for a more expensive price than for which they are being sold here, as has been indicated in the Auditor General's Report?

**Dr. Henry:** There are a couple of things that I wish to draw attention to. One is that the audit was for textbooks, so even if exercise books were to occur in the audit, it would be an error on the part of the Auditor General. The audit was specific to textbooks. That is the first point. The second point I wish to make is that we are buying books from the Guyana National Printers Limited (GNPL). There is nothing foreign about that, exception that the company never received business from the Government prior to 2015. That is the only thing that is foreign about it.

**Ms. Manickchand:** As a matter of record, the exercise books have always been printed by the Guyana National Printers Limited. So, you may wish to correct yourself on that.

**Dr. Henry:** That is not what the records show.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Line item 6301 - Education Subventions and Grants: Does this cater for the uniforms that should be distributed to the students from more than 110 high schools?

**Dr. Henry:** It has always been catered for under this line item. Yes, it is catered for.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Ms. Manickchand, you have the floor.

**Ms. Manickchand:** I no longer want it at this moment.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, very well. Ms. Teixeira, you have the floor.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Mdm. Minister, line item, 6301, Education Subventions and Grants, I noticed on page 429 there is the breakdown for the Uniform Voucher Programme for \$109,444,000. I noticed in all the subventions that cover the Uniform Voucher Programme, that the figures are the same for nursery, primary and secondary schools. There has been no increase in the numbers or the



allocations. Therefore, I assume that the Ministry is only catering for a particular number of children in the school system. How is it that we are not increasing the number of uniforms or the amount for uniforms? Therefore, we are dealing with a cohort population, yet we are increasing the school feeding. Are we feeding more children than those who are going to school? The figures for the Uniform Voucher Programme - I am using this one for the secondary schools - has been the same every year. The number of children in nursery, primary and secondary schools remain the same. You have not increased the allowance, so that cannot explain it.

How is it that the allocations for school uniforms for the last two years remain the same and yet the dietary for this coming year has increased? In the earlier discussions, this was by \$200 million *et cetera*. Is it that we are giving them more meals? What is going on?

**Dr. Henry:** The short answer is that we are expanding the School Feeding Programme, but not the Uniform Voucher Programme. We will continue to give what we gave in the previous years. We will also rely on what we have done in the past. Each year, we were able to provide our students in the public-school system with uniform vouchers based on what we would have projected. I have no reason to doubt that 2019 would be any different. I rely on the estimates provided by the technical staff. I always relied on it and it has always held; I see no difference this time.

**Ms. Teixeira:** A Follow-up Minister: One therefore is assuming that the population in schools is not growing since the numbers that you are allocating for the Uniform Voucher Programme are the same. Or is there a view, statistically, that the population in the schools' system is dropping based on demographic and population shifts? Obviously, I believe that your planning unit would have advised you of that.

When you come to the correspondence of population in school with the School Feeding Programme and Uniform Voucher Programme, there seems to be a disconnect. The two are not being reconciled. Therefore, Minister, when you say expansion of the programme, does that mean that children who were not formerly getting meals, are now getting? I could tell you there are many areas in the interior where the children are not benefitting from the School Feeding Programme as before. I am concerned about the disconnect in figures and statistics between these are two major, massive programmes.

When you talk about “expansion,” could you please verify if it means more children than were formerly fed? Are you feeding them more? Are you now addressing areas that were neglected or are you paying more for the meals than you did before? In the interior, especially Region 9, they have their own way of paying the farmers there for the things. Are you now paying more for chicken imported from Brazil for children from the Rupununi instead of the cassava produced there?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira?

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]*

**Ms. Teixeira:** It is a question, Sir.

**Dr. Henry:** Firstly, there are a couple of the things that we must put in perspective. One, we do not feed secondary schools through the School Feeding Programme. This programme speaks to secondary schools. The School Feeding Programme goes up to Grade 2, that is nursery and primary. That is the first thing.

The dietary here speaks to President’s College and, as I pointed out, while we are not expanding or strengthening the Uniform Voucher Programme, we are certainly looking to do that for the School Feeding Programme. In fact, the cost of meals would have increased per student at President’s College which is why this number being allocated would have had to be increased in keeping with that.

In addition, I believe there are larger questions, based on all that I have heard being asked, which certainly span beyond the breath of this secondary programme. I can provide and lay over to this House, information responding to the many queries and concerns expressed in relation to the expansion of the School Feeding Programme. I would be more than happy to provide that. Certainly, at the nursery and primary level, for the first time, we are including in the hinterland communities those riverine schools that were not previously captured. That would also represent an additional cost, even though it was not reflected in this programme.

I think there is a lot of information that ought to be shared in relation to the School Feeding Programme, and it properly deserves a document to be circulated, which I will undertake to do, if that would meet the needs and requirements of the questions that were raised.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Under the same line item 6301, Education Subventions and Grants, could the Hon. Minister tell us what the cost per meal for a student is?

**Dr. Henry:** What I have here, is the cost per day to feed a child in the President's College. I can certainly ask my staff to break it down per meal. If it would be of any use to you, it is \$1,800 a day to feed a child. That is for three meals. I do not know if it is equal, so I will ask my staff to break it down to the cost for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. I do not know if there are two snacks, but you can get that information. That certainly should not pose a challenge at all.

*11.45 p.m.*

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** I would appreciate the offer that the Minister afforded us. But could I ask very quickly what is the composition of the three meals that you feed a child with for \$1,800 per day?

**Dr. Henry:** Thank you for that question. I can certainly give you the menu because I am advised that every day of the week it is a different menu. I would be more than happy to share the President's College menu with you. It is something that I undertake to do. That would give you a good sense of what you get for the value of \$1,800.

**Mr. Chairman:** Ms. Sukhai, do you wish the floor again?

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** At this point, no.

*Programme: 405 – Secondary Education - \$4,018,231,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 405 – Secondary Education - \$ 1,400,335,000**

*Programme: 405 - Secondary Education - \$1,400,335,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 406 - Post-Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$4,369,910,000**

**Ms. Teixeira:** I noticed the University of Guyana (UG) is listed under this head as part of the subvention. Line item 6301 – Education Subventions and Grants: Usually what we used to do – we, meaning all of us - the allocations for the University of Guyana’s Berbice and Turkeyen campuses, was a lumpsum that included current and capital. I noticed in this Budget - maybe I did not notice it last year - that we are now separating and putting capital works for UG under different heads. I think in the Ministry’s budget, under Ministry Administration, you had the Health Science Faculty under capital. Now here you have the subvention, and under capital on this programme there is another subvention to do with UG’s health work. Is that a new style of the Ministry to segregate what is the current and the capital for the University of Guyana instead of giving it a lumpsum so that, at its own discretion the council decides how to spend? Is that a new direction of the Government, or the Ministry I should say?

**Dr. Henry:** What happens, is that when there is funding from places like the World Bank it is required to go under capital project, once it is for that type of big projects. But once the local funding is given it goes under Programme 6 as a subvention. So that is where the difference is.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am just trying to digest what you said. That is, if these are foreign-funded they are put separately under capital for the University of Guyana. That is something new. Does the University of Guyana, as a corporate body in its own right, not have its own agreement with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and so on? Who does it have it with? Is it the Ministry of Education? I remember the World Bank issue was a kind of bifurcated agreement; one-part Ministry of Education which had to do with the primary and secondary schools, and the other part with the University of Guyana was a separate agreement to do with all the climate issues and stuff like that - the \$15 million where they had their own separate project unit. That is why I am wondering why we are bringing the UG programmes under the capital of the Ministry.

**Dr. Henry:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised, and I rely on the advice that it has always been the case that the University of Guyana loans, like any other agency, would be negotiated through the Ministry of Finance and it comes under the education sector.

*Programme: 406 – Post Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$4,369,910,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 406 – Post Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$1,641,900,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Project code 1216000 - University of Guyana - Berbice: Could the Hon. Minister tell us, of the \$448 million, how much of this would be spent on the upgrade for the sewage system and would the sewage system upgrade be for the administrative buildings or would it be for the students' washroom facilities?

**Dr. Henry:** There is here \$100 million for phase one of the sewage system. What I cannot say is who will benefit as you are pointing out, if it is the student or the lecturers, because I do not know how that is disaggregated. But I could certainly get that information and provide it to you if it is so required.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** On the same heading, I am happy for the answer that there is a beginning of phase one to upgrade the sewage system at the University of Guyana. However, I will again ask the Minister whether she will be so please to disaggregate the sum, because when I go on social media there is a lot of complaints and even pictures shown on Facebook about the condition of the students' washroom areas. I would really need to make representation that in phase one that it is dealt with. I am hearing a lot of comments, but I want to say that the sewage system is probably very old and faulty, but I am also concerned about the issue with the students.

**Dr. Henry:** I really want to say that the comments are noted. From my understanding of the sewage system it has nothing to do with the toilets, but I will certainly reach out to the persons who are looking at the sewage system and I will give you whatever information they provide me with. I think that is pretty much what I could offer at this point in time.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, could the Minister point me to any project, under the same project code 1216000, as to whether there is any intention to upgrade the sanitary block for the students at the University of Guyana for 2019?

**Dr. Henry:** As we all know, the UG is a subvention agency. I cannot stand in this House to say what they will do with the subvention; they may very well be doing the toilets. But what I do know is that for this project we are speaking about the sewage system. So, there is no way I can provide that information to you but, certainly, as we engage with the University of Guyana, we are going

to get a better sense of what they are doing and provide you with the information as we move along.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Hon. Minister, project codes 1216000 and 1216100 both have to do with the University of Guyana, Turkeyen and Berbice. Hon. Minister, you just reported to the House that the capital for the University of Guyana, if it was foreign-funded or to do with a loan it would appear in the budget. However, these projects are not foreign-funded; they are both locally-funded. The \$448 million for the Turkeyen campus and \$60 million for the Berbice campus are both locally funded. Could you explain how the capital projects for the University of Guyana are not being given as a lumpsum to the University Council outside of what you have said are exclusive? The foreign-funded ones are included in the Ministry's budget. I would like to raise this issue as to why these amounts are being put into the budget now under capital when these are locally-funded and under part of the subvention for the University of Guyana?

**Dr. Henry:** I am advised that that has always been the case and so I rely on that advice.

*12.00 p.m.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** Some of us in this room have been on the Council. Some of us here have also been Ministers, and, therefore we know that that is not the case. There is a Minister right in front of you, Madam who was the Minister of Education, who was also a Council Member and who knows this is not the case. I would advise you to think a little bit more about this issue.

**Dr. Henry:** I am advised by my Technical staff that, as far as they know, it dates back as far as 20 years and that has been the case. I rely on them and I will continue to rely on them. I cannot come here to suggest anything otherwise than what I have been advised.

**Mr. Bharrat:** Project code 1216100 – University of Guyana – Berbice Campus: There is an allocation of \$60 million for the construction of a building or building, could you say if this is to facilitate additional Degree Programmes at that campus? If not, could you say if there are plans to do so?

**Dr. Henry:** This building is actually for student support where counselling and those types of activities will be done. It is not for academic purposes.

*Programme: 406 – Post Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$1,641,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates. (12.02 p.m.)*

*Assembly resumed.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, this concludes our work for this morning. We will now take the suspension, but before we do, there is a brief announcement. All Members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Constitutional Reform are invited to a meeting in Committee Room No. 1 at noon today. Members would have been notified of the meeting and I will name the Members: Hon. Mr. Williams, Hon. Mr. Ramjattan, Hon. Dr. Roopnaraine, Hon. Mr. Trotman, Dr. the Hon. Henry, Hon. Mr. Nandlall, Hon. Ms. Manickchand, Hon. Dr. Anthony and Hon. Mr. Anamayah. Thank you.

**Ms. Manickchand:** Sir, could I point out that we did that in the House which is a little bit of a departure. I have never heard...

**Mr. Chairman:** I beg your pardon?

**Ms. Manickchand:** I never actually heard this meeting announced. The one-day notices that we have gotten for the last two meetings, this one is included and last Friday, may well prove to be insufficient to Members. We never had an announcement of the Standing Committee meetings in the House. I thought I would bring it to the House's attention, that what we have been getting were one-day notices. I got a call this morning from the Parliament Office, following an email yesterday, about this meeting. I pointed out in a letter to the Hon. Chairman as well as all the Committee Members that we went for an entire year without even sitting at this Committee once; from 2017 to 2019.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are you making a point?

**Ms. Manickchand:** Yes, Sir. I am making the point that Your Honour is inviting us to this meeting, and now, we are told that there are Members who are not here and whose names have been called. I am saying that that may very well be because of the very short notices. I am going to the meeting, but I am saying that there are Members whose names were called and who may not be able to go to the meeting because of the extremely short notice. As Your Honour took it upon himself to announce the meeting. I thought that I would let you know as you Head the House.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank you. Of course, Hon. Members would know that there is a Chairman of this meeting and it would be, of course, at that meeting, that much of what you have said could find place but I thank you. Hon. Members, we will now take the suspension.

*Sitting suspended at 12.06 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 1.18 p.m.*

*Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply*

*In Committee of Supply.*

**Agency 42: Ministry of Communities (1.20 p.m.)**

### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 421 – Sustainable Communities Management - \$1,486,756,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: While there has been a decrease, could the Hon. Minister state what are the top five designations and their emoluments?

**Minister of Communities [Mr. Bulkan]:** The top five designations and emoluments are: Permanent Secretary (PS) – approximately \$684,000, Legal Officer – \$370,000, two Ministerial Advisors – \$347,000 each, a Ministerial Liaison Officer - \$347,000 and one Advisor to the Minister - \$315,000.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, could you layover for us the entire list of the Contracted employees under this programme?

Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: I see that there is an increase under this line item, could you give an explanation for this increase and say what are the designations?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The reason for the temporary basis for the contractual engagement is because the recommendations are with the Public Service Commission (PSC) for appointment to the permanent pensionable establishment and it is awaiting approval. The six positions are for a Deputy Chief Planning Officer, a Coordinator of Engineering Services, an Assistant Coordinator



of Engineering Services, a Typist/Clerk and two Drivers. These appointments are currently on a month-to-month basis, until their appointments come through.

**Mr. Croal:** Just referencing to line item 6116, I see the Auditor General's Report referred to having as many employees as possible on the fixed establishment. We understand what happens with Advisors and so forth but for the other positions under Contracted Employees, could you say what efforts are being made to have those on the fixed establishment?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The bulk of the 21 remaining employees on contract employment, 15 of them, are actually above the age limit for appointment to the permanent pensionable establishment.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: There is an increase from \$196 million to \$223 million. Firstly, could you account for that increase? Secondly, could you categorise the expenses under this?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The principle reason for the increases in the 2019 allocations is to allow for increases in the stipends payable to the Regional Chairpersons and Regional Vice-Chairpersons. There is also an increase in the emoluments for the Regional Executive Officers (REOs) and there are some new stipends being introduced for the first time in 2019. They are to allow for the payments to all of the Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Town Clerks and all of the Overseers in all 70 of the Local Democratic Organs (LDOs) as well as the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) Chairpersons.

**Mr. Croal:** You made mention of stipends for Oversees, could you state the stipends amount for the Overseers, the current emoluments for the REOs, as you mentioned that there was an increase, I know that there was an increase some time last year or the year before, and the planned budgeted stipends for the Mayors?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The increases for the REOs are the annualised increases but the increased stipends for the Regional Chairpersons are fairly modest. It is moving from \$284,000 monthly to \$300,000 monthly. For the Regional Vice-Chairpersons, it is moving from \$213,000 to \$240,000. For the Mayors, they are in two categories: the four Hinterland Mayors will receive a monthly stipend of \$110,000 and the Deputy Mayors will receive a monthly stipend of \$85,000.

*1.27 p.m.*

The Mayors and Deputy Mayors for the coastal regions will enjoy for the first-time stipends of \$75,000 and \$60,000, respectively. Similarly, for the Town Clerks, the hinterland Town Clerks will enjoy a monthly stipend of \$78,000 and for the remainders the sum of \$55,000. It includes all of the Overseers. They will receive a stipend in the sum of \$40,000 monthly and the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) chairpersons will receive a stipend of \$10,000 monthly.

Mr. Chairman, as I had alluded previously and elsewhere including, I believe, in my Budget debate that the payment of these stipends arose out of the recommendations at the National Conference of Local Democratic Organs (NCLDO) where the recommendation was made for capacity building, institutional strengthening and an upgrade in the emoluments of the local government leaders.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, you did not state the emoluments for the Regional Executive Officer (REO).

**Mr. Bulkan:** I did say it is annualised.

**Mr. Croal:** How much is the current amount? Meanwhile you are getting that Hon. Minister, could you confirm therefore with a stipend being paid through your Ministry for, chairpersons, f the NDC chairperson *et cetera*, that does not take away from whatever stipend maybe paid by the respective local authorities?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Hon. Member, that is correct. This is Central Government supplementing what is paid by the respective organs. This is why it is categorised as a stipend. Each organ is at its full discretion within its financial means to be able to pay stipends to its chairperson or any other officers of the Council. The new salaries for the Regional Executive Officers (REOs) is at the sum of \$347,288 monthly. This caters for the annualised increase this year.

**Mr. Croal:** Follow-up: What are the benefits that the officer would receive?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There is a flat sum of \$70,000 representing a duty allowance.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6312 – Subventions to Local Authorities: Hon. Minister, could you give a breakdown of the increase of the \$685 million? What is it intended for?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The proposed allocation of \$685 million is to fund the payment of community enhancement workers in 79 of the 80 Local Democratic Organs (LDO), namely, all of the NDCs and all of the Towns with the exception of Georgetown. The breakdown is \$443 million for the NDCs and the sum of \$203 million is for the municipalities.

In addition to that, the sum allows for operational support to the four newest municipalities at a cost of \$5 million each and the sum of \$2 million is allocated to each of the eight new NDCs and a similar sum for Barakara. It is to pay for the community enhancement workers in 79 of the LDOs and additional recurrent expenses for the new municipalities and the new NDCs as well as Barakara.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Follow-up, Line item 6312 – Subventions to Local Authorities: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to layover to the House the number of community enhancement workers that would be paid under each local authority area?

**Mr. Bulkan:** If the Hon. Member is desirous I could relay this information.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** You can lay it over.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Do you prefer it laid over?

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I will be guided by you, Sir. Should I layover it or should I relate it?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, if it is a long list of things it will be better if it is relayed to the Hon. Member. If it is not a long list and you are minded to...

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is 79 Local Democratic Organs.

**Mr. Chairman:** It may be best to direct it to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am guided.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could you state what is intended for this allocation?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is to cater for the participation in a total of 13 national events. These include religious and other holidays, National Day of Villages, International Days, Indigenous Heritage and Agriculture Month. The specific activities include Christmas, Mashramani, Independence Day, Youman Nabi, the National Day of Villages, Arrival Day, Phagwah, Emancipation Day, Diwali, Eid ul Adha, International Day of Violence Against Gender, Heritage Month, and the support also for the Regional, Agricultural and Commercial Exhibition.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: You are providing \$124 million to the Local Government Commission and \$10 million to the Guyana Association of Municipalities (GAM). Could I ask you Hon. Minister, have you received the Commission of Inquiry Report (CoI) into Georgetown and are you in support of the recommendations and how you will proceed if you have to on the recommendations?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes, I have received the Report of the CoI that was submitted to the Local Government Commission. What I am not in receipt of is any further correspondence from the Local Government Commission as to how it proposes to deal with the Report itself. I should add that the responsibility for taking the process forward lies with the Local Government Commission. The Commission is the one that will be making the determination as to which of the recommendations in the CoI will be acted upon.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Follow-up. I would just like to seek the confirmation of the Hon. Minister. Would the Ministry of Communities be in any way a hindrance towards the implementation of the recommendations of the CoI?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Am I required to respond to that, Sir? I said, a moment ago, it is the responsibility of the Local Government Commission to act on the recommendations. I do not propose that the Ministry of Communities will be a hindrance in that process.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could you firstly indicate the service provider and the current contract would have started? Secondly, could you state the locations for the security services being provided?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The name of the provider is Amalgamated Security Services. The duration of the contract is April 2018 to March 2019. The locations are the Central Ministry including the Brickdam Offices and the Permanent Secretary's residence.

*Programme: 421 - Sustainable Communities Management - \$1,486,756,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 421 - Sustainable Communities Development - \$622,000,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 1902900 – Project Development and Assistance: Could you give a breakdown of the subvention to be provided to the municipalities and the NDCs?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The subvention to the municipalities is \$210 million. The breakdown is \$30 million for Georgetown and \$18 million to the remaining Towns. For the 70 NDCs, it is the sum of \$5 million each. This of course is the second increase during the life of this Administration. It started at \$3 million, it was increased to \$4 million, now and it is being taken to \$5 million annually. There is a special grant of ... for the municipalities and the NDCs and \$5 million for each of the NDCs.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, under the same project code 1902900: Could you indicate what other expenses you may have under this programme other than the subvention to the municipality as well as the NDCs?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is a provision for the sum of \$42 million and it is to support community-based activities at the level of constituencies to support capital works for community development and small projects.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, under the same project code 1902900: For the community-based activities, could you state what is the criteria or how one of the local authorities could apply?

*1.42 p.m.*

Is this for community groups that make the application? I am just trying to get some clarity and some more information on this funding.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, it is primarily the latter. It is the request that originates from the community groups. It is to support community development as I said; small projects and these applications are normally done directly to the Ministry.

**Mr. Croal:** Follow-up: Could you state what would be the broad criteria for the community projects? Or is there no parameter? I am just trying to get some information, so that we could let other community groups out there know there is funding available.

**Mr. Bulkan:** It would support activities such as upgrading community grounds and community facilities, activities that would promote social cohesion, and it is to strengthen constituencies within the respective local organ.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Project code 1902900 - Project Development and Assistance: Having listened to the allocations for Local Authority Area and NDC municipalities, would the Hon. Minister indicate whether the fiscal transfer formula is being used, at all, in the allocation to the Local Authority Areas?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This of course we are dealing with the 2019 provisions and the arrangements are that 50% of the approved sum is payable at the outset in accordance with the Fiscal Transfers Act. The remaining 50% is accessed following the application of the formula. I did, during the Budget debates in response to a question, indicate that in 2018, that there were some small shortfalls between the sums that would have been due, and that a determination was finally made by the Ministry and supported by the Central Government to provide the remaining small portions. I think it averaged about 10% by way of a special grant. The entire sums that were approved were made available to the Local Democratic Organs, but that the formula was being monitored. In any of those organs where there was a short fall, the money was actually not returned to the treasury, but, it was made available to the respective organs by way off a special grant.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Follow-up: would the Minister agree that the arrangement he explained run counters to the whole intent and purpose of the Fiscal Transfer Act? Why I say that is because there are three distinct variables and no other variable form part of Act.

**Mr. Bulkan:** No. We hold a different view. Members on this side of the House recognised that the rebuilding and the repairs to this system which was subject to extraordinary pressures over a

very long period of time, that to build capacity within these organs is going to take time. It is going to need a lot of support from the Central Government.

The Act itself does not provide for mandatory subventions on the part of the Central Government. It is entirely discretionary on the part of the Central Government as to how much would be allocated.

Once that sum has been determined by way of the annual Budget, we see the general spirit is to provide continuous and continued support to these organs to allow for them to develop, because they are coming from a very degraded base and they all of the support and the assistance they could get.

**Mr. Ali:** Project code 1902900 - Project Development and Assistance: There is a Fiscal Transfers Act that has a formula and that formula has to be applied. There is no discretion in the law. A formula is prescribed, and it has to be applied.

There is a reduction there from the 2018 figures to the 2019 allocation. Is this a direction to the results of the Local Government Elections?

**Mr. Bulkan:** If I may return to the question of the Fiscal Transfers Act, I did say a moment ago that the Act itself does not provide a formula for any mandatory support or allocation of finances on the part of the Central Government. It is entirely discretionary. Once that allocation has been made, it is only then that the provisions within the Fiscal Transfers Act apply.

We hold a slightly different view that the Act itself is not a straitjacket. It provides a formula for how the remaining 50% could be accessed. That is being monitored as I said. If there is any portion of the original allocation that does not meet that test, there is nothing preventing the Central Government from exercising further discretion and to allow these organs to be the recipient or beneficiary of the originally allocated sum.

The reduction in the 2019 provisions over 2018 is as a result of the programme Budgeting where expenditure that was formally recurrent in nature was under this heading and that is being transferred now to line item 6312 – Subventions to Local Authorities; look at the sums would bear this out to be true. It is not an overall reduction in the allocation of subventions for the CW workers. It is a reallocation to a different programme.

**Mr. Croal:** project code 1902900 - Project Development and Assistance: I firstly would like to disagree with you that the fiscal transfer application is discretionary. There is a fixed formula there and there are three variables, namely, the geographic size, the population, and the rate of collection. You have a ballpark figure, but the Fiscal Transfers Act was intended to be an incentive mechanism for NDCs or local authorities to be able to increase their rate of collection. I disagree with that.

Project code 2511100 – Local Government Commission: Could you indicate if the \$13 million was the full amount requested by the Commission?

**Mr. Bulkan:** As I did indicate during my contribution to the Budget debate, that the submission by the Local Government Commission was made directly to the Ministry of Finance and not via the Ministry of Communities. I am not aware if the proposed allocation here is all that was asked for. The proposed sum as indicated in these documents is \$13 million for vehicles and equipment.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Project code 1902900 - Project Development and Assistance: I think one of the fundamental things about Local Government Reform is the whole issue of independence. What is taking so long for the District Tender Boards to be in place, so that procurement at the Local Government Bodies could take place with hindrance from Central Government?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, that comment, if you will, does not relate to a project code. I think it would more appropriately could form the basis of a Parliamentary question.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I said project code 1902900 – Project Development and Assistance: Tax payers' moneys are given to the...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Mr. Dharamlall, what is it that you are asking? Are you repeating the question or are you starting a new question?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I am trying to clarify things in the question that the Minister may not understand.

**Mr. Chairman:** Please, repeat the question for the Minister.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Hon. Minister, the fact that are given NDCs capital subventions, works have to tender for. I am asking you, Hon. Minister, why the District Tender Boards have not been in place? The hindrance of the Regional Tender Boards still affect the procurement performance of Local Authority Areas.



**Mr. Bulkan:** I am unaware of the hindrance at the level of the Regional Tender Board that the Hon. Member alluded to.

**Mr. Mustapha:** Project code 1902900 - Project Development and Assistance: The Minister indicated the various sums for the municipalities and the NDCs, but in the last Local Government Election, nine new Local Authority Areas were created. I do not know if there are additional sums to be expended in those areas, because a lot of capital work such as the setting up of offices, employment of staff and things of that sort. Mechanism would have to be put in place to start the collection of rates and taxes.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Under this project code, the proposed allocation is to allow for the subventions to the municipalities that I have already identified. The \$5 million provision to each of the NDCs as well as the special grant. There is provision for support to the new NDC areas to allow for offices, but that would be dealt with under Programme 02 when we get to that project code.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Follow-up: on the question that I had asked. I think the Minister did not respond to, when will the District Tender Boards be in place? Hon. Minister, could you please indicate?

**Mr. Bulkan:** To the best of my knowledge, the responsibility for those Boards that the Hon. Member is referring to does not reside within this Ministry.

**Mr. Chairman:** There will be two more questions and then I will put the question. There is no other question.

*Programme: 421 – Sustainable Communities Management - \$622,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 422 – Sustainable Communities Development - \$1,285,443,000**

*1.57 p.m.*

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6116- Contracted Employees: You have had an increase of four contracted employees, could you state who are the new contracted employees? Secondly, what are the paid emoluments for the top five employees?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The four new additions to the 2019 programme are a Special Ministerial Advisor, Senior Environmental Officer, District Community Development Officer and a Security Officer. The top five in terms of emoluments under this line item are the Technical Advisor for Solid Waste for the sum of approximately \$463,000, the Special Ministerial Advisor for the sum of \$386,000 approximately, Senior Environmental Officer for the sum of \$256,000 approximately, there is a Technical Coordinator at \$431,000 and there are three Technical Assistants at \$315,591 each.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Line item 6117- Temporary Employees: There is an increase by four employees. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to share the designation of these individuals and their emoluments? Secondly, the allocation for Budget 2018 is \$4,033,000, Revised 2018 is \$12,130,000, would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say to us where did this additional resource come from?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There are three Senior Engineers and they are attached to the Sanitation Department. The salaries being approximately \$256,000 each and the Equipment Operator, approximately \$81,000. These persons would have been appointed to the Ministry during 2018 and this is why the Revised 2018 expenditure is above the 2018 allocation. The additional resources were provided by the Ministry of Finance.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6261- Local Travel and Subsistence: You would have had an increase allocation here. Could you account for this increase and what it is intended for?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is an increase of approximately \$3,500,000. It is to allow for increase field trips consultation with all of the LDOs and sanitation management, project monitoring and in-kind contribution for two Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) projects that are been executed.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6265- Other Transport, Travel and Postage: You would have had an allocation in 2018 of \$3 million. You could only spend half of that or just over half of that. In 2019, you are asking for an increase allocation even over the budgeted amount. Could you explain this?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Even though these budget documents contain that figure that the Hon. Member has refereed to, \$1,859,000, I am advised that that figure was at the time of preparation and that the annual expenses in Revised 2018 will be closer to the original allocation. That would reduce the

increases being sought in 2019 which is the full sum of \$5,200,000. It is slightly more than the \$3 million which was provided for in the Budget 2018. It is to cater for charters and Highers for the sanitation programme and project monitoring as well as community development projects. It is a wide area.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to layover for us the scope of works under line items 6251 – Maintenance of Roads, 6252 - Maintenance of Bridges, 6253 - Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works and 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure? Line item 6261- Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister explain to us the reason for the 56.3% increase in allocation in comparison to Budget 2018 under this line item?

**Mr. Bulkan:** For clarity, the information that is being requested to be laid over is for the maintenance of roads, maintenance of bridges, maintenance of drainage and irrigation (D&I), and maintenance of other infrastructure.

The actual allocation is not considerable amounts are \$6 million, \$3 million, \$3,100,000 and \$3,500,000 respectively. It is to provide for maintenance of access roads to Haags Bosch, Lusignan, Bartica, Lethem, Rose Hall, Kara Kara and other facilities. It is to provide maintenance to the bridges in Haags Bosch, Rose Hall and other land filled sites. For the drainage and irrigation, it is for the internal drainage system at Haags Bosch, Lusignan, Bartica, Lethem, Rose Hall and Kara Kara and for the other infrastructure. The \$3,500,000 being proposed in Budget 2019 is provision for maintenance of fence, health post and the Pickers shed at Haags Bosch.

Line item 6261- Local Travel and Subsistence: The proposed increase from \$4,500,000 to \$8 million in 2019 is to allow for increased field trips for consultation with the Local Democratic Organs, Sanitation Management and Project Monitoring. I think it is the same question that was asked earlier.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Hon. Minister, line item 6321: Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Hon. Minister, you are providing \$402 million to Guyana Water Inc. (GWI). Do you think that it is prudent to have GWI reintroduce the water subsidy that was previously provided to pensioners?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The proposed sum of \$420 million as subsidies to the GWI is to cater for its energy or electricity charges.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Follow-up: Hon. Minister, despite the Government providing \$400 plus million to GWI as subsidy. Do you not think that it is prudent to have the water subsidies reintroduced for pensioners?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That consideration does not actually apply to the provision here. It is for subsidies to offset electricity charges by the corporation.

*Programme: 422 – Sustainable Communities Development - \$1,285,443,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme 422 - Sustainable Communities Development - \$4,927,500,000**

**Mr. Ali:** Project code 1302200 - Community Infrastructure Improvement Project: There is an allocation of \$300 million. Hon. Minister, could you say in relation to the revaluation exercise, when would this commence?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This activity is expected to commence in early 2019. A pilot project has actually started even as we speak. I think that it was widely publicised in New Amsterdam.

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister confirm that the company Municipal Association Canada is the contracted company for this exercise?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Sir, I am tempted to say that the answer to that is no. Instead, I will provide a clarification. The name of the contracted entity is not what was related, but it is the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation of Ontario (MPAC).

**Mr. Ali:** Thank you Minister for the clarification. Earlier you said that this contract is expected to commence early 2019. On 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2018 in a Department of Public Information (DPI) Report, it was reported that the Minister of Communities said that a contract was signed to a value of \$335 million for the reassessment of property. Could the Hon. Minister confirm this?

**Mr. Bulkan:** In general, what is being reported has a high degree of accuracy, there is a contract entered into between the Ministry and the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation of Ontario that would allow for mass property evaluations over 12 to 18 months period.

**Mr. Ali:** This is a Report by the DPI quoting the Hon. Minister. He is disassociating himself from that Report. That report stated very clearly that the contract was signed on 2<sup>nd</sup> October and will be completed to the latter part of 2019. What we are hearing now is that this project will commence early 2019. There are three issues here

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, please ask the question now.

**Mr. Ali:** Thank you very much. Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that any resources spent before 2019 is in contravention of the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act, Part IV and it is public moneys; grants and loans are part of public moneys.

*2.12 p.m.*

Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that, if any resources were spent before this, it was in contravention of the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act (FMAA) before the approval of this Budget?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the Cabinet has approved a contract in the sum of approximately \$320 million to allow for this service. What I have said is that a pilot started in 2018 and that the project itself is expected to start in 2019.

**Mr. Ali:** I am very happy to learn that Cabinet approves contracts. Could the Hon. Minister say whether a contract or any contract has been signed in relation to the expenditure of any resources out of this \$300 million in this Budget?

**Mr. Bulkan:** What we are addressing now is provisions for the 2019 expenditure. And as I have said, this project is expected to be executed in full beginning 2019.

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, I return to my question. Was any contract signed, committing any of this \$300 million budgeted for 2019, by this Ministry? Was any contract already signed, as we speak here, as of now, committing any of this \$300 million by this Ministry? A very simple question.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am not too sure about committing. What the contract provides for is a contract sum which has been indicated. With regards to commitment, that can only flow from the 2019 provisions, once they are available.

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, we have arrived at the destination. Once the contract, as is confirmed now, has been signed, and there is a contract figure in that contract, it is a commitment of public resources. It is a commitment of state resources and this is in violation of the FMAA. So, will the Hon. Minister now agree with me...

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Ali, you are not asking a question. I am waiting for the question.

**Mr. Ali:** Would the Hon. Minister now agree with me that he broke the law when he committed resources that have not been budgeted for, and that have not been approved?

**Mr. Bulkan:** No. I do not share that view, Sir.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Under Sustainable Communities Development, project code 2802100, Hinterland Water Supply: Could the Hon. Minister tell us whether under this sum there is any plan to deal with the water system of Kanapang, Chieung Mouth, Waipa, Kaibarupai and Itabac?

These communities for the last two years, after the flooding, their solar pumps and other operational things have not been working. They are still awaiting word, from the Government, as to whether they will see a better water system and their systems will be repaired. This is 2019, so, I want to give them some hope.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The list of the villages and communities expected to be serviced under this allocation at this time does not include the villages that have been named by the Hon. Member, which are villages, of course, in the North Pakaraimas. But it allows for many other villages in the hinterland regions, but not specifically the ones named by the Hon. Member.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Could the Hon. Minister tell this House, now that he is aware that they have not been able to capture Kanapang, Chieung Mouth, Waipa, Kaibarupai and Itabac, to repair their water system - even though the mountain is not flood prone, but these systems have been down since then - whether he plans, during 2019, to ask for a supplemental to be added to the Budget, so that he will be able to address this matter?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI) does have a very aggressive programme, not only on the coastland but in the hinterland. This \$170 million proposed allocation in the 2019 Budget is to address water security in many hinterland communities. It is not exhaustive or 100%. But an assessment is done on a continuous basis, and if indeed, the determination is made as to the absolute necessity for emergency interventions in those communities named - Kanapang, Itabac, Waipa. I think that this could be given consideration by way of supplementary funding. So, I would not dispute the general contention.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Under the same project code, could the Minister say, of the \$170 million, what is the cost for the drilling rig?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The proposed sum is \$55 million.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Hon. Minister, project code 1903200 – Central Housing and Planning Authority: This year you are providing a capital subvention of \$780 million. In the speech of the Hon. Minister in the Department of Housing, keys to 43 units were provided in 2018. Based on the moneys spent by Central Housing and Planning Authority (CHPA) in 2018, that works out to \$3.37 billion, about \$76.7 million per unit or apartment. Of the \$2.998 billion in 2019, I would like to ask Hon. Minister, how many units will be constructed and handed over and at what cost? Also, is it because there is not an uptake by citizens that is why only 43 of 160 plus were taken up during the course of 2018?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Hon. Member, could you confirm that it is project code 1903200 that your question relates to?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Yes.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Sir, the sum that is provided for that is \$780 million and the capital profile can be found at page 190. The activities that are listed, bears no resemblance to the questions posed by the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, again, for clarification to the Hon. Minister, because he seems to be dodging every time we ask this question about housing in Guyana. Every single year...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, please ask the question.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I am clarifying; we are providing taxpayers' money to the agency. So, in our providing hundreds of millions...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Dharamlall, please ask your question or I will assume that you have nothing to say and I will move to another Member. Now, let us get this going please.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to find out from the Hon. Minister, again I will repeat project code 1903200, and we are providing \$780 million in taxpayers' money to the CHPA. The CHPA was only able to provide 43 keys despite spending \$3.372 billion in 2018 for the 43 units or apartments. That amounts to over \$76...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Dharamlall, did you ask the question already?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I am explaining the question to the Hon. Minister.

**Mr. Chairman:** Just ask the question, please.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** So, Hon. Minister, with the subvention given to the CHPA and because CHPA is your responsibility, how many units will be built in 2019 and were only 43 taken up in 2018 as a result of the dissatisfaction of our citizens?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Thank you, Hon. Member. Mr. Chairman, I provided an answer to the project code that the Hon. Member is questioning. The legend states: "Provision for community infrastructure projects." It goes further to refer to the capital reference number – the page number. Sir, those community infrastructure projects, there are several components. There is road upgrading in several locations to asphaltic concrete and these include: La Parfaite Harmonie Housing Scheme, one kilometre; Belle West Phase 1 and 2, point seven five kilometre; Zeelugt Phase 2, a similar distance; Uitvlugt, point five kilometre; Providence Phase 2, one kilometre; Section 'D' Nonpareil, half of a kilometre; Good Hope Phase 2, half of a kilometre; Hope/Dochfour, one kilometre; Herstelling, point seven five kilometre; Farm Phase 1, point seven five kilometre; Experiment, point seven five kilometre; Kilcoy/Chesney, point seven five kilometre; Four and Five Miles Bartica, one point five kilometre; Tabatinga/Lethem, Amelia's Ward Phase 2 and Block 22 Wismar, point seven five kilometre each...



**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Dharamlall, please take your seat. Do you have a question to ask?

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I just asked the Minister a question.

**Mr. Chairman:** The Minister is answering your question. When the Minister is finished then you can tell him that he did not answer your question.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Of the proposed sum of \$780 million, those activities that I just referred to accounts for \$621 million. The next component is installation of light-emitting diode (LED) street lamps and upgrading of existing recreational facilities. The street lamps are in all of the aforementioned areas and the upgrading of the existing recreational facilities are in Perseverance and Amelia's Ward. The total of those two activities is \$80 million.

The third component is the electrification programme which allows for installation of electrical networks in eight areas at a sum of \$79 million, a total of \$780 million, as stated in these documents.

**Mr. Ali:** Project code 1903900 – Adequate Housing and Urban Accessibility Programme: Could the Hon. Minister say whether this head caters for the home improvement project?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is, yes, that is one component of the programme, Sir.

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister say whether there is a criterion that has been made public for Guyanese to have access to this facility? If that criterion was made public, when was it so made?

*2.27 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that this information was advertised publicly in the newspapers. I do not have the details with me, but these could be provided later. Additionally, it was also advertised by way of press conferences done by the Central Housing and Planning Authority

**Mr. Ali:** My question was very specific; it was whether the criteria to access the fund were advertised, not whether the programme was advertised. The Hon. Minister is saying that the criteria were advertised. I will ask him to provide the evidence, where such criteria were advertised and

made public. That is the first thing, we need the evidence. Secondly, could the Hon. Minister say how many applications for this programme has been received to date by region?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The information that I related in relation to the advertisement, I believe it would have been a public advertisement advising that these details are available at the CH&PA; the specific criteria. I am not sure if the criteria were listed in the advertisement, but the programme was advertised and interested applicants could receive further details or the criteria that the Hon. Member is referring to, upon contacting the CH&PA, Sir.

**Mr. Ali:** My question remains very specific. It is in relation to the criteria and when were they made public. We need a copy of that document that was made public by advertisement. We also need the full list of criteria. The second part of the question was, how many applications have been received so far by the region? We need to know that. As I am on my feet, the third question that I am going to ask is, who constitutes the evaluation panel to say who would benefit from this initiative?

**Mr. Bulkan:** To be sure and to clarify what I said, I did not say that the criteria were listed in the advertisement to which I alluded. I was advised that there were public advertisements of the programme. In relation to the regions that would benefit from this component, it is not all of them. The catchment areas only apply to two regions - Region 4, from La Bonne Intention (LBI) to Diamond, inclusive of Georgetown, and Region 3, in the CH&PA housing schemes. These include La Parfaite Harmonie, Lust En Rust, Westminster and Onderneeming.

With regards to the number of applications that have been received to date, the closing date for applications is February, 2019, so it is still a work process. The screening would be done by the Central Housing and Planning Authority.

**Mr. Ali:** Could the Hon. Minister say when he would be able to lay over the criteria used to select the beneficiaries.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I can relate some of the criteria now.

**Mr. Ali:** No, I want the official criteria.

**Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Williams]:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to respectfully ask that the Hon. Minister lay out some of the criteria now?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, this is a question and answer, why are we treating it as if it is a seminar of some kind; it really is not.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I would be happy to relate some of the criteria at this stage. In broad terms there are three stages for selection: the first step is to ascertain the basic eligibility; the secondly step is technical validation and third step is the actual selection.

At the level of the applicant there is an income cap for applicants and this figure is set at a \$75,000 monthly income. The applicant must be a citizen of Guyana who resides either in Georgetown or within the catchment area. I referred to that a moment ago, Sir. It is from LBI to Diamond and the areas in Region 3, Essequibo Islands/West Demerara. The applicants must be at least 18 years old, the owner of a property, have completed full payment for the cost of a house lot where that applies, be living in the house for which he/she is requesting the subsidy. Households that have benefitted from prior home improvement subsidies and the sanitation subsidies, will not be eligible.

There are a number of technical validations, Sir. The CH&PA must be enabled and allowed to carry out site visits to personally verify the information that is being reported; to assess the structural integrity of the home including factors such as stability, alignment and integrity of the building and to assess the surroundings considering the environmental aspects and other infrastructure. Those are some of the basic criteria, Sir.

**Mr. Ali:** I am staying on the same project code 1601800, Water Supply Improvement Project. The request is for the Hon. Minister to lay over the full criteria that will be used to select a beneficiary as approved by the International Development Bank (IDB). Secondly, could the Hon. Minister say whether this programme will be audited? What monitoring mechanism is there to ensure the audit of this project, to ensure that the beneficiaries would actually benefit in relation to the criteria?

**Mr. Bulkan:** If I heard the Hon. Member correctly, he did allude to the IDB's involvement in this programme. To the best of my knowledge, I believe that the IDB has a very strict monitoring and compliance procedure. This programme will be subjected to those IDB rules, regulations, and monitoring, including the national audit mechanism.

**Mr. Ali:** The IDB does not provide for Cabinet to approve contracts and the Minister just said that. I am not sure about that. Could the Hon. Minister confirm, in reference number 189, Volume 3 of the Estimates of the Public Sector, whether any actual work in terms of water improvement would be done in Leguan, Wakenaam, Bush Lot, Mabaruma, Mahdia and Tain to No. 5 Village? I am talking about whether any physical infrastructure work would be done next year?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The short answer to that is, no. This funding is to eventually provide infrastructure in the very areas, namely Walton Hall to Charity, Leguan, Wakenaam, Bush Lot, and Tain to No. 5 Village. The consultancy studies are to provide for the design of water treatment plants, wells, transmission lines and service connections in all those areas. It is a step by step process.

**Mr. Ali:** So, the Hon. Minister can confirm to this House that the entire allocation of \$150 million is for studies in 2019.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Sorry, it goes beyond studies; studies are one component. It is to allow for preparation of detailed designs for the strengthening of the water sector governance, public consultation and support services and project management as well as associated cost.

**Mr. Mustapha:** I want to refer to project code 1302200, Community Infrastructure Improvement Project. This is a follow-up question to my Colleague Irfaan Ali's first question. Could the Minister tell this House if the Ministry of Communities ever signed a contract with a Canadian firm to tune of US\$125,000, for the re-evaluation of properties in our country?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That refers to a 2018 activity or allocation and the answer is, yes.

**Mr. Ali:** I was hoping not to hear that answer. Could the Hon. Minister say if there was a 2018 allocation, where was it budgeted? Where was it spent from? Which heading was it spent from? According to the profile here, under this heading that the expenditure was budgeted, pre-2017, 2017 and 2018 expenditures were nil. In 2019, there is a budgeted provision of \$300 million, so could the Hon. Minister advise us?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The information related by the Hon. Member is indeed correct. The 2018 allocation did not come from the 2019 profile that the Hon. Member just read out.

**Mr. Ali:** This is funny. I have here Estimates of the Public Sector, Volume 3, that outlines the expenditures for every year. You said that the expenditure was made in 2018 but this document does not reflect that. I am asking Hon. Minister, under which head was the money spent from, in the absence of it under this head. You said that it was spent in 2018.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Order Paper for today's activity that I have with me here states that what we are dealing with is the Motion for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditures for 2019. It goes on to state:

“...to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year, 2019.”

This is explicit, we are dealing with 2019 provisions and the Hon. Member is asking about 2018.

**Mr. Ali:** The purpose of the questioning is to have follow-up based on the Minister's answers. The Minister said that a certain expenditure that he referred to was made in 2018. According to the Profile that is before us, no such expenditure was made in 2018. All we are asking is for the Minister to tell us under which head, where was the expenditure made because it was not made under this heading.

*2.42 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the very profile that the Hon. Member refers to does not show it to be a multiyear project and it did not start in 2018. We are dealing with 2019 but I would be happy to provide the information subsequently to the Hon. Member. There is nothing to hide, because this information was in the public domain.

**Mr. Ali:** Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say when he would provide this information to the National Assembly.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, I would be happy to provide this information before the end of the week.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, project code 1302200, could you indicate that the pilot project has physically started?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, once again we are dealing with a 2018 activity but this exercise concerns 2019 provisions and allocations.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Croal.

**Mr. Croal:** The request here for...

**Ms. Teixeira:** Could I have a point of order Mr. Chairman? The Standing Order 71 (1) states:

“(1) The Estimates of Revenues and Expenditure for a financial year shall be laid before the Assembly by a Minister before or within ninety days after the commencement of that year.”

We are in the estimates and it is not just to do with what is the projection for next year; it is dealing with revenues and expenditure of a financial year which is the year we are in and the projected year to come. So, the Minister's equivalence to do with answering 2018 matters is out of order. I would ask your help to have his cooperation because we are dealing with performance and expenditure of a budget that was approved in 2018, and before we increase or decrease we want to know how the money was spent. So, his reluctance to answer is disturbing. I seek your assistance.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, under the profile, it shows that the 2018 amounts to be financed by Central Government is \$317 million. At reference number 188, the sum of \$26 million was committed towards that pilot project in New Amsterdam.

**Mr. Croal:** The Hon. Minister has just indicated the expenses of 2018. Could the Minister state, therefore, whether on the three supplemental papers that came if any mention was made of the \$26,000 being incurred for 2018?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, there was no supplementary request for this activity in 2018.

**Mr. Croal:** As a simple follow-up, could you therefore state where this money come from and the authority?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, it came from the very area that is stated in these documents at reference number 188.

**Mr. Croal:** Just allow me to make one statement before I ask my question. There was no mention in 2018 for the initial phase of the valuation exercise. According to the Hon. Minister, \$26 million has been committed but when we look in the legend we do not see any mention about this anywhere. But it has to be recorded somewhere Hon. Minister. And, if it was not catered for initially, you had three financial papers that came to the House that did not have that request. So again, very simply where is the authority for the expenditure of the \$26 million under 2018?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, that sum would have come from budgetary allocations made to the Ministry and it was utilised for this particular activity. I have already committed that before the end of the week the details would be provided to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Croal:** I would move on in the interest of time. Project code 1903300 – Georgetown Restoration Project: There is \$300 million budgeted here. For Part 1, could you give an outline of the expenditure?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, there are three components: community enhancement, infrastructural development and institutional strengthening. The first provides for constituency funded activities at the sum of \$75 million; infrastructural development at the sum of \$75 million for an administrative building for the municipality; the sum of \$12 million for the upgrade of the East Ruimveldt Market; \$25 million for the La Penitence Market; \$50 million for the completion of Phase 2 of the Kitty Market; and for the institutional strengthening, the sum of \$25 million. That should give us a total of \$300 million.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, are any of these expenses expected to be warranted to the municipality of Georgetown or is it going to be expended through your Ministry?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, components two and three that I have just referred to would be disbursed and monitored by the Ministry. The constituency led projects will be disbursed by the municipality upon submission of the requisite information to the Ministry.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, just to expand a little on the amount under the constituency, could you tell the House the criteria for those awards? Secondly, now, that you are going to be providing the funding through the municipality of Georgetown, what safety mechanism is in place in light of the recent findings from the Commission of Inquiry to ensure those expenses are properly expended?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the schedule allows for the maximum of \$5 million to each of the 15 constituencies for activities to be identified at the constituency level and this would normally be led by the constituency councillors, would be supported by the council and audited by the Central Ministry as to the usefulness and validity of the proposed activity.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, my last follow-up under this project code. You made mention about auditing, but when I last read the Auditor General's Report there was mention of the non-provision of the vouchers and supporting documents for these sorts of expenses that are being done through the municipality. If there is no documentation being provided, what mechanism do you have in place for safety, to ensure that it is properly expended?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the first time that this initiative was introduced was in this year, 2018 and it is being repeated in 2019, subject to the approval. The 2018 accounts have not yet been audited but the approval point of disbursement is subject to review by the Ministry.

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 2803100 -Technical Assistance: You had \$10 million in 2018 and \$20 million being expended now. Could you enlighten us as to when this project, which seems to be a continuous project, is going to be concluding, who are the beneficiaries for this local government system and give a little outline of what you plan to do as part of the strengthening?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the capital profile provides a basic description of the project; there are three components and they are interlinked. It refers to capacity building for local government reform, for harmonisation of the local government legislation and drafting of amendments to existing and new legislations. The sum of \$20 million is being proposed for the consultancy services. The specific activities would include consultancy fees to be able to undertake these activities and it would allow for preparation of strategic plans for the Ministry as we seek to consolidate the development of the local government system as well as plans for the Guyana Association of Municipalities.

With regards to harmonisation of the local government legislation, it was something that we had announced earlier in our tenure, and this is given the fact that currently there are many different pieces of legislation which relates to the local government system. Among these are Chapter 28:01, the Municipal and District Councils Act, Chapter 28:02, the Local Government Act, Chapters 28:03 and 28:04, and there is also Chapter 28:09, the Local Democratic Organs Act, which came



in much later than Chapters 28:01 and 28:02. We recognised that it is quite a task to have to relate to all of these separate pieces of legislation.

I believe Hon. Members would be aware that Chapter 28:02, the Local Government Act, came into being in 1945; Chapter 28:01, the Municipal and District Councils Act, came a lot later in 1970; and the Local Democratic Organs Act was a result of the new Constitution in 1980. We believe that it is necessary and even timely, at this stage, to have the harmonisation of all of these pieces of legislation and that it requires technical expertise. This is what this project caters for, the engagement of a consultant. These proposals are currently at the CDB for its no-objection, to be able to access the grant funding which has been approved.

*2.57 p.m.*

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I would like to take you back to project code 1903300, Georgetown Restoration Project, the \$300 million that you are allocating to the Georgetown Restoration Project, in addition to the \$200 million that you gave last year, are you aware as to whether the moneys disbursed to the Georgetown City Council were further contracted using the National Tender Board procurement requirements?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Ministry is committed and bound to ensuring that the National Tender Board procurement requirements are adhered to. In the case of the proposed allocation for 2019 of \$300 million, as I said, the sum of \$75 million, which is to support constituency activities, would fall outside of the scope of the question that was asked by the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I am just following up. Based on the 2017 Report of the Auditor General, page 211 states:

“Twelve contracts totalling \$21 million were awarded to one contractor contrary to the apparent stipulated maximum of four contracts to one contractor.”

The reason I am raising this is because there is a possibility of high-scale collusion at the level of the City Council. Are you comfortable, with the Report of the Commission of Inquiry (CoI) and of the Auditor General, that your moneys would be legally and well spent by the Georgetown Mayor and City Council?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Earlier, reference was made to the CoI that was commissioned by the Local Government Commission. The Inquiry, itself, having been completed and a report compiled, has been submitted to the Local Government Commission. We are recipients of a copy via the Local Government Commission. The issues that have been identified and flagged in that Inquiry and captured in the Report, are being addressed. I did say earlier, it is the responsibility of the Local Government Commission, principally, to address those recommendations and to act on them. As custodians, if you will, of these resources that are being made available, the Ministry is very mindful of issues of accountability and integrity in the expenditure of these sums. I would like to give that assurance to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I would like to take the Hon. Minister to project code 2802200, Coastal Water Supply. This may come as very new and cutting edge, not something the Government is used to, but you know water is food, Hon. Minister, and the primary source for ourselves. Do you know that Ms. Ally?

**Ms. Ally:** No.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I notice here that you would be constructing wells at Lusignan, Farm and Fyrish which are much needed. Are the water treatment plants and wells food certified, if I may use that expression, by the Government Analyst and Food and Drug Department or the Guyana National Bureau of Standards?

**Mr. Bulkan:** If I heard the Hon. Member correctly, I heard reference to “food certified”. I am not too sure to what that actually refers, but what I can attest to is that the Guyana Water, Inc is committed to achieving World Health Organization’s (WHOs) standards in relation to the supply of potable water.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Project code 1601800 – Water Supply Improvement Project: There is \$150 million through a Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) funding. I noticed that you will be conducting studies on the Hope Canal. I would like to ask you whether it is within your contemplation that water in the Hope Canal would be treated for distribution to residents within the catchment?

**Mr. Bulkan:** As outlined here in the description, the provision entails for the conduct of a feasibility study to make that determination as to what level of treatment is required to utilise surface water from that canal. I believe that is the purpose of the feasibility study to be able to make that determination about what the requirements are to be able to achieve that standard.

**Mr. Seeraj:** Line item 1903300, you mentioned Government's intention to ensure the recommendation of the recent CoI are implemented to give some assurance that taxpayers money will be well spent. Given that there was another Report from another CoI which was done, and I think it is referred to the Keith Burrowes Report, which made a number of recommendations that addressed issues of accountability and transparency, how comfortable are you, that the City Council will act on the recommendations of this new CoI Report when the recommendations of the first CoI were basically not adhered to?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I would like to believe that the earlier answers that were provided did address those concerns that are now being articulated by the Hon. Member. We remain concerned.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Hon. Mr. Chairman, I think my Chief Whip went before me.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Dharamlall.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Sorry.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not think Hon. Members should be telling the Chairman to whom he should choose to give the floor.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Sorry, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** We will not have any more of that.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Okay, Sir. Project code 2803100 – Technical Assistance/Planning and Support for Local Councils: One of the things that the Ministry intends to do is capacity building for local government reform. I would like to ask what do you envisage as part of local government reform in 2019?

**Mr. Bulkan:** In my contribution to the Budget debate, I did make reference to the historic conference that was held in 2018; the National Conference of Local Democratic Organs, and I

referenced the Report that was produced. I did say, as well, in my contribution, that this Report was disseminated to all of the 80 Local Democratic Organs, Regional Democratic Organs, Municipalities and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils. It was submitted to all of the Chairpersons and the Clerks of Councils. I believe, subject to correction, that I sought to encourage interested Members from the opposite side to acquaint themselves with this Report because of the edifying value that is in it. In this document, it contains at page 21, 4.2 the Local Government Development agenda. It has great details of capacity building, institutional strengthening and infrastructural development. At the level of capacity, it includes providing specialised and accredited training for Local Democratic Organs (LDOs) staff, based on their roles within the LDO. Training should be in areas such as general management, accounting, public financial management, results-based management, budgeting, reporting, development, planning, strategic analysis and planning, facilitation, management meeting, business management, environmental management, human resources management, project management, entrepreneurship, solid waste management, property evaluation and governance. It goes on to say: providing soft skills, development training....

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister...

**Mr. Bulkan:** ...all the NDO's staff...

**Mr. Chairman:** I wonder whether you would...

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is extensive, so that this is why I said that I will edify him.

**Mr. Chairman:** Yes, I think so.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I will give a copy to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Chairman:** That I think is... [*Inaudible*]. Ms. Teixeira, you have the floor.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you, Sir. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister about the Georgetown Restoration Project under project code 1903300, for \$300 million. My Colleague earlier asked questions and I was shocked to learn that there was nothing in there for the City Hall. One of the most beautiful historic buildings in our country is the City Hall. If you pass it now it is about to collapse. It is in the most deplorable condition that I have ever seen it. Has the Government or you,

Sir as the Minister, put aside money anywhere in the Budget to start work on the City Hall before it collapses?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I note the concerns of the Hon. Member. It is one shared by, I believe, the majority of the people of Guyana. Unanimously, it is a sentiment of Members of this House. I did say that \$75 million of the \$300 million is for an administration building to be used by the Municipal administration. It is to construct a building within the compound to allow for urgent renovations and restoration. In addition, perhaps the Hon. Member may have seen it publicised, the European Union (EU) has funded detailed architecture drawings which were submitted to the City, I believe in October, at a sum of approximately US\$3 million to provide for the complete restoration of City Hall. The administration building is for the relocation of the staff to allow for those activities to take place in a phased manner subject to budgetary provisions.

**Ms. Teixeira:** A follow-up: Could I get clarification, is US\$3 million that you referred to for the architectural drawings or for the costing to repair the building?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is just for the drawings.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Could you advise the House if the drawings and the scope of works by the EU give us an idea of what would be the total sum of moneys required to restore the building? We have an idea of the costing that we are talking about.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not have that figure at hand now, but I will seek to obtain it and relate it to the Hon. Member.

**Ms. Teixeira:** It is obvious that if you are going to relocate staff and build a new building, you must have some idea what you are going to do in a phased period for the original historic building. We must have some timeframe or framework within which we are operating. Further, the US\$3 million that you referred to, is it a loan, a grant or do we have to pay for architectural drawing?

**Mr. Bulkan:** To the latter part of the question, it was a grant by the European Union in the sum indicated.

*3.12 p.m.*

With regards to the new building, I think that, it is not subject to dispute, the necessary repairs to that historic building cannot take place simultaneously, whilst being used, and, therefore, it requires the relocation of the staff. These are the arrangements that are being catered for with this proposed allocation of \$75 million, which is for different administrative buildings within City Hall compound.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Could the Hon. Minister state, as he does not have an idea of how much it would take to restore that building, if he has any idea, when he would be coming back to this House to advise us on what he requires and to have some financial or funding to start the repairs on this building? It is an exquisite building and, up to this morning passing it, your heart bleeds because the building is falling apart, and, as I said, it is one of the most beautiful building we have in our country. It has to have some kind of urgency within which to deal with. The sum of \$600 million being used to spend for architectural drawings gives you an idea of the enormity of, now, during the construction work on it. If we do not act quickly, we would not have anything to reconstruct.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is that the principle responsibility for addressing the state of that building is not within our Ministry. That building, as the Hon. Member know, is a heritage building and it is part of the responsibility of National Trust, which is under the Ministry of Social Cohesion. The National Trust, as well as the subject Ministry, is very concern. In fact, I am aware that there have been offers from external sources, I am not referring to the EU at this stage, by countries in the Middle East which could allow for restoration of that building. So, the Central Government is not only looking forwards its own resources, but it is looking for a multilateral assistance to be able to, as the Hon. Member said, and I think we all agree, to save that historic and iconic building.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Project code 3600300 – Solid Waste Disposal Programme: Hon. Minister, you were supposed to complete the design for the sanitary landfill at Bartica, Linden and Mahdia. My first question to you is how far away are we from completing that design or those designs? Bear my ignorance, but what are the exact locations, not the Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates, but the exact locations in Bartica, Linden and Mahdia, and if, for example, you have a ballpark figure on what might be the possible cost and how you intent to manage it, whether it would be done by the municipalities or whether it would be done through a PPP or some other means?

The other thing is, you are intent to design a landfill at Lethem, again, what level of consultation could you validate occurred to have the Lethem landfill? Could you say where it is going to be located and to that effect, thank you?

**Mr. Bulkan:** With regards to the actual location or the siting of these sanitary landfills, I did allude, again, if you would allow me to refer to my budget contribution, where I spoke of Haag Bosch, where we inherited a dump site and today it is a model sanitary landfill. I did extend an invitation to the Hon. Members to visit that facility to see for themselves, that is an open invitation. The contractor, when he assumes responsibility, give a commitment, he said that shortly persons would be able to go and drink coffee and he is not off the mark.

But, with regard to consultation, the principle consultation in terms of what was done with those organs whether it is current ones; Bartica, Linden and Mahdia or proposed as in the case of Lethem, it is those organs that would be consulted to make the major recommendations as to the most suitable location within their jurisdiction, thereafter, the technical studies as to the soil characterisation, all of the requirement that are needed to ensure that the site is suitable for that activity would be the responsibility of the technical consultants. The sums that are being allocated for Bartica, Linden and Mahdia is \$20 million, \$20 million and \$10 million respectively. For the design of the Lethem landfill, the sum proposed for that is \$15 million.

**Mr. Chairman:** There are two questions remaining.

**Mr. Anamayah:** As a follow-up to what my Colleague just asked on the same project code 3600300, Solid Waste Disposal Programme, are there any similar plans to build a model sanitary landfill in Corriverton or anywhere in Berbice?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Under the Ministry's programme, there is provision for the construction of a sanitary landfill site in Belle Vue, the Region to which the Hon. Member referred. That is allow for, as I said, the closure of the esplanade dumpsite which caters for New Amsterdam. The Belle Vue site is expected to replace the esplanade site, which is currently be used for New Amsterdam. In relation to Corriverton, no, it is not currently on the programme.

**Mr. Chairman:** This is the last question, Mr. Hamilton you have it.

**Mr. Hamilton:** Thank you very much. Hon. Member, project code 1903300, Georgetown Restoration Programme, you spoke a lot about the new administrative building, could you indicate to us the timeframe for the construction of that building?

The second question is as regarding the supervision and the procurement aspect of the building and whether it would be done by the Ministry or whether it would be done by the City Hall. If it would be done City Hall, could you commit to us that by then it would have, in place, the procurement institution to ensure for procurement to be done via the Act that subscribe to procurement in government entities?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The principle responsibility for completion of the activity or construction of the building would be that of the City Hall. It would, however, be encouraged to engage both expertise that is present within the Ministry of Communities as well as the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, so this would be the general guidance that would be offered. It is expected to be completed within 2019.

*Programme: 422 – Sustainable Communities Development – \$4,927,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates. (3.21 p.m.)*

**Mr. Chairman:** We could now turn our attention to the regions. You would recalled yesterday, that we have an order in which we would do it; Regions 1, 8, 9, 2 and 3. So, we would attend to Region 1 and allow a few minutes for the Minister to have his officers in place.

Hon. Minister, are you ready?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes, sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Agency 71: Region 1: Barima/Waini (3.26 p.m.)**

### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$468,021,000**

*3.27 p.m.*



**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Hon. Minister, first, outline the intended breakdown for the \$42 million?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is to allow for statutory meetings for the Regional Democratic Council (RDC), extraordinary meetings, hosting of a Regional Toshias' Conference, visits to the Region by His Excellency and other Ministers, payment of monthly stipends to the Councilors, to allow for the Regional Chairperson as well as the Regional Vice-Chairperson to attend meetings in Georgetown, includes provisions for hosting the regional intelligence security meetings, regional administrative committee meetings, the National Regional Development Consultative Committee (NRDCC) meetings, other activities such as swearing in and training of Neighborhood Democratic Council (NDC) Councilors, the hosting of the Regional Agricultural and Commercial Exhibition (RACE), visits by the Regional Chairman, the Regional Vice-Chairperson and other officers of the regional administration to communities within the Region and there are two sub-regions, payment of stipends to 23 Toshias in the Region of a sum of \$30,000 each and to the same amount of deputy Toshias at \$15,000 each, nine area Councilors at the sum of \$20,000, and the Community Development Council (CDC) Chairpersons at a sum of \$15,000. It is not exhaustive, but those are some of the activities.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, I would ask that you layover that breakdown to us with the allocation for each one of those categories of expenses. I heard you mention allocations being made for visits. Each Ministry has allocations for visits for their respective Ministers, as well as the Office of the President would provide for visits of His Excellency. Could you provide some more information on that expense and how much for them?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I believe that if the Regional Chairman is so desirous of partially hosting and contributing towards, whether it is the visit of the His Excellency the President or other Ministers, there is nothing that would prohibit or prevent the RDC from contributing to those visits, given that it all has to do with both the management and development of the regions.

**Mr. Croal:** Same line item, 6211. Hon. Minister, I did not hear you commit that you are going to layover that breakdown. Secondly, on the same line item 6211, could you confirm – interestingly, I do not see that you have the Regional Executive Officer next to you, he is in the back row –

whether all expenses under line item 6211 are incurred with the prior approval of the Regional Chairman?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The vacant seat next to me is reserved for the Regional Chairman. An invitation was extended to all regional chairpersons to participate and to be present here during the defense of these estimates. I believe that the Regional Chairman is in the compound and may, probably, join us. I think the Regional Chairman would have been, if he were present here, the fittest person to give a definitive answer to that.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, can you, first of all, confirm who is the Accounting Officer of the region?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Mr. Croal, is there a line item? Please let us do it.

**Mr. Croal:** No problem. Let me go to the same line item, 6211. Who is the Accounting Officer for 6211?

**Mr. Bulkan:** What we are doing is providing clarification and explanation for these proposed sums. I do not think the question as to where the responsibility lies is relevant to the examination of these line items and of these proposed sums.

**Mr. Croal:** The Hon. Minister alluded to the Regional Chairman when I asked a question under this same line item. Hence, it is beholden of me to ask, who is the Accounting Officer. I asked the question... so, that the Regional Chairman has no responsibility for answering for expenses. Having said that ...

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Croal, could you ask the question?

**Mr. Croal:** Yes, I am asking, but when the Hon. Minister explained ...

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Croal, just ask your question. I do not need an explanation, just ask your question.

**Mr. Croal:** I will repeat the question, then. Could the Hon. Minister say who is the Accounting Officer for line item 6211?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The agency has an Accounting Officer, and this is one activity within the agency. The Hon. Member is aware who is the Accounting Officer.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Minister?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Could the Hon. Member please repeat the question?

**Mr. Croal:** For line item 6111 to line item 6312, could the Hon. Minister indicate who is the Accounting Officer?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Accounting Officer is an appointee of the Financial Secretary (FS) of the Government of Guyana, so that question should be properly directed to the FS.

**Ms. Teixeira:** This is a process of accountability and transparency which we are going through.

**Minister of Public Health [Ms. Lawrence]:** Do you have a question?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am standing on standing order, I am not on a question, Hon. Ms. Lawrence. I am standing on a point of order. This process for transparency and accountability. This is being live streamed and the population does not know ...

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Ms. Teixeira?

**Ms. Teixeira:** I am on a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Ms. Teixeira, when you rise on a point of order ...

**Ms. Teixeira:** I did say standing order 40.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members must allow me. You state the standing order under which you rise, you state the issue and then leave it to the Chairman. What it does not allow for is a speech, such as you are doing.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I was trying to not make a speech. I only made two sentences, but I will try to be more succinct.

On a point of order, Standing order 40. The Regional Executive Officers (REO) are public officers of this nation and are accountable to this nation. I am, therefore, asking that the standing order ...

the Minister's refusal to name who the REO is, who the Accounting Officer is, is in violation of accountability and transparency. He should do that; there is nothing to hide. These officers are gazetted. The population looking at this does not know who these people are and the Minister refuses to name the person. I do not understand.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Not so long ago the FS, within his authority and remit, appointed an Accounting Officer in one of our regions and made a change in that appointment, which we found out after the fact. So, I cannot presume that any changes have been made to allow me to speak authoritatively. I was informed after that change was made.

**Mr. Croal:** I will move on from the conclusion that the Hon. Minister has refused to say who the accounting officer of the Region is. Having said that, Hon. Minister, could you confirm who is the approving officer of line item 6211? Secondly, can you confirm if all expenses under 6211 were subjected to a no-objection from the Regional Chairman?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The authority for approval of expenses under this line item is that of the Accounting Officer. It is expected that the activities receive the endorsement of the Regional Chairman prior to these expenditures being undertaken.

**Mr. Croal:** My last two questions under line item 6211. Hon. Minister, I did not get the confirmation that you are going to layover the breakdown on this allocation.

**Mr. Bulkan:** My apologies, Hon. Member. That information will be provided in writing.

*3.42 p.m.*

**Mr. Croal:** Secondly, under line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could you confirm that the allocation here is insufficient for the hosting of Regional Democratic Councils? Secondly, the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) was not able to be rotated to the other sub-regions as they should as a policy that they have whereby it is supposed to be every other one.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The challenge and the phenomenon outlined by the Hon. Member is not unique to this agency or to this line item. In every programme or agency under this Budget, the funding that is required for all of the activities is greater than the ability of the Ministry of Finance or the Central Government to finance or to fund. The expectation as always is that the agencies have to work

within the allocations or the sums provided to them and this would be no exception to that general rule.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: The allocation here is \$15 million which is the exact figure in Budget 2018. Could you indicate what is intended for this allocation? Having said that, you were not able to expend all of your resources for maintenance of buildings, only \$8,937,000 or \$15 million. Could you give us an assurance that you would be able to do that in 2019? Secondly, a confirmation as to why you have not been able to complete your programme envisaged for 2018?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The proposed sum of \$15 million caters for repairs to several buildings, namely the Mabaruma Guest House with an estimated cost of \$6 million, the Acquero Guest House with a cost of \$4 million, and to the Assistant Regional Executive Officer (AREO) living quarters in Port Kaituma with a sum of \$5 million.

With regard to the expenditure in 2018, I had earlier in the previous consideration of the Ministry, outlined that at the time of preparation of this Budget not all of the expenses would have been captured. I am advised that this item or the expenditure in 2018 under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings falls in the same category.

**Mr Croal:** Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the \$256,450,000 intended for?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is to cater for the provision of stipend to members of the Regional Tender Board and to evaluators, and the increased cost of handling of goods on the Transport and Harbours Department wharf at a proposed annual sum of \$1,580,000.

The remainder, which is the bulk of the allocation or approximately \$255 million is to allow for the upgrading of maps. This exercise will be national in scope, but the project will start in the Barima/Waini Region. This activity will be conducted by the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GLSC). The allocation is being made under this line item, but the moneys would be warranted to the GLSC to allow for this activity, which is the complete new maps of Guyana. I am informed that the last time this was done was in 1966.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, could you provide to us with the exact allocation that would be going to GLSC which you have there and secondly, the stipend to be paid for evaluators or members?

Line item 6264 – Vehicles, Spares and Service: Could you confirm how many vehicles are catered for under this line item?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The exact sum for the mapping exercise is \$254,870,000. The evaluators at the level of the Central Tender Board will be paid \$3,000 per session and this is payable to those members. There are four members. I believe Ms. Liverpool is one of those persons.

There are 10 vehicles in total under line item 6264. That is the fleet at the RDC and it includes 200 horse power Yamaha Outboard, four all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and four Hilux Land Cruisers.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6264 – Vehicles, Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister state to whom the vehicles are assigned?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Toyota Hilux - PMM 587 is used by the Regional Executive Officer (REO) and that would be at Mabaruma, as is the 200-horse power Yamaha, an ATV, and a Nissan. At Matakai there is a Hilux and an ATV. At Moruca there is a Hilux, an ATV and a 75-horse power Yamaha Outboard.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the security provider, when the company started, and the duration of the contract?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The provider is Radar Security Service and Supplies, contracted for a period of one year and it started from September 2018 to September 2019.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships) - What do you intend to do in terms of this exercise for training?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The various forms of training would include communications to allow for participants to be able to communicate more efficiently which would be done by the Department of Public Service. Training in programme budgeting to be done by the Training Division and training of personnel in accounting procedures to better sensitise officers of the rules and regulations of the Public Service. Those training are expected to be conducted inhouse at the RDC as well as the other sub-offices at Moruca, Port Kaituma and Matthew's Ridge. Training in

government accounting in procedures of supervisory management and procurement towards management also is to be done by the Department of Public Service.

**Mr. Chairman:** There will be three questions after this one. Mr. Croal, please proceed.

**Mr. Croal:** This is my last question under this programme. Could the Hon. Minister indicate is there any other allocation or what is the intention with respect to the Amerindian hostel out at Kumaka?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Is it training?

**Mr. Croal:** It is not training.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Which line item is it?

**Mr. Croal:** We have moved onto in terms of infrastructure as well as management.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Which line item is it?

**Mr. Croal:** I can put it under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Croal if there is a line item then let us hear the line item.

**Mr. Croal:** Sure, Mr. Chairman. The question is very simple.

**Mr. Bulkan:** There is no provision in the 2019 allocations for that hostel in Kumaka.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Minister say is there any provision in the \$11,400,000 allocated to preparing or offering the returning Guyanese-Venezuelans and Venezuelans a shelter in Region 1?

This matter has been in the Press and it is a national matter. It is a concern of the residents of Region 1, because the Amerindian Hostel, we know, has been shut down because of the occupancy by the Spanish speaking friends and neighbours. I am wondering whether this matter has been going on for the entire year or last year or whether any provision was made for shelter or any comfortable area for these visitors.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The activity that the Hon. Member has outlined is capital in nature. The line item that is being referenced is under recurrent expenditure, maintenance. The answer is no. It is not a recurrent expense.

*Programme: 711 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$468,021,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

*3.57 p.m.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$56,280,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 2401500 - Land and Water Transport: Could the Minister indicate the type of vehicle to be bought and to where would it be assigned?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, it is provision for a 4x4 pick up, budgeted sum of \$12.5 million, an ATV, the first one to be based at the RDC in Mabaruma - \$3,600,000, also Region Administration Mabaruma and boat and engine to be based at provision of \$3,300,000 million to be based in the Matarkai subregion.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Project code 1208600 – Buildings - Administration: My earlier question was noted to be of a capital nature. Is there any intension to upgrade the Amerindian hostile at Kumaka in Region 1 – Mabaruma subregion? Is there any allocation to provide a habitable structure or shelter for our visitors from Venezuela of both Guyanese and Venezuelan nationals?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the proposed sum of the allocation for \$34 million is to allow for the payment of retention to the sum of \$938,000, boat house at Port Kaituma budgeted at \$11 million, enclosure of the Regional Administration Building budgeted sum of \$12 million, and enclosure of the Amerindian hostile at Matarkai budgeted sum of \$10,060,000 million. The answer would be no.

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 2401500 - Land and Water Transport: I did ask about the vehicle. It is a vehicle for the RDC. Could you say to whom it would be assigned to?



**Mr. Bulkan:** I regret that cannot be more specific than what I said earlier, which is that it would be assigned to the Regional Democratic Council.

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 2502500 Furniture and Equipment – Administration: Could the Hon. Minister say, where is it intended for this furniture to be sent?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is for the RDC Secretariat at Port Kaituma and the sub regional office at Moruca.

*Programme: 711 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$56,280,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 712 – Public Infrastructure - \$308,491,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister state what is the reason for the increased allocation here?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The proposed increase allocation of approximately \$24 million, again, the expenditure that is reflected in 2018 may not be the full sum of what is spent in 2018. The difference would not be the entire figure that I related.

It is a modest increase over the 2018 allocation of \$87,500,000; a mere half million, to allow for the monitoring and evaluation of public works projects across the region, to allow for the purchasing of additional fuel for the Mabaruma, Moruca and Arakaka Power Plants, and fuel for the equipment within the Roads Division which includes the additional ATVs that are being catered for under the programme.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, I do not see an increase in the budgetary allocation. You are correct; it is a similar \$88 million. Are there any plans for generating hours? The Hon. Minister of Infrastructure, bear be one-minute Mr. Chairman, would have clarified with the solar farm you would not necessarily still have 24 hours. Is there any intended increase of generating hours in 2019?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that the increase supply in the number of hours of electricity is catered or anticipated to come from the new solar farm and not additional hours that deals with generator which currently supplies the Mabaruma.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, could you confirm therefore, because I did try to get that answer, how many generating hours is intended in 2019?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There is no consideration at this time to increase the number of hours that are being supplied or provided for by the diesel generator which is 9 hours. The increased hours will come from the new solar farm once that becomes operational. I believe that is eminent.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6251 - Maintenance of Roads: The budgetary allocation was \$51 million, expected expenditure is half of the sum in 2018 and you are seeking the similar amount in 2019. Hon. Minister Could we have an explanation for much needed road networking infrastructure that is required within the region? Could we have an explanation as to why only half of the resources have been spent? Could you layover to us the works that are intended for 2019?

**Mr. Bulkan:** With regard to the 2018 expenditure, again, I would like to relate and to inform the Hon. Member that the sum indicated here does not capture all of the 2018 expenditure. I am advised that it was at the time of the preparation at the end of October. I am also further advice that there were difficulties and challenges during the rainy season in completing some of the projected road works. The list of areas that are targeted for repairs in 2019 the request will be honoured, and the list will be provided to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service: Could you indicate how many vehicles are catered for under this programme?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is a total of approximately 20 pieces of equipment. This includes the power plants, the six generators; two in Moruca, there is a tractor in Mabaruma, and Moruca. There are two trucks, one High Integrity Magnesium Automotive Castings (HIMAC), one motor cycle, one road roller and another tractor.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6281 - Security Services: For Budget 2018 you did not require your full resource allocation here. The similar amount is being budgeted for 2019. Could you say, therefore, what cause the increase in 2019? What are the locations for the security services?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The security providers is the same company that was related earlier Radar Security Service & Supplies, it is the same contract period from September 2018 to September 2019. The locations are the power plants under this programme across the region.

**Mr. Croal:** What you did not clarify for us - you did not require that amount of resources in 2018, but you are asking for the same amount as budgeted in 2018.

**Mr. Bulkan:** My apologies. I said earlier, and the similar situation obtains which is that the 2018 figures here do not capture the full expenditure.

*4.12 p.m.*

The projection is that the sum that was originally identified in 2018 which is just over \$20 million would be needed in 2019.

*Programme: 712 – Public Infrastructure- \$308,491,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme 712- Public Infrastructure- \$162,700,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 1902600 - Infrastructure Development: Construction of culverts; the legend described that at Wauna Scheme. Having said that, could you indicate of this allocation here completes all the work that is required for that scheme?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 2401500 - Land and Water Transport: Could you give us the break down for the \$15,500,000 budgeted?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The sum of \$13 million is budgeted for a 4x4, a pickup to be based in Mabaruma and the remaining sum of \$2,500,000 for a boat and engine to be based in the Moruca subregion.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Project code 1219500 - Buildings: I noticed that there is a \$30 million allocation here for construction of buildings. Could the Minister say what buildings will be constructed, which locations and the amounts allocated if it is more than one building?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, please for one moment. *[Inaudible]* It is to provide for construction of living quarters at Mabaruma, a building of 50 x 25 feet, and the project cost is \$18 million. The remainder is at Port Kaituma.

**Mr. Chairman:** There would be two questions remaining after you Ms. Campbell-Sukhai. Please, go ahead.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Follow-up: The building to be constructed at Mabaruma for staff, would it be from outside of the region or within the region?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that it is for staff under this programme 712: Public Infrastructure and it could be a combination of both personnel based within the region as well as personnel visiting from outside of the region.

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 2601400 - Power Supply: For Waramuri. Could you give us a little information on that?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is to provide for electricity distribution network at Waramuri. It is to cater for approximately 350 residents within this community and to supply electricity to the schools, health facilities, and the police stations that are currently without such facilities.

**Mr. Chairman:** This is the final question.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Project code 2601400 - Power Supply: May I ask the Minister was any provision made for cables and other necessary materials to extend the electricity within the township, not meaning the compound of Mabaruma but Mabaruma is now a Town? A solar farm was established. No electricity is coming from the solar farm as yet. However, my question still stands, and I want to understand whether the Minister planned or has taken into consideration that the township needs electricity and must be expanded.

*[Mr. Chairman hits the gavel]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members must let the question suffice.

**Mr. Bulkan:** That project code refers to an activity to be conducted at Waramuri and not at Mabaruma.

*Programme: 712 – Public Infrastructure - \$162,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Current Expenditure**

### **Programme 713- Education Delivery- \$1,314,826,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6292 - Dietary: Hon. Minister, \$51,300,000 budgeted for 2018, only \$37 million spent for 2018, and the similar allocation is being requested for 2019. Could you confirm that the reason for the spending in dietary, was the allocation adequate that was spent for 2018? Notwithstanding, this is not coming from me, of shortages within the dormitory facilities. Could you state if the allocation for 2019 is now adequate?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I cannot give a definitive assurance to the Hon. Member that the proposed sum for 2019 would indeed be adequate to cater for meals for the respective locations. However, it is greater than the original proposed allocation for 2018. Even though the expenditure that is reflected here suggests that there was an underspending, as I had said previously, it seems to be that the cut-off point here would have been in October. What I believe that I can, with some reasonable degree of certainty, give an assurance that if before the end of 2019 it is recognised the need for a supplementary to provide for this critical service to be met, which is dietary for the students in these dorms; Port Kaituma, Santa Rosa Secondary School and North West Secondary School; the Minister of Finance would be very favourably disposed to consider such supplementary. For now, this is the provision for 2019.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6292 - Dietary: The Hon. Minister confirm, because the date of 31<sup>st</sup> October that was given by the Hon. Minister of Finance was really the latest estimate that you will be spending for 2018. Hon. Minister, I heard you referring to the expenses at 31<sup>st</sup> October. Could the Hon. Minister therefore confirm that, notwithstanding the shortages within the region, the region is underspending its budgetary allocation?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Hon. Member alluded if not asserted with some reasonable degree of certainty that there were shortages. Sir, that seems to be in dispute. I do not think that we should accept that as a given.

However, in relation to the 2018 expenditure, at the outset, yesterday the Minister of Finance did say, in that regard, that a Reconciliation Report would be submitted by the end of the first quarter, 2019 and it will contain accurate figures as to the actual expenditure across all of these agencies and programmes for 2018. That is not far in the future it is a mere less than four months away and those actual figures will become publicly available.

For now, the information that is being presented here is that there is no absence of this programme, the provision of meals to these locations that the RDC currently provides for.

**Mr. Croal:** I will leave the shortage aspect for another day. Line item 6281 - Security Services: Could you say where are the increase locations for this allocation? Is every educational facility within the region being covered with this?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that this provision will cater for security service at 18 sights. It includes schools and other Government facilities. I believe that that is the total number of sights under this programme. The proposed sum in 2019 is marginally greater than the proposed sum in 2018, even though the suggested expenditure in 2018 appears to be less. But again, it could be victim to the same fate that we had referred to in a few other line items.

*4.27 p.m.*

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Again, we have underspending for much needed repairs across the region for educational facilities. Therefore, could you layover for us where is intended for that \$110 million? And secondly, is there any explanation for the underspending on the maintenance of buildings?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, there is a request to layover the schedule of buildings that will be catered for under the proposed allocation of \$110 million, to the schools in the region. This request will be met, and the information will be laid over to the Hon. Member.

With regards to the underspending that is reflected in the documents before the Hon. Member and Members of this House, I think that that assumption should not be made conclusively at this stage. I am led to believe that the actual expenditure to the end of the year will be much closer to the 2018 budgetary allocation.

**Mr. Chairman:** Two questions after this question, Mr. Croal.

**Mr. Croal:** I only have one more, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: There is an increased allocation here, Hon. Minister. Could you state what the increase is catering for?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is indeed an increase of approximately \$4 million over the 2018 allocation. It is to provide for routine visits and transportation of supplies to schools. It is a fleet of 13 vehicles, including the school buses at the several locations: Baramita, Matthew’s Ridge, Port Kaituma, Carabauri, Moruca, White Water, and two buses at Mabaruma; Hosororo; an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) at Port Kaituma; and there are about four outboard engines as well.

*Programme: 713 – Education Delivery – \$1,314,826,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 713 – Education Delivery – \$193,270,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether the allocation that was...

**Mr. Bulkan:** Sorry, to interrupt you, Hon. Member. I think we are dealing with the Capital Expenditure for Education Delivery.

**Mr. Croal:** Sorry.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Unless you have no question for that.

**Mr. Croal:** Land and Water Transport – project code 2401500: Could you indicate where the boat, engine and bus will be for and the various breakdown?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is for a 200-horsepower outboard engine that is to be based in Moruca, together with a 22 feet boat; a 40-horsepower engine to transport children from Borawha to Saint Nicholas Primary School - that is in keeping with the Public Education and Transportation Service (PETS), commonly known as the 5Bs programme – with another 30 feet boat; a 15-horsepower engine to

be used at Lower Haimarakabra to Waramuri Primary – again, 5Bs; a 15-horsepower engine to be used at Big Kanabali, to transport approximately 40 children from Big Kanabali to Santa Cruz Primary; another 15-horsepower engine for 20 children in Barima to Saint Ninians Primary Annex at Black Water Savannah. There are a few more at Powaikuru, and there is also another one for students from the Santa Rosa Secondary and Carabauri Primary to be transported from Wallaba Village – a total of \$15.76 million.

**Mr. Croal:** It is not a question. I was going to request that the Hon. Minister lay it over.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Croal, could you repeat your request?

**Mr. Croal:** I ask that the Hon. Minister layover that information.

**Mr. Chairman:** Very good. Thank you.

*Programme: 713 – Education Delivery – \$193,270,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 714 – Health Services – \$731,827,000**

**Dr. Anthony:** Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister tell us how much of this sum would be expended by the region and how much would be warranted to the Ministry of Public Health?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that of the budgeted sum, the provision of \$90 million, that the sum of \$67 million will be warranted to the Central Ministry. Mr. Chairman, subject to correction, I am advised that it is \$80 million of the \$90 million provision for 2019. So, it is the majority. I am advised that \$80 million of the \$90 million will be warranted.

**Dr. Anthony:** The \$10 million that the region would be expending, could the Minister say to us what form of procurement will be used? Is it sole sourcing or competitive bidding, and what would be those items that the region would be going out for?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Thank you, Hon. Member. I am advised that the requirements in the Procurement Act is what would be followed, which basically speaks to competitive bidding.



**Dr. Anthony:** Could the Minister tell us whether, in this sum, vaccination would be covered?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Again, I am advised that the provision does cater for some amount of vaccination. But the procurement will be done centrally and not regionally.

**Dr. Anthony:** We understand that there are persons who have come across from Venezuela and are in places such as White Water, Kamwatta and so forth. Could the Minister say whether this new sum that is talked about will have enough provision to cater for vaccination of these persons who are coming across from Venezuela?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Again, the information at hand informs us that, indeed, consideration has been taken into account. The provision does allow for the acquisition of an increased supply to cater for this emerging crisis as related by the Hon. Member – the outbreaks associated with the influx of persons on the western border.

**Mr. Chairman:** This is the final question.

**Dr. Anthony:** Could the Minister say to us what types of vaccines would be necessary for the Venezuelans that are coming over? *[Interruption]*

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.]*

**Dr. Anthony:** There are outbreaks in Venezuela and that is why we need to know.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, please ask the question.

**Dr. Anthony:** And secondly, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Communities are supposed to be doing surveillance there. Could the Minister say whether they have enough surveillance officers, personnel and the requisite equipment to take samples, to store and get them out to the Ministry, so that they can be sent to the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) in a timely manner? How many cases and how many samples did we have over the last year?

*4.42 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the answers to the latter questions are, yes. There is adequate equipment to conduct that level of testing. *[Interruption]* I did say that I am advised.

With regards to the vaccines, there are 17 antigens present in the Region. I believe antigen is a medical term. The answers to all of those are, yes. I think the actual numbers would have to be provided later. When you said the “last year”, you meant 2018. This information is subject to confirmation; there are 25 cases.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Minister. Hon. Dr. Anthony that was the last question.

**Dr. Anthony.** I would like to ask him to layover for my last question, because he was not able to explain the point.

**Mr. Chairman:** If you ask him that, it is fine. Hon. Minister, you are being asked to layover the details of the last question. Thank you, Dr. Anthony.

*Programme: 714 - Health Services - \$731,827,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 714 - Health Services - \$168,550,000**

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Project code 1202400 - Buildings - Health: We have here:

“Construction of a maternity waiting home at Santa Rosa, health training complex at Mabaruma... and incinerator at Kwebana.”

At number five there is “provision for hot water baths”. Where is this? Where will these hot water baths be installed and who will benefit?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The provision is for the four district hospitals and to cater for the sterilisation of sheets and linens. It is a laundry provision to reduce patient to patient transmission of infectious diseases such as Scabies and Chicken Pox *et cetera*.

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 2401500 - Land and Water Transport: There is \$14 million for the purchase of ambulances. Hon. Minister, could you indicate if there is an allocation for any water ambulance under this project code?

**Mr. Bulkan:** No, this provision is not for a water ambulance. It is for the conventional land ambulance.

**Mr. Croal:** The same project code 2401500, Land and Water Transport. Hon. Minister, could you give an update on the water ambulance to ply the Moruca route?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That is a 2018 activity and I believe that we are addressing the Estimates of Expenditure for 2019.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Mr. Croal, you have the floor. There will be two questions after this one.

**Mr. Croal:** I will make it easier for you, Mr. Chairman. There will only be one question.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is very good of you. That is very generous of you.

**Mr. Croal:** Thank you.

**Mr. Chairman:** Please proceed.

**Mr. Croal:** Could the Hon. Minister state when will that water ambulance be operational?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that the equipment is here and training in its proper use is about to commence. Its operationalisation, I am advised, is very eminent.

*Programme: 714 - Health Services - \$168,550,000 agreed to and stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 715 - Agriculture - \$20,000,000**

*Programme: 715 – Agriculture - \$20,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members we must now turn to consider Regions 8 and 9. Hon. Members, we are entitled to a break at 5.10 p.m.; everyone that has this note. Hon. Members, I must tell you that we are quite behind in our treatment of the agencies.

#### **Agency 78 - Region No. 8: Potaro/Siparuni**

### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 781 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$ 152,313,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** We would allow the Minister an opportunity to have his staff changed around.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I noticed there is a reduction. In fact, there is a reduction in the entire staffing establishment under Regional Administration and Finance. Could the Minister tell us whether these are vacancies or staff leaving the employ of the region? If these are vacancies, is there any intention to fill them?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The reduction in the numbers are due to the transition of persons to the fixed establishment. To the second part of the question, yes, there are vacancies within the programme and they are being addressed.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Line item 6211 - Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Hon. Minister tell this House whether there will be an increase in meetings of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC). In 2018, there were five meetings budgeted for, and I would like to suspect that in 2019 we should have an increase in those meetings.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The budgeted sum of \$36 million is projected to cover the cost of the meetings of the RDC which are due to be held by the five numbers, as outlined by the Hon. Member. It is the expectation that the provision would be adequate to meet the needs for those meetings.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** On the same line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency, I would like to ask the Minister if he is aware that access to communication and information, as it relates to developmental matters related to the population on that side in Subregion 1, is not yet very healthy or developed. Does he have any measures in place to ensure that with five meetings it would be adequate? My knowledge of what is happening in those areas is that there is not enough attention or opportunity to represent the population of that... [Mr. Jordan: The question.]  
I have two questions and they were already stated.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Hon. Member is alluding to a real challenge in relation to the management of that region. As a result of the geographic location, the state of the infrastructure and the diverse nature of all the villages in the North Pakaraimas, it is a challenge posed by the administration in terms of communication and accessibility. It is one of the many ongoing challenges that the Administration continues to address. In between that, as the Hon. Member is aware, considerable

resources are being provided to this region for all the programmes - education, public health, and upgrade of public infrastructure. I think it is a general comment being made about the challenges in relation to communication in that region. It is not as developed as other parts of the hinterland region or the coast.

**Mr. Chairman:** I thank the Hon. Minister. Hon. Member, there will be one more question after this. Please proceed, Ms. Campbell-Sukhai.

*4.57 p.m.*

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, that is the challenge of the hinterland; we cannot get to represent them well. But I have the final question under line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage, and I will also mention line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence. Would the Minister tell this House whether, in 2019, the children of Chenapau should expect to be flown from Mahdia to Chenapau rather than traverse across the forest, as was alluded to by the Hon. Minister Garrido-Lowe in her budget presentation?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the transport of children from Chenapau, if it is present, it will be under the education programme and not under regional administration.

*Programme: 781 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$152,313,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 781 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$7,950,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, project code 2402200 - Land and Water Transport: I noticed there is a \$6 million allocation. Could the Hon. Minister tell us how many vehicles he intends to purchase with the \$6 million? Who will be the beneficiary of the vehicles and in which sub-region?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the allocation is for the purchase of two ATVs. One to be used at the Kato sub-office and one at the Mahdia main office. This is to allow for increase monitoring of projects.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, two more questions after this one.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, with respect to the allocation of the vehicle, may I ask the Minister when the Ministry will allocate or make provision for a People's Progressive Party (PPP)/Civic councillor to be provided with an ATV, since this year an A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) councillor was provided with one and the same day he was heading home he fell off the mountain. I hope the young man is now healthy.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the general trust of the question, as I interpret it, is that the Central Government tries to provide improved equipment and facilities to RDC councillors within its means. So, we have heard an instance of RDC councillors benefitting from such improved services. I am happy to note the observation that is being made.

*Programme: 781 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$7,950,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 782 - Public Infrastructure - \$204,062,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, line item 6251 - Maintenance of Roads: I noticed that there is a \$57,580,000 allocation. Could the Minister provide the details, and if it is too long could he lay over the details in a printed form?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the allocation is to provide for maintenance of 10 roadways in the region. These being Taruka, Kopinang, Maikwak, Karisparu, Morewau, Kaibarupai, Micobie, Tumatumari, Orinduik and roads in Kamana.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Ms. Sukhai, do you have another question?

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This will be my final question on the current expenditure. Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister tell this House whether the Three Miles road bridge, the Mango Landing bridge, the Jumbie bridge, the Kopinang bridge, the Paloma bridge, and the school children bridge in Kopinang, form part of the maintenance plan under this heading?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, for the benefit of the Hon. Member, I will outline the bridges to be repaired under this allocation. They are in Orinduik, Tuseneng, Morewau, Itabac, two bridges in Chieung Mouth; Taruka, Maikwak, two in Kato and two in Kanapang.

*Programme: 782 – Public Infrastructure - \$204,062,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 782 -Public Infrastructure - \$147,520,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, under project code 1100800, Bridges, there is a \$67,520,000 allocation. Could the Hon. Minister say whether under this capital allocation the Three Miles road bridge, Mango Landing bridge, Jumbie bridge, Kopinang bridge, Paloma bridge and the school bridge in Kopinang... Mr. Chairman, if you could see this, it is the Kopinang bridge. One would see this is priority and it is not catered for and allocated. These are the priorities which we have to come, to bring redress to the state.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, this allocation of \$67.52 million is to cater for the rehabilitation of a bridge at Konawaruk at an estimated cost of \$21.1 million; the construction of a bridge at Kalibung, in the Paramakatoi/Kato area, at an estimated cost of \$14.5 million - bridges that were destroyed by heavy traffic; the construction at Kurukabaru - and these are all expected to be concrete and timber bridges - is a bridge between Kurukabaru and Kato and that link is at an estimated cost of \$17.36 million; and the construction of another concrete and timber bridge at Elenake, linking Paramakatoi and Kato, to benefit 4,000 residents again in the North Pakaraimas.

**Mr. Chairman:** Ms. Sukhai, this is the last question.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, project code 1219600 – Buildings: I noticed there is a \$10 million allocation. Could the Hon. Minister tell this House whether this \$10 million is to do additional work to the small building in the compound at Mahdia where the Member of Parliament (MP) resides?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the answer is no.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, could he tell us which building then is going to be constructed?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, it is to construct new living quarters to cater for senior staff that is expected to be posted in the region. It is to be based in Mahdia.

*Programme: 782 - Public Infrastructure - \$147,520,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 783 - Education Delivery - \$995,278,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Mr. Chairman, line item 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister say whether \$12,500,000 in 2019 is now adequate for reimbursement to teachers who travel to attend workshops and other events? It is difficult for teachers to attend workshops in those areas, especially in Subregion 1.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the allocation in 2019 is 25% greater than it was in 2018. It is an additional sum of \$2.5 million. It is to cater for a better delivery of the programme and of the service. Unfortunately, I cannot speak authoritatively and definitively to the question that was posed, but this is the provision and it is an increased provision of 25%, a sum of \$12.5 million.

*Programme: 783 - Education Delivery - \$995,278,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

*5.12 p.m.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$130,765,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Project code 1209100 – Furniture and Equipment – Staff Quarters: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the \$4,265,000 will be to provide additional furniture for the new Teachers who will be taking up positions in Kato? The last time I checked there were not enough.



The allocation in the sum of \$4.265 million is to cater for better comfort to Teachers stationed in the region. It is to acquire or procure, among other things, two four-burner gas stoves, two 11 cubic feet refrigerators and 10 beds with eight inches mattresses. These beds will be placed at Princeville, Chenapau, Taruka, Itabac, Chieung Mouth and Bamboo Creek; 10 wardrobes for the Teachers' Quarters at Chenapau, Taruka, Itabac, Chieung Mouth, Tuseneng, Princeville, Micobie, El Paso and Paramakatoi and 11 tables and chairs (dINETTE sets) at a cost of \$1.65 million for mainly the locations in the North Pakaraimas.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Project code 2402200 – Land and Water Transport: There is a sum of \$18,500,000 allocated to purchase vehicles, boats, engines, tractor and trailer. Could the Hon. Minister say, whether the all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are included here and whether the school children of Chenapau will be benefitting from such?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The allocation of \$18.5 million is to fund a boat and engine to transport school supplies and children at the Sand Hill Primary School. The sum of \$11 million is budgeted for the purchase of a tractor and trailer to transport school supplies to the Kato School Complex and \$6 million is budgeted to purchase two ATVs for use at the Kato Complex and one at Mahdia.

*Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$130,765,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Current Expenditure**

### **Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$331,098,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Line item 6221- Drugs and Medical Supplies: I noticed that there is no increase in the allocated sum for 2019. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he has not considered the locations and the need for adequate drugs for the two sub regions, particularly for sub-region 1 where there is always a shortage?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Whilst indeed it is true that the provision in 2019 is not greater than it was in 2018, it is the case that the 2018 allocation was considerably higher than the 2017 allocation, by over 60%. It moved from \$19 million to \$32 million. In the space of two years, it is a considerable increase.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Follow-up on the question, since the Minister stated that there is a 60% increase over and above 2017, and he usually likes to keep it within the budget year of 2019, I would wish to ask whether the \$32 million that was allocated in 2018 was adequate? There were tremendous shortages remaining in that region in 2018.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that the supply of drugs in the region was adequate in 2018.

*Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$331,098,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$90,500,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Project code 2402100 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles, boats and engines would be bought and where will they be located?

**Mr. Bulkan:** On a point of correction, the document that I have states project code 2402200 and not project code 2402100. Is that correct, Hon. Member?

The allocation of \$27.5 million is to acquire two ATVs, one to be used at Mora and the other at Kurukabaru at a budgeted sum of \$6 million; \$4 million is for the purchase of three aluminium boats and engines, one to be used Kaibarupai, one at Kanapang and the third at Pamela Landing in lower Potaro; and the purchase of a 4x4 ambulance to be used in Mahdia.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** May I ask the cost or the estimated cost for the ambulance?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The estimated cost is \$17.5 million.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** On the same line item, could the Hon. Minister say to this House what will become of the ambulance that was bought earlier and not yet put in use at Mahdia?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I will appreciate if the Hon. Member could be a little more specific. Could she provide an approximate date because I am familiar with one ambulance? It preceded, when we were on that side of the House. If I may use the word, Sir, that particular ambulance was a scandal. It was widely publicised. It was ostensibly a new ambulance but when it got in there it was

unserviceable. I would be happy to provide the information to the Hon. Member. It was never used.

*Programme: 784 – Health Services - \$90,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 785 – Agriculture - \$28,835,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Hon. Minister state where the works will be done?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There are three locations: Kato, Paramakatoi and Mahdia.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Line item 6302, Training, including Scholarships: I noticed that \$3.5 million is allocated. Could the Hon. Minister say whether training will be done for the Farmers in Monkey Mountain where they attempted to establish a rice-producing village? Currently, I think they are in problems. Could the Hon. Minister say whether they will benefit from any training to restart that project and make it profitable?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that Monkey Mountain is one of the locations for which this allocation is expected to be utilised.

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister tell this House what type of training will be done at Monkey Mountain?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This training will be conducted by two central agencies, namely, National Agriculture Research and Extension Institute (NAREI) and the Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA). I will have to, respectfully, ask the Hon. Member that I provide these details subsequently in writing

*Programme: 785 – Agriculture - \$28,835,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 785 – Agriculture - \$17,510,000**

**Ms. Campbell-Sukhai:** Project code 1702000 - Agricultural Development: I noticed in the legend that it speaks of the provision for poultry pen, shade house, furniture and equipment, could the Hon. Minister provide a list of the activities to be funded under this project code and he could lay it over?

*5.27 p.m.*

There are Agriculture Officers in sub-region 2 who do not have transport and there is only one ATV allocated to the agriculture projects in that area, could the Hon. Minister say whether, under Agriculture Development, he catered for support to the Agriculture Officers to be able to mobile in Sub Region 2, particularly where it is difficult to walk from village to village for hours?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the question. With regard to the transportation for officers under this programme, I am advised that, due to the limited nature of equipment, the resources are shared across the programmes. The sum of \$17.5 million is to allow for the construction of a shade house in Taruka, the construction of poultry pens; one in Kato and Paramakatoi at budgeted sum of \$12 million, the procurement of equipment for improved communications namely a satellite phone and a handheld Global Positioning System (GPS), to provide for a solar egg incubator in Kato village, a portable feed mill in Kato village and a rice huller in Itabac village, the same rice project.

*Programme: 785 – Agriculture – \$ 17,510,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates. (5.28 p.m.)*

*Assembly Resumed*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we would now have the suspension. I thank you for your assistance. We would return at 10 minutes after 6 o'clock.

*Sitting suspended at 5.29 p.m.*

*Sitting Resumed at 6.19 p.m.*

*Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply*

*In committee of Supply*

**Agency 79: Region 9: Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo (6.21 p.m.)**

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$198,359,000**

**Mr. Charlie:** Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: To the Hon. Minister; Toshaos, deputy Toshaos, Senior Councillors and Regional Councillors would be grateful, and happy enough, to ask, through their representative, if this line item cater for increase to their stipend?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Thank you Hon. Member, the stipends currently being paid to all of the Toshaos is \$30,000 monthly and for the deputy Toshaos it is \$15,000 monthly and the Senior Councillors it is the sum of \$20,000 monthly. There are quite a few Senior Councillors in the South Paramakatoi, North Rupununi, Deep South Central and South. The 2019 allocations do not provide for an increase in these sums, but they remain at \$30,000, \$20,000 and \$15,000.

**Mr. Charlie:** I, like my indigenous leaders of Region 9, am grossly disappointed since this Government promised a good life.

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]*

And I move on. In 2018, the same line item 6211, the budgetary allocation was \$35,449,000 and the expended sum \$30,443,000. To the Hon. Minister, 2019 would cater for \$35,449,000, the question is; could you please explain the allocation underspent under this line item?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The 2019 allocation is identical to the 2018 allocation. The 2018 expenditure, the revised figure, is actually less on this document, but I am advised that, at the last Regional Democratic Council (RDC), those expenses are not reflected here and that that sum would be expended by the end of the year. Hon. Member, it would not result in an underspending under that line item.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There are an additional four contracted employees, what is the designation of those persons who have been contracted and their emoluments?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The additional employees are; one Deputy Regional Executive Officer (DREO) (Planning) at a salary of approximately \$255,000 monthly, two typist clerks at a salary of approximately \$60,000 each and one driver/mechanic at the same rate of pay.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister could you confirm, recently you would have had an advertisement for a number of DREOs across the region, could you confirm if that is such person from that vacancy?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The person reflected in this document to which I just referred was from an earlier advertisement and the person is a female from the region. There is currently another advertisement for the similar positions to try and fill the vacancies which remain in other regions.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister could you state why the recruitment was not done through the fixed establishment?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This particular position is one at a higher position to try and fill the vacancies that remain in other regions.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister could you state by the recruitment was not done through the fixed establishment?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This particular position is one at a higher level and it requires a particular technical qualification. I am advised that it was not possible to fill this recruitment via the process that was identify, but that, once in the system, it would be easier to transition to the fixed establishment.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, could you confirm that you are saying that this person has been appointed on contract to get experience, so that they could later apply for the vacancy that is being advertised across the regions?

**Mr. Bulkan:** No, I am not suggesting that. It so happens that there is no position on the establishment within the region for a DREO (Planning), so this is a new position, hence the method being employed.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, is this a policy across the regions for that position? Secondly, was this appointment done through the Public Service Ministry?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answers to both questions are yes.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to Agency: Hon. Minister, could you confirm if this is a People Progressive Party Civic (PPP/C) majority council, the RDC?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not see the relevance to that question. We are considering figures here and I do not think that question has any relevance to this exercise.

**Mr. Chairman:** One more question and then I would put the question.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** The RDC submitted to the Ministry, under this line item, over \$130 plus million. This line item allows Councillors to go out and do their work, the Hon. Minister has decided to give...

**Mr. Chairman:** No, Mr. Dharamlall, could you ask the question that you wish to ask.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** The Ministry has decided to cut the request of the RDC, Hon. Minister, could I ask you why you have decided to cut the request of the RDC, a request that was approved by the RDC, from a \$135 million to what you have provided here?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The sum of \$35,000,449 is the provision that exist in these estimates as the sum to be provided for that line item for 2019. I cannot go beyond that, Sir.

*6.32 p.m.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** Line item 6312 – Subventions to Local Authorities: Could you say if the \$12,055,000 has been allocated for the Lethem Town Council and the New Aranaputa Council? If the answer is yes, then I have a follow-up question.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is yes.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Could the Hon. Minister say how much has been allocated for each body? Secondly, why is the allocation for 2017 and 2018 the same as 2019 when Aranaputa's Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) is a brand-new council which was recently elected? How could the provision remain the same when there is a brand-new elected body that has come on stream?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that, though the allocation was not provided specifically for Aranaputa in 2018, support was provided by the municipality to the Aranaputa Council. Now it is formalised, and it is disaggregated and presented in this manner.

**Ms. Teixeira:** *[Inaudible]* the breakdown of the assignment of the funds for Lethem and Aranaputa. You said that you had assigned money to Aranaputa, but the Aranaputa NDC was not formally instituted until June 2018 as indicated in the Official Gazette. When it was brought about in October, I think in 2016, there was a problem because it did not have required People's Cooperative Units (PCUs) to make it an NDC. Could you please tell us what was given to these two bodies in 2018 and what is projected to be given to them in 2019?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Aranaputa was not given an allocation of its own in 2018; it enjoyed support from the Lethem municipality. The provision in 2019 is that the sum of \$12,055,000 would be apportioned to both of these councils. I am not in a position to give the Hon. Member the exact split, but I will provide this information later.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Is that not rather odd, Hon. Minister, that you would put in the exact same figure, knowing fully well there is an election of both bodies – one is a brand new one – and do not have an idea of how you are going to separate the moneys between a municipality and an NDC? Is it not rather odd, Sir, that there has been no consideration of that? If that is so, I do not disbelieve that you have not thought about it. But if that so, then who and how is the decision made to provide funds for the Lethem Town Council and Aranaputa? Is it done on a discretionary basis or is there some criteria?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that of the \$12 million allocated in 2018, approximately \$4 million of that was made available to Aranaputa. The formula going forward remains the same – 8:4. I did relate earlier that the other support that is being provided from the central government are separate and apart from this, to each of these councils by virtue of being, in the case of one, a municipality, and in the case of the other, an NDC. So, it would be \$18 million for the municipality and \$5 million for the NDC, which is separate and apart from the \$12 million.

**Ms. Pearson-Fredericks:** Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Budgeted in 2018 was \$4 million and Revised 2018 was \$4,000,000. Budgeted in 2019 is \$8,233,000, could the Hon. Minister say what sort of training will be carried out and who will benefit from the scholarship?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The sum is to be utilised only for training and not scholarships. The specific forms of training relate to monitoring and evaluation, training for the integrated financial management and information system which is the IFMIS system that is being used by all of the regions. There



is also provision for the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMAS) refresher, payroll refresher – the forestry activities are to be conducted with training done by the Ministry of Finance and the payroll refresher by the Accountant General – data analyst training by the Ministry of Finance, Government accounting procedures, office assistant training, Principles of Human Resources Development: Modules One and Two, Preparation for Retirement, Principles Of Professional Secretarial Practices: Models One and Two, and Supervisory Management: Modules One and Two.

All of those are to be conducted by the Department of the Public Service, Training Division. There is also Budget Preparation, scheduled for July to August, 12 days to be conducted by the Ministry of Finance. That activity is estimated at a sum of \$970,000. There is also Advanced Computer Training, 20 days; and Customer Care for the Workplace to be conducted by the Department of Public Service, for a period of four days in July. Those are the activities.

**Mr. Chairman:** Two more questions.

**Mr. Charlie:** Line item 6281 – Security Services: The 2018 budgeted sum is \$21,000,000. I have noted here that, to date, a sum of \$19,897,000 being expended and that the budget sum for 2019 goes back to \$21 million. Could the Hon. Minister relate to this House how many security guards are attached to this programme, the name of the security firm and how many security guards are allotted to the five subdistricts across the region at the Administrative buildings?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is a total of 17 guards and the name of the provider is Radar Security Service and Supplies. The contract was awarded in December 2017 for one year. There are two guards each in each of the sub-regions: Karasabai, Aishalton, Sand Creek, and Annai as well as the Amerindian Hostel. The rest are based in Lethem.

*Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$198,359,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$58,200,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 2402300 – Land and Water Transport: Hon. Minister, can you give the breakdown of the allocation for the boats, engine and vehicles as well as indicate to whom the vehicle will be assigned?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Of the budgeted sum, \$21.4 million is to cater for the purchase of two 4x4 vehicles, one to be used by the REO's office and the other by the Accounts Department. It is to enhance operational efficiency and easier access on field visits across the region. The sum of \$6.8 million is for the purchase of an aluminium boat with a 40-horsepower engine to be used by regional officials in the riverain areas such as Yupukari, Toka and Simoni.

**Mr. Croal:** Project code 1204900, the payment of retention, in relation to what project would this be?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That would be for the extension of the Administrative building in Lethem.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, could you indicate whether there are any resources made available for the guesthouse at Lethem?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The sum of \$6 million has been provided for the extension for the Indigenous People's Hostel in Lethem and not for the guesthouse.

**Mr. Charlie:** Project code 1204900 – Buildings – Administration: The Hon. Minister just mentioned that the retention will be paid for the Administrative building. Minister, would the other administrative offices in the subdistricts of Annai, Aishalton, Karasabai and South Central Rupununi be catered for under any rehabilitation work or extension under this budget sum of \$26 million?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer to that is no.

*Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$58,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$62,018,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, under National and Other Events, there is about a 400% increase. Could you indicate what this is intended for?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The sum of \$6.5 million is being provided to cater for national and other events and that is to offset expenses for national holidays in all five subdistricts of the region. The events include participation in Mashramani, Phagwah, Independence Day, CARICOM Day, Labour Day, Indian Arrival Day, the Regional Toshias Conference, Emancipation Day, Eid ul-Adha, Amerindian Heritage Month and the Regional Agricultural and Commercial Exhibition.

6.47 p.m.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: Region 9 is a vast expanse of 30,000 plus square kilometres. How did you decide that only \$4 million would be enough in the monitoring of agriculture in Region 9 to cover 50 plus villages with all of them being agricultural farms? Why would you only budget \$4 million?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The previous allocation was \$4,720,000, and the 2019 allocation is the sum of 51% higher which is \$7,140,000. [Ms. Teixeira: 6261?] Line item 6261, yes. Unless I heard the Hon. Member incorrectly, I thought he said the area of the Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo Region is 30,000 square kilometres. I believe it is considerably more than that. It is 59,000 square kilometres which is almost twice as much. It is indeed a vast region but the allocations in 2019 are increased by 51% over 2018.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** I would just like to correct the Minister. Line item 6261 states that the Budget 2018 was \$2,800,000, the Revised 2018 which is the actual is \$2,800,000, and the Budget 2019 is \$4 million. I am asking the Minister once again, knowing that it is 30,000 plus square miles nearly 60,000 square kilometres, why would you only budget \$4 million to cover such vast expanse of agricultural land?

**Mr. Bulkan:** My apologies, Hon. Member. It is actually 43% more than the 2018 allocation. We are trending in the right direction.

*Programme: 792 - Agriculture - \$62,018,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 792 - Agriculture - \$26,400,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, the Legend indicates purchase of vehicles, furniture and equipment among other things. Could you indicate how much is the allocation for the vehicle and to whom would it be assigned?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is the sum of \$15 million. I think that helps to answer the previous question as to the resources that are being allocated to this programme to service the vastness of that region. It is for the agricultural programme.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Project code 1701400 – Agricultural Development: What is the rationale of setting up the spray race system at Kurupukari and not at the international crossing?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that there is one spray race system existing and this is an additional system which is at Kurupukari. It is to supplement or to add to the programme.

**Mr. Charlie:** Project code – 1701400 – Agricultural Development: I need some clarity here, how much black giant birds the programme will be purchasing for Ruperti, Crash Water and Rewa as per villages?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The provision is to purchase 150 of these black giant birds for each of the three locations at an estimated sum of \$2,750,000 at each of the three villages.

*Programme: 792 - Agriculture - \$26,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

**Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 793 - Public Infrastructure - \$204,047,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could you indicate the new contracted employee here and the emolument?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is for one Checker with a salary of \$60,000.

**Mr. Charlie:** Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: The budgeted sum for 2018 is \$62 million. I have noted that to date the programme has spent \$55,543,000, an underspending of \$7 million and in 2019 the budgeted sum is \$62 million. Could you say where or which location roads were

maintained in Region 9? What kilometre of roads undertook maintenance and the nature of maintenance?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I believe that the question relates to the 2018 programme. If that is so that information can be provided subsequently. If the Hon. Member is so desirous, what I can provide is the budgetary provision for 2019 for the schedule of roads that this sum applies to.

**Mr. Charlie:** It is touted that residents of Region 9 will be getting asphalt roads. Could the Hon. Minister say if the 2019 Budget caters for asphalt roads in this village?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The budgeted sum of \$62 million is to cater for repairs to roads in six locations but, it is not asphalt roads.

**Ms. Pearson-Fredericks:** Line item 6264 – Vehicles Spares and Service: The budgeted sum for 2018 is \$5,600,000, Revised 2018 is \$5,140,000, and Budget 2019 is \$10,450,000. Could the Hon. Minister say how would this increase be expended?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The sum will be used to provide for a fleet of vehicles including equipment. The list totals 17 vehicles. It includes a compactor, two tractors, four pickups, two trucks, three all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and two motorcycles. There are provisions in the Estimates for a new pickup to be acquired in 2019 as well as a front-end loader to be purchased out of the 2019 allocations.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Line items 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings, 6251 - Maintenance of Roads, 6252 - Maintenance of Bridges, and 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Hon. Minister do you have Bill of Quantities for these line items and the works to be executed there?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is not normal in the case of maintenance activities Bill of Quantities (BQs) be prepared this early in the process. There is an estimate for each of the activities. I can provide that estimate and the global figure is related in the documents. I can provide the breakdown if the Hon. Member is so desirous.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Hon. Minister, could you please layover at a subsequent time the breakdown of the Estimates? I would just like to ask the Hon. Minister that I noticed since 2017 you have been budgeting \$30 million per year to maintain bridges. You spoke just now of the size of Region 9.

Are you saying that the bridges are in a similar state of deterioration and that the moneys for bridges would remain the same for almost every year?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I think there is a common theme running through these estimates in these documents. It is one of affordability. Under this programme, the sum happens to be the same that is projected in 2019 and it is to cater for repairs to four bridges. It is awarded to Paupau, Chiliwau, Maruranau and Yurora at a total sum of \$30 million.

**Mr. Chairman:** There would be two questions after this. Please, go ahead.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Did you say when you are going to submit this information? Would it be tomorrow?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It would be before the end of the week.

*7.02 p.m.*

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Okay. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister with these works being done in some villages, is the Hon. Minister amendable to having the Village Councils tender and works of these natures being executed by the village councils within the given areas?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I would like to thank the Hon. Member for introducing that question. It is a principle that the Central Government is very supportive of and it is one that we try to facilitate. We will seek to strengthen our efforts in this direction to provide for engagement of more local contractors and labour from as close as possible proving the same quality can be offered. The answer is yes, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** This is the last question.

**Ms. Pearson-Fredericks:** Line item 6284 – Other: I notice here Budget 2018 \$11 million, revised 2018 \$11 million, and Budget 2019 \$11 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what are some of the activities or things that would be covered under the line item - Other?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This line item or this sum of \$11 million caters for the payments for temporary labours, clerk of works, equipment operators, drivers, and emergency works which is normally occasioned especially during the rainy season annually.

*Programme: 793 – Public Infrastructure - \$204,047,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Capital expenditure**

### **Programme: 793 – Public Infrastructure - \$189,400,000**

**Mr. Charlie:** Project code 2800400 – Water Supply: The budgeted sum is \$35 million. To the Hon. Minister, provision of installation of trestle, in Aishalton, Maruranau, Bashaidrun and Achiwuib. The Minister came to this House and asked for a supplementary which this House approved \$52 million. Under this programme the Minister is coming now for us to approve \$35 million for the same villages where trestle was to be constructed using this supplementary figure and using this capital figure. Could the Hon. Minister explain this?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advice that some of these villages, when the provision was catered for, it was prior to the intervention that the Hon. Member referred to. It would allow subsequent to approval for these resources to be redirected to other surrounding villages and to extend the scope of the distribution network within the villages.

**Mr. Charlie:** I note it was a mistake. Could the Hon. Minister say which villages will now be identified to have this trestle constructed, with solar, and all the implements? What mechanism will you use Mr. Minister to identify villages? How many villages are you catering for under this project code with the budget sum of \$35 million?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The mechanism would be determination of the RDC, currently it provides for the intervention in six villages. It is not expected that the service could be extended to less than six villages. It would be at the minimum six villages for a determination to be made by the RDC.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Project code 2402300 - Land and Water Transport: In 2017 you spent \$17,499,000, 2018 \$6 million and in 2019 you have budgeted \$13,400,000 for a vehicle. Could you please state what type of vehicle and to whom it would be assigned?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is for the purchase of a 4x4 vehicle to be used by the Public Works Department and it is for transporting officers under that programme to monitor projects across the region.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Just for my information purposes. Hon. Minister, a 4x4 vehicle duty free, because Government does not really pay the duties, is it \$13.4 million?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That is the provision that is being catered for Sir. I believe it is to allow for the acquisition for not only a new vehicle but a very good vehicle that would give very good service to the region.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Project code 1902300 - Infrastructure Development: Have you catered for the South Pakaraima? I do not know when last you have been there, but, culverts and bridges in the South Pakaraima Mountains... I noticed you are already here for Makodo Creek, Parishara, Kaicumbay and Aishalton. Have you considered the South Pakaraima? If not, why not?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I know the Hon. Member asked a question and provided the answer himself. There is nothing I could add. He has related the information.

**Ms. Pearson- Fredericks:** Project code 1100900 – Bridges and Project code 1401300 – Roads: Could the Hon. Minister layover all the information with regard to these two items to the House?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is not many activities and it would not take long for me to relate them. The \$43 million under the Bridges is for three bridges. There is one at Moco Moco – a bridge 120feetx18feet concrete structure for the budgeted sum of \$27 million.

There is another bridge to access the Moco Moco village 15feetx60feet. This is a wooden bridge for the budgeted sum of \$8 million.

There is a third bridge in the same location for another \$8 million.

For the roads there is a sum of \$53 million - \$14 million is for upgrading to sections at Achiwuib to Bashaidrun - \$14 million, \$25 million upgrading of roads at Yakarinta and \$14 million for upgrading of roads between Maruranau and Shea.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Mr. Charlie, this is the last question. Please, proceed.

**Mr. Charlie:** I would like to single out specifically Yakarinta where road works will be undertaken. Could the Hon. Minister say exactly where in Yakarinta this road will be constructed? I have a follow-up.



**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advice it is the main access road leading to the village. It is the main road to the landing.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Mr. Charlie, is this a follow-up question or is it another question?

**Mr. Charlie:** It is a follow up question.

**Mr. Chairman:** Go ahead, please.

**Mr. Charlie:** Just testing the Minister's knowledge. Does the Hon. Minister know that during the rainy season, Yakarinta is only accessed by boat to the village? The construction of a road to Yakarinta is not feasible. Does the Hon. Minister or his Technical Officers know this?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The rainy season does not extend to 12 months in the year. I believe it is much less than that. For the greater part of the year access to this village is via the road.

*Programme: 793 – Public Infrastructure - \$189,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$1,231,400,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: Could you indicate who are the three increase contracted employees and their emoluments?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is one typist clerk - \$60,000, a cook for the same sum, and a coordinator for the Learning Resource Centre for the sum of approximately \$139,000.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6291 - National and Other Events: There is a 300% increase here. Could indicate what is intended for this activity and what is the increase for?

*7.17 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes, Sir. It is a huge increase and it is to cater for a much-expanded programme of Sports and National events.

In fact, in our discussions the Regional Education Officer (REdO) was very proud to relate all of the new programmes that will be conducted in the region as a result as of the approval of these Estimates. It is to allow for among other things, such as, participation in the debating competition, Mashramani, Youth Week Observances, Independence Day, Heritage Month, Remembrance Day, Agricultural Month, Regional Awards Ceremony, and School Based Assessment Camp.

Critically at the primary level for Primary School's participation in activities such as: spelling bee, essay writing, arts and craft competition. At the nursery level, it is to expose our younger children to activities and experiences that will enable them to expand their comprehension skills, language and critically create a sense of pride and nationalism. There will be participation in three activities such as: Children's Mashramani, Youth Week, Independence, Education, Agriculture and Amerindian Heritage Month activities as well as facilitating the Nursery Regional Awards Ceremony.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, was there a consideration for similar increases for all the Hinterland regions?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Time does not allow for us to go down that road. We are dealing with this region and its allocation.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6284 - Other: This allocation has decreased by \$27 million. Could you indicate what happened here?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It was due to the sweeper cleaners being reallocated to a different line item. They were taken off from this heading - other.

**Ms. Pearson-Fredericks:** Line item 6302- Training (including Scholarships): In 2018 \$12,500,000, Revised 2018 is \$12,500,000 million, and 2019 is \$35 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what entails this huge increase?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Once again, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for that question. I think it refers to the increased Central Government allocations and provisions to train persons across our country. The list of activities is quite long. In the interest of time I believe that we have already gone pass the one hour allocated for this region. I would be happy to layover this to the Hon. Member.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Line item 6241- Rental of Buildings: In 2018, there was no allocation for Rental of Buildings, but I noticed \$2,880,000 for Rental of Buildings under Education - Region 9. Could you advise is this rental of a building for school purposes, or for staff, and where and when has it started?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is to cater for rental of apartments for Teacher and Officers at Sand Creek Secondary School, Saint Ignatius Secondary School, Arapaima Nursery School, Annai Secondary School and a Welfare Officer.

*Programme: 794 –Education Delivery- \$1,231,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme 794- Education Delivery- \$151,400,000**

**Mr. Charlie:** Project code 1204700 – Buildings - Education: I have noted that the allocation is \$117 million, and it will cater for the completion of Paipang Primary School and living quarters at Sand Creek. To the Hon. Minister, could you tell this House is this living quarter the five apartment quarters at Sand Creek? What happened to the completion of Paipang Nursery School and Bashaidrun Nursery School?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This provision is to cater for the completion of the Primary School at Paipang and the living quarters at Sand Creek. Could the Hon. Member repeat the remainder of his question, please?

**Mr. Charlie:** The other part of my question was: Would the uncompleted five apartments teachers' quarters at Sand Creek, Paipang Nursery School and Bashaidrun Nursery School will be completed using this 2019 budgetary allocation of \$117 million. These projects had commenced in the year 2017 and to date they are incomplete.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** As a former Permanent Secretary (PS) of Local Government, I remember that when you are preparing the Budget, quotations for vehicles would usually come as part of the verification. Hon. Minister you are purchasing vehicles?

Project code 2402300- Land and Water Transport: Could you say how many All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) are being procured? What are the quoted prices for them? What type of vehicle, is it a 4x4 pickup? What is the quoted price for it?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The estimated cost and the budgeted sum for the two ATVs is the sum of \$5 million total, one for the District Education Officer (DEO) at Aishalton and one for the Welfare Officer at Lethem. The sum of \$14,400,000 to purchase of a 4x4 vehicle for the Education Department.

**Mr. Charlie:** I would just like to touch back on project code 1204700 Buildings - Education: The Minister said that the completion of the schools, that I mentioned, will now be completed in 2019 using some of the budgetary allocation for \$117 million. In 2017, there was a budgetary allocation for this schools, respectively and five apartments - teachers' quarters. Are you saying that the programme budgeted for these projects hence the incompleteness after two years?

**Mr. Bulkan:** No, Sir. It is a roll over activity.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** We did not turn the page.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Dharamlall, that was the last question on this item.

*Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$151,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Current Expenditure**

### **Programme: 795 - Health Services - \$545,625,000**

**Dr. Mahadeo:** I would like to direct the Minister's attention to line item 6112 - Senior Technical and 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Could the Hon. Minister advise us as to how many voluntary council testers, Directly Observed Therapy (DOT)s workers and microscopists do we have in Region 9? Where are they located? I know that you may not have that sort of detail now, but you could layover it, please. I could say in line item 6111 - Administrative: For the staffing details you have zero. Who is managing health in Region 9?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The programme is managed by the Regional Health Officer (RHO) at the Central Ministry via the RHO.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** I would like to direct the Minister's attention to line item 6221- Drugs and Medical Supplies: one of the indicators to health services states percentage of essential drugs and medical supplies that have at least three months stock. Could the Minister indicate, if he has the information now, as to what percentage we are looking at for 2019? Mr. Chairman, if the Minister does not have the information now, he can lay it over.

**Mr. Bulkan:** This information would be laid over, Sir.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Same line item, could the Minister say, what percentage or how much of the \$128,200,000 will be kept in the region for emergency purposes?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is approximately \$28 million.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** I would like to task the Minister, based on this document here, we see that there was quite a bit of expired drugs. Have systems been put into place that we are not going to have expired drugs and medical supplies for 2019?

*7.32 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Member be kind enough to indicate...?

**Dr. Mahadeo:** The Audit Report.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is yes; improved systems have been put in place.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Could the Hon. Minister say if the \$28 million that will be used for emergency supplies... I am hoping that we will follow the rules and regulations of procurement. But I am not sure that we have the capacity in Region 9 to acquire the types of medication that we might need. That is my view; the Minister can contradict. However, Minister, my question is, when we are buying emergency supplies, what length of period do we hope to cover? Is it one week, two weeks or one month?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that it is on average for a period of one month, where the occasion arises.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Minister to layover for us the buildings in line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, and the infrastructure in line item 6255, Maintenance of Other

Infrastructure, that will be benefiting from the \$53 million and the \$20 million that is budgeted for 2019?

I would also like to ask the Hon. Minister, Vehicle Spares and Service, line item 6264 and line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: How many vehicles do we have in the region and to whom are these vehicles assigned?

**Mr. Bulkan:** For line item 6264, the fleet comprises of four vehicles: one ambulance, one 4x4 pickup and two ATVs. The allocation is to cater for maintenance of that fleet.

The details relating to line items 6242 and 6255 will be laid over as requested, Sir.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: I would like to ask the Minister, the \$4 million, how will this money be spent? Do we have the capacity in Region 9 or will we have to outsource?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that that service is outsourced from outside of the region. It is not available in the region, Sir.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Could the Hon. Minister advise whether the advertisements and so on will be done nationally for line item 6282?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The agency is obliged to adhere or follow the national procurement regulation.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** I would like to direct the Minister to line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships, at which I see an increase in \$2 million. I would like to ask the Minister if we could subsequently be provided with a list for training and the possible numbers of beneficiaries.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes. This information will be provided.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Line item 6294 – Other: \$4.85 million. Could the Minister advise us where this money will be going? What will it be spent on?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is to cater for increased referrals within the region, from other health posts and facilities, to the Lethem Regional Hospital for specialised attention and services.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** I would like to direct the Minister's attention to line item 6265, Other Transport Travel and Postage, and we see an increase of over \$2 million. Could the Minister please advise?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is to provide for more frequent transportation of drugs to health facilities in the region and from Georgetown to the region.

*Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$545,625,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$109,400,000**

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Project code – 1204800 - Buildings – Health: Construction of health post, pharmacy bond and living quarters at Lethem. I would like to know how many rooms or how many persons these living quarters will be catering to? Also, the retention payment, would it be for this same construction of the health post?

The extension of the Lethem Regional Hospital and maternity ward at the Annai Health Centre, how soon do we expect this construction to be completed?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer to the first question is to cater for that service to more than 2,000 villagers of St. Ignatius.

The second one, the retention, no, it is not for the activity, the project that has been suggested. Rather, it is for the nurses' hostel at the Lethem Regional Hospital.

With regards to the completion of the extension of the Lethem Regional Hospital and the maternity ward at the Annai Health Centre, the budgeted sums are \$12.7 million and \$8 million respectively. Ordinarily, delivering on projects of this value would certainly be expected to conclude within the fiscal year. I would say, to hazard a guess, towards the third quarter.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Project code – 2402300 - Land and Water Transport: Purchase of a vehicle and an ATV. What kind of vehicle? Where would these vehicles be placed? Who would be using them?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is a 4x4 vehicle for \$13.4 million, to be used in the Sand Creek subdistrict. And \$3 million for the purchase of an ATV to be used by the Vector Control Department across the region.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Project code – 2505300 - Furniture and Equipment – Health: We have here a number of items that will be bought. I would be grateful if the Minister could provide us with a list of these items that will be bought and where they will be placed?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes. It is over 22 sets of items, it would take too long to read them out. So, this information will be provided to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Dharamlall:** Hon. Minister, project code 2402300 – Land and Water Transport: You said that the cost of the ATV is \$3 million. But earlier, you said that you are buying two ATVs for another department for \$2.5 million each. Could you please state whether this is an anomaly in the price or whether one is outfitted differently from the other? I would just like to clarify.

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is not always the case that three by two. If you buy more than one you can get a better price. It is within the ball park of \$2.5 million and \$3 million, depending on the actual model.

*Programme: 795 – Health Services – \$109,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates. 7.43 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairman:** That concludes our consideration of Region 9. Hon. Members, if you would be kind enough to turn to pages 298 and 299, we would consider the estimates for Regions 2 and 3. Hon. Minister, as soon as you are ready, you will let us know.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes. Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** Thank you.

**Agency 72: Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam 7.45 p.m.**

### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$221,497,000**



**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Member Mr. Bulkan, staff vacancies, line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support and line item 6115, Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: You have 32 and 24 respectively. But when I look at the line item 6114, what I find is \$28,897,000, and last year there was \$28,555,000. What is happening here? This is one less, 32, and it is more than what you had last year. How come it is less yet it is more money than last year. Likewise, at line item 6115, Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled, there are 24 staff and you have an increase here.

*7.47 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** Thank you, Hon. Member. The staffing is down by one person and the marginal increase is due to the annualisation of salaries. That accounts for the marginal increase in the budgeted sum.

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6111 - Administrative: While the original administration has a total of 41 vacancies, the employment analysis shows these vacancies include critical post. Are there vacancies for Chief Accountant, Accountant, Medical Superintendent, and a Regional Health Officer (RHO)?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Estimates of Expenditures for 2019 provide for an increase in staff members from five persons to seven and there is a budgeted sum. It does not speak to the issues outlined by the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Damon:** A follow-up question: Minister, are you aware that these critical vacancies – Regional Health Officer - would have an adverse result on the operations of the Region 2 administration.

**Mr. Bulkan:** We are dealing here with Programme 721, Regional Administration and Finance. It is not the health programme, which I believe is the thrust of the Hon. Member's concern.

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6281- Security Services: Hon. Minister, I see that you have \$37,883,000 here. Are you aware that many times security officers are not paid? As such, are you prepared to blacklist security contractors who fail to pay their workers?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The monitoring aspect that the Hon. Member refers to, again, I regret to say that it is a bit outside of the scope of the allocation. We are dealing here with sums that are allocated to provide this service but that is the monitoring aspect that the Hon. Member is referring to.

**Mr. Damon:** A follow up question: Let me go a little slow. Hon. Minister, are you aware that this agency utilises tax payers' moneys, and as such, it is the responsibility of you, the Hon. Minister, to monitor the moneys being spent?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I do not deny, but there is actually a system. The principle responsibility resides within the region at the level of the Regional Democratic Councils (RDC) and the various administrative offices that are tasked.

**Mr. Damon:** Equipment and Maintenance: Could the Hon. Minister say if PWW 5476, which was bought for the RHO, was delivered to the RHO?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Could the Hon. Member provide a line item? He did not provide one?

**Mr. Damon:** It is line item 6282, Equipment and Maintenance.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I think that the Hon. Member needs the assistance of his Colleagues next to him.

**Mr. Damon:** I withdraw that question, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure; you have a sum here of \$8 million which is an increase of almost \$2 million. Could you say why the increase?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The increase is to allow for repairs to the fence of the RDC's compound, the weeding and cleaning of the compound and repairs to the entrance at State House.

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Hon. Minister, I see that you have increased from \$5.1 million to \$8.5 million. Could you say what caused you to have this huge increase?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Hon. Member is indeed correct. It is a huge increase; it is approximately 67%. It is to cater for general repairs to the walls, floors, windows and sanitary facilities to the following buildings: State House Annexe at Anna Regina, the Suddie and Supenaam Amerindian Hostels to cater for persons from those riverine communities, and the Regional Chairman's office is allocated

a sum of \$1.5 million to provide for a more conducive working environment for the Regional Chairman.

**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Minister Bulkan, under line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), could you say who are the persons who would benefit from the training and scholarships?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Legend does include the words, “including scholarships,” but it is solely training. The beneficiaries or recipients would be the administrative staff at the RDC. The different forms of training include: orientation to Public Services and Human Resources (HR) Supervisory Management, a course to be conducted by the Ministry of Public Service; there will Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) and National Insurance (NIS) training; voucher preparation to be conducted by the Ministry of Finance; leadership training to be outsourced to Zoywins Consultancy and Training; training for the enhancement of local governance within Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) in the Region, this is expected to be conducted by the central ministry; and training for a new pool of evaluators and Tender Board members who are expected to be appointed during the year. This training is to be done by the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB).

**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Member Mr. Bulkan, line item 6291, National and Other Events. I see that you have here \$1,640,000 for Region 2. Likewise, I have seen all the other agencies amount to \$12million for this line item. However, when I check with the other regions, I see \$28 million for Region 1 and \$18 million for Region 5. Why is it that you only give \$12 million for Region 2, although Region 2 is bigger than those places?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member seeks to personalise this debate.

**Mr. Damon:** No, this is not personalising; answer the question.

**Mr. Bulkan:** He keeps referring to my name and I am not the person who is responsible for these provisions; there is a process.

**Mr. Damon:** Refer it to the relevant Minister if it is not you.

**Mr. Bulkan:** The observation is correct, the allocation and provision for this activity is lower in this region than others. We are dealing with the sum of \$1,050,000 and that is the provision under this line item for these national events.

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service: You have an amount here for \$1,550,000. Could you say if these vehicle spares and services will be advertised through the regional procurement system or is the person who will be supplying these items handpicked?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The process is the former.

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6273 - Water Charges: I saw that you have an increase from \$6,449,000 to \$7,084,000, I want to find out from you Hon. Member, is it the case that more water will be drank in the region come 2019?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is a very modest increase from approximately \$6.5 million to \$7.084 million. It is actually a negligible increase, and I think it is entirely justifiable given the amount of buildings catered for under this programme, which is actually 25 buildings.

**Mr. Charlie:** Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: The allocation for 2019 is \$8.5 million. Last year the Parliamentary Sectoral Committee on Social Services visited the Suddie Amerindian Hostel in Essequibo. The Report was laid in this House with a slew of recommendations. To the Hon. Minister, why was the recommendation as to the rehabilitation of the Suddie Amerindian Hostel not taken on board in 2019?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I have already outlined the buildings that would benefit from this allocation, and it does not include the one referred to by the Hon. Member.

*8.02 p.m.*

**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Minister, is it true that circularised instructions stated that for the occupation of Government quarters Public Servants must pay rent of 10% and 12% for furnished and unfurnished quarters except where entitlement to Government quarters are being approved?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, unfortunately there was no line item to that query.

*Programme: 721- Regional Administration and Finance - \$221,497,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Capital Expenditure**

### **Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$16,300,000**

**Ms. Pearson-Fredericks:** Project code 1202900 – Buildings – Administration - \$13.8 million: It is for the provision of wharf and building. Could the Hon. Minister say which building? Would a building be repaired or constructed and where would the wharf be constructed?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the allocation for the wharf is \$5 million and that is at Supenaam.

**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Member Mr. Bulkan, at project code 2503000, Furniture and Equipment, Administration, there is \$2.5 million for the purchase of furniture and equipment. Could the Hon. Minister name the buildings that the furniture will be going into and what type of furniture?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the locations will be for the Regional Chairman's office. It is a meeting table with six chairs; to the regional Accounting Unit, a photocopier; and to the Local Government Registry and the regional Accounting Unit, computer workstations including the paraphernalia - monitor, mouse, backup *et cetera*.

**Ms. Pearson-Fredericks:** Sir, under the same project code 1202900, with regards to the wharf the Hon. Minister said that it will be built at Supenaam. I noticed some works are ongoing at Supenaam with regards to the wharf. So, I would like to know, is it the same wharf that he is talking about or which part will this next wharf be located at Supenaam? Sir, I would like to know the exact spot.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, these allocations are actually for the retention for that same project at Supenaam. It is the retention sum.

**Mr. Croal:** Hon. Minister, back to same project code 1202900; the legend indicates payment of retention and provision for wharf and building. So, this would indicate to me that we are talking about a retention for something else and not the wharf.

**Mr. Bulkan:** My apologies, Mr. Chairman. The Hon. Member is correct. The retention is for an activity at Cotton Field. The \$5 million is for the completion of that project at Supenaam and this money has to be warranted to the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to complete that project.

*Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$16,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Current Expenditure**

### **Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$414,606,000**

**Mr. Damon:** Staffing Details, line items 6115, Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled and line item 6116, Contracted Employees. I have seen that it has reduced from 23 employees to 20 employees and the estimated sums are more than last year. Could the Hon. Minister say why these extra moneys have been allocated here?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, in the case of line item 6116, on the staffing details, indeed it is a reduction of three employees, and the increase is marginal at the sum of \$1.7 million. This is to cater for the annualised increase for the remaining 20 persons that are on the payroll. In the case of line items 6113 and 6115, in actual fact line item 6115 has gone up from 39 to 44. I think that explains why the allocation should be higher. At line item 6113, the allocation is actually lower by 22%, from \$5.4 million to \$4.262 million.

**Mr. Damon:** Mr. Chairman, line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister say if the Regional Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, were able to access adequate amount of fuel from this line item and, also, what type of lubricant? Is it Bentex 90, Rotella 30 or Spirax 140?

**Mr. Bulkan:** the Regional Chairman, would not ordinarily be expected to access fuel and lubricant from under this programme. This is the agricultural programme. I believe that the Hon. Member is trying to be a salesman for a particular product; he is calling brand names and I do not think that is advisable. But the question does not apply to this exercise that we are in.

**Mr. Damon:** Sir, a follow-up question. I further ask the Minister what type of lubricants and I even named some. Could he not follow-up and say what type of lubricants?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, that would not be permitted in the House.

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads... Shut up Greenidge, I am on the floor.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member Mr. Damon, you will withdraw that remark.

**Mr. Damon:** I withdraw. Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: We had an increase of \$21.7 million from last year. Could the Hon. Minister say where these roads are that will be maintained?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member is correct, it is an increase by approximately \$5.2 million or 32% over the 2018 allocations. Sir, I would not be the person effecting these maintenance works but I can give the Hon. Member the locations. The first instance is from Westbury to Better Hope, an estimated sum of approximately \$4.6 million; Henrietta/Lima, approximately \$3.9 million; Coffee/Grove, approximately \$5.462 million; another area in Lima/Coffee/Grove where the road is in a pretty bad state, \$3.5 million; and Huis'T Dieren, the road leading to the Ituribisi Conservancy at the estimated sum of \$4.25 million.

**Mr. Chairman:** One other question after this one.

**Mr. Damon:** Mr. Chairman, line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation works - \$186 million: Could the Hon. Minister Bulkan, produce a list with all these works that will be done with these moneys? Could the Hon. Member please lay it over?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, the description of the works is to weed, clean and maintain trenches, canals, flood relief basins and facades. The locations are Good Hope to Somerset and Berks and the Cozier/Manikuru areas, and maintenance of sea and river sluices in quite a number of locations. In all the total sum of the locations is more than 200, because it is quite a lengthy list. If the Hon. Member is desirous... It will take about three days because this sheet has more details than what is required.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Damon this is the last question.

**Mr. Damon:** A follow-up question under the line item 6253. Hon. Minister Bulkan, these moneys are all the moneys that the region asked for, for D&I works?

*8.17 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** I believe it is hardly likely that this would have been the sum requested because I believe, in almost most instances, the allocations were not the same as what was requested. I am advised that it is not far, it is quite close to the sums that were requested. The reduction is not a huge amount.

*Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$414,606,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$40,980,000**

**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Minister, project code 1300700, in the legend there is a provision for bridge, culverts, access dam, sluice and payment of retention. With this \$40,980,000, could you say where the bridge, culverts, access dams and the sluice would be built?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The bridge would be built at the Queenstown main canal; the culvert would be at Windsor Castle; the access dam would be at Devonshire Castle and the sluice would be at Charity.

*Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$40,980,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 723 – Public Infrastructure - \$157,662,000**

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Hon. Minister, could you say, for the four additional persons who would be employed under this line item, what type of technical skills do they possess; are they Engineers or Overseers?

**Mr. Bulkan:** They are an Electrical Assistant, a Plumber, a Carpenter and a Mason.

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Hon. Minister, you have \$19,358,000, which shows an increase. Could you list the buildings which will be maintained in Region 2 and state the sum for each building?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The Living Quarters in the Cotton Field compound, \$2.568 million, Regional Democratic Council (RDC) 828; Living Quarters in the Cotton Field compound at the sum of



\$5.225 million, RDC 823; the Public Health building at a sum of \$5.565 million; the Mechanical Department building for the Engineering Department, the sum of \$2 million; and the remaining sum of \$4 million is to purchase associated materials for routine maintenance works: electrical wires, switch gears, nails and zinc sheets.

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Hon. Minister you, there is an increase to \$33,900,000, could you state the names of the villages where the roads to be repaired or rebuilt are situated, and the cost for each?

As I stand here, let me go to line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, could you also say what are these other infrastructures, where they could be found, the various costs for each?

**Mr. Bulkan:** There are quite a number of locations. In the interest of time, I think that the Hon. Member would prefer this information to be laid over.

**Mr. Damon:** Line item 6264 – Vehicles Spares and Service: The sum of \$7,200,000 is budgeted, could the Hon. Minister say if the works would be done at the State House workshop or if they will go through the procurement process to have someone do the repairs?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that these works would not be effected at the regional workshop but that the services would be outsourced to private contractors via the public procurement process.

*Programme: 723 – Public Infrastructure – \$157,662,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Capital Expenditure**

### **Programme: 723 – Public Infrastructure - \$113,120,000**

**Mr. Damon:** Project code 1100300 – Bridges: Hon. Minister, there is a sum of \$26 million for the construction of bridges and for the payment of retention, could you say where these bridges would be built, the cost for each bridge and sum for the retention?

As I am standing here, Hon. Minister, project code 1400500, Roads, \$54,800,000 is budgeted for upgrading of roads and for the payment of retention. Could the Hon. Minister list all the roads and the various amounts for each road?

Project code 2401600 – Land and Water Transport: The sum of \$25 million dollars is for the purchase of vehicle. Could the Hon. Minister say for whom would he be purchasing this vehicle? Is it for the Regional Chairman or would it be for someone who will be stationed in that area?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The sum of \$26 million is to cater for the construction of two bridges: one at the Cremation Site Road at a budgeted sum of \$14,894,000, and the second one is at the main canal at Lima, and it is for a bridge which is in a deteriorated state at this time at a sum of \$10,643 million.

The three retention amounts are small: \$240,000, \$110,000 and \$113,000. These would have been for projects at **Dasraj** Street Living Quarters and the Daniels Town Community Centre. For roads, a total sum of \$54.8 million is for maintenance; for Retention, the sum of \$1.15 million is for the upgrading of roads at Hill Top, **St. Denise**.

The other activity is the upgrading of roads at the Main Access Road at Charity Old Housing Scheme at a sum of \$14.88 million; upgrading of road at Pitman Street, Dartmouth at a sum of \$9.297 million; upgrading of road at Guyana Telephone Telegraph Company (GTT) Tower Street, Good Hope, Supenaam at a sum of \$13.169 million. This will provide safe and improved access to approximately 30 households in Good Hope and the one in Dartmouth would benefit 80 households. It also caters for the upgrading of road at Mandir Cross Street, Lima, at a sum of \$3.856 million; and the upgrading of road at the Cremation Site Road, La Union, at a sum of \$12.440 million. This will provide improved and safer access to the general public who utilises this cremation site.

For land and water – the sum of \$25 million is budgeted to replace a sewerage truck that the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) currently has and has outlived its usefulness. The sum of \$25 million is budgeted for the region to acquire a new sewerage truck with a heavy-duty pump and a six cubic metre capacity to provide disposal of sewerage from all Government buildings, inclusive of schools, health centres as well as to private individuals who generates economic activities. The beneficiaries would be approximately 3,000 persons. This truck would replace one that is over 10 years old.

8.32 p.m.

**Ms. Pearson-Fredericks:** Sir, under project code 1400600, Roads, I just heard the Hon. Minister mentioned upgrading the road at Hill Top, **Saint Denise**. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister how much of this \$54.8 million would be allocated to that Hill Top project? I would like, also, to ask if the Hon. Minister is aware that the project has already started, and if he could how much have already been spent on that project?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Hon. Member, the information that I provided that, that sum of \$1.15 million is for the retention payment for that project.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Damon, do you wish the floor, this is the last question?

**Mr. Damon:** Yes, okay, thank you Sir. Hon. Minister, project code 2512000, Furniture and Equipment, could you say if any of this furniture would be for the Amerindian hostel at Anna Regina, which badly needs furniture?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer is no, and I believe that particular location, if there is any allocation for it, would be under a different programme.

*Programme: 723 – Public Infrastructure – \$113,120,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$2,314,501,000**

**Mr. Damon:** I have seen here Hon. Minister, in the Staffing Details, line item 6112, Senior Technical, last year it was 481 and this year it is 521, an increase by 40. When you come across here, you have a huge amount of \$236,765,000 compared to \$233,959,000, Hon. Minister are you certain that the senior technical staff that you would be employing, you have budgeted enough moneys to pay them, because you just have a small amount here of \$2 million and something thousand dollars? Would that be enough to pay them for the year?

**Mr. Bulkan:** With the greatest of respect, I believe that the Hon. Member is getting tired because the figures that he is referring to... he is referring to one line item, senior technical, but the budgetary allocation that is he referring to, refers to another line item.

**Mr. Damon:** Alright, I withdraw that, Sir.

**Mr. Bulkan:** So, it is a huge different between the allocations, it is \$236 million instead of \$765,564,000. Unless I misheard, I did not even hear \$236 million, I heard \$236,000, so I think the Hon. Member needs to take a five.

**Mr. Damon:** Take five? I get more bad now. I am sorry about that oversight there, but let me repeat the question, line item 6112, Senior Technical, why is there a demand for 40 more technical persons and what would be their remunerations and salaries?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This line item actually refers to teachers, so it is actually increasing the teaching complement within the region. I do not believe that the Hon. Member would have a difficulty with that, Sir, it is elevating the educational standards and the delivery of education in the region.

**Mr. Damon:** A follow-up question; Hon. Minister, I would want to know, line item 6112, how many of these technical people had been graduated from the University of Guyana?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that approximately 65% of that 521 are graduates, Sir.

**Mr. Damon:** Could I get a list with all the names of the 40 technical people and their salary and remunerations?

As I stand here let me continue, line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, you have an increase here to \$143,428,000, could the Hon. Minister say who is this other technical and craft skilled person would be; if it is the handy craft master or if it is somebody for the technical institute?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Again, this line item refers to teachers, the other technical and craft skilled, and while indeed the numbers have gone down marginally to 158 from 163; however, the budgetary allocation has gone up. This is because we are dealing with a 158 employees, so when you cater for the annualisation of the increases, that accounts for the increases in the budgetary allocations though the numbers has been reduced by five.

**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Minister, line item 6133, Benefits & Allowances, there is a sum of \$60 million, which shows an increase from \$41 plus million. Could you say if these allowances are for the

teachers or the technical people you just spoke about, and, if so, could you say how much of this \$60 million would be given to each one of them?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The allocation caters for allowances for all the teachers under the programme outside of line item 6116. It caters for allowances such as bicycles, motorcar, vacation and uniform allowances.

**Mr. Damon:** Follow-up: How many of these teachers would be entitled to duty free?

**Mr. Bulkan:** That question does not apply to this programme or any of these lines item.

**Mr. Chairman:** One other question would be allowed.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister explain why the allocation for national events for Region 2, is \$7.3 million in comparison to other regions under the same education delivery where it is far higher. Region 2 has a much higher population than Region 10, 9, and so forth and when you look at the education component of Region 2, it is only \$7.3 million, whereas Region 9 was \$17.5 million for the same national events under education delivery. Maybe, the Hon. Minister of Education - there seem to be underfunding and why, I do not know, could pump some more money for national events into these regions because, maybe, it is in the cutting of the region submission that this was reduced to a lower figure?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The 2019 allocation is an increase over 2018, albeit, rather modest. The observation being made by the Hon. Member is indeed a valid one, but, equally, I would say that the sum of \$7.3 million for activities such as this is not a figure to be scoffed at, \$7.3 million is a lot of money. It caters for participation in events such as mathematics and technology fair, regional and Mashramani competition, National Mashramani competition, participation in the health fair, Commonwealth Day activity, reading carnival, music festivals, choir competitions, dance and drama festivals, dramatic poetry competitions and art competitions. I think, what has been suggest to us is that no region is unique, each region has a different programme to suit their own priority and focuses and this is what the allocation for this region provide for.

**Mr. Chairman:** Ms. Teixeira, you asked the last question.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Thank you, Sir.

**Mr. Chairman:** There is no other question, you had the last question.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Okay.

**Mr. Chairman:** You had the last question.

**Ms. Teixeira:** I had the last question, or I am having the last question?

**Mr. Chairman:** You had the last question.

**Ms. Teixeira:** Okay.

*Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$\$2,314,501,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$ 211,400,000**

**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Minister, project code, 1100300, Bridges, \$14 million is budgeted for the construction of bridge and landing, and likewise, project code, 1202800, Building-Education, \$175,9000 is for provision for schools, quarters, sanitary block and payment of retention fees; could you, Hon. Minister, hand over the documents to us with the particulars of what you intend to do?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I prefer to read out the first list which is the bridges because there are only two activities for the \$14 million. It is to construct a timber bridge at Riverstown, Canal. Currently, there is no bridge for pupils living in this area to access the schools. Regrettably, Sir, there is only a single plank which students use to cross. The construction of this bridge at an estimated cost of \$5.255 million would provide easier access to the students and parents living in Riverstown.

*8.47 p.m.*

The second one is a timber bridge at Kuremuru and Wakapau in the Pomeroun. The estimated cost of \$8.745 million is to cater for nursery and primary school children who have to currently walk through a swamp to access a school that is located three miles away. This bridge will link Mora to the main school island at Korua Itabu, where 42 families are requesting this bridge. It will also help

to increase agricultural production in this area. The list is quite long, and I will be quite happy to lay this over to the Hon. Member.

**Ms. Pearson-Fredericks:** Project code 2401600 – Land and Water Transportation: It is to the amount of \$5,500,000. Could the Hon. Minister say where would this tractor and trailer be located?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This tractor is to be used to transport approximately 15 secondary school students from Akawini to Kabakaburi Riverfront. This is due to the nature of the terrain there. It is investing in the 5Bs Programme.

**Ms. Pearson-Fredericks:** A follow up question: You spoke about transporting children from Akawini to Kabakaburi, are we talking about secondary school children or primary school children?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Secondary school students.

*Programme: 724 - Education Delivery - \$211,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Current Expenditure**

### **Programme: 725 – Health Services - \$939,505,000**

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us, under line items 6112 and 6113, the number of voluntary counsellors/testers, the number of Directly Observed Treatment (DOTS) workers and microscopists who are employed by the region and where they are located?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Would it be acceptable for the Hon. Member to receive this information in writing?

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Yes.

Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us what amount of the \$225,180,000 will be spent or will be left for the region to spend in case of emergencies? That is one. Secondly, what procedure will be followed, or the region has been following, to identify drugs and medical supplies that need to be bought as emergency, and how it goes about acquiring this?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The figure is the sum of approximately \$25.709 million. The standard procedure is that it done on an emergency basis and if it is not on hand, at the time, the principle that governs the process is the public procurement process.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** How do we identify the drugs, because often times the Materials Management Unit (MMU) has medication, but due to whatever reason, the region does not have? How do we ensure that it is not there and that it is indeed an emergency supply that is necessary to be bought because it is not available anywhere else? You said that it is by public procurement. Would it be by using the Regional Tender Board or ...?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is a combination of the Regional Tender Board and the three-quote system. I believe that the general procedure for the stocking of drugs in the regions is that requests are made. What is being provided for is that, in cases where the drugs are not there, for whatever reason, whether it be sloth in the system or inefficiency, the fact is that you do not want the facility to be without drugs. That is why it is catered for some percentage of the total allocation to be available, at the discretion of the region, to be able to acquire these drugs outside of obtaining it from the MMU or the central supply. But as I said, it is expected that public procurement governs the acquisition in such cases.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Same line item. I want to believe that it would not be available, but could the Minister also provide the information or an indicator that states, "Percentage of essential drugs and medical supplies that have, at least, buffer stock" to the House?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I believe it is the same question that was asked in relation to the other regions. Yes.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** May I ask the Minister to layover the list of buildings, bridges and infrastructure that will be repaired using the moneys that are here?

I would like to go on to Fuel and Lubricants, line item 6231, and to ask the Minister a direct question as to whether vehicle PWW5476 is within the fleet of health vehicles that will be receiving fuel from this line item.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Can I ask the Hon. Member to repeat the registration number of that vehicle? It is 5476, but I did not get the first part.



**Dr. Mahadeo:** PWW.

**Mr. Bulkan:** This information is not available at this time. I will provide it to the Hon. Member subsequently. Information was requested in relation to maintenance of buildings, but I think there is a mistake because there is zero allocation under Buildings. There is an allocation, however, under Bridges, and this information can be laid over.

**Mr. Chairman:** Two more questions and then I will put the question.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I beg your pardon, Sir.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Minister, it is like you are getting tired.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I apologise. Line items 6242 and 6252. Yes, Hon. Member.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Previously, in the Report of the Auditor General, it was mentioned that logbooks were not properly kept. I would like to ask the Minister, where fuel and lubricants are concerned, whether systems have been put in place to ensure that all the logbooks are up to date, that the supervisor signs them, that the authorising officer and the journey is recorded and everything?

Under Dietary, there is \$33,000,000 for this year. I would like to ask the Minister; how do you go about getting persons to supply the dietary? At one time, I know there was a farm attached to the Hospital with a gardener. Is this still there or is everything being bought?

The last question is, If I may ask at the same time, under line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), if we could have a list of proposed training and the number of persons expected to be trained.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that, in relation to the issues flagged in the Report of the Auditor General, relating to the use of vehicles, those deficiencies have been remedied or rectified in accordance with the recommendations. For line item 6292, Dietary, no items are supplied internally; all of the items that are required and outsourced by the public procurement procedure. The information with regards to Training (including Scholarships) under line item 6302, the request for this information to be laid over is duly noted.

**Mr. Damon:** Hon. Minister, why was a physical count carried out at the drugs bond and a sample of 107 items revealed, 32 instances of shortages, and 66 instances of excess? Did the Head of the Budget Agency investigate it and was the Audit Office of Guyana updated accordingly? Were systems put in place to ensure that the stores regulations were complied with at all times?

**Mr. Bulkan:** This is not an audit exercise. Earlier we sought to establish that what we are looking at is the Estimates for 2019. With all due respect, the question posed by the Hon. Member can, probably, take the form of, if I may suggest, a parliamentary question, but it is not for the purposes of this exercise.

*Programme: 725 – Health Services - \$939,505,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

**Programme: 725 – Health Services – 150,355,000.**

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Project code 1202700 – Buildings - Health: Completion of an operation theatre. Is this operation theater at Suddie, and since its completion, up to what stage is the operation theater ready, and when do we expect it to be completed and put in use?

*9.02 p.m.*

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that it is the operating theatre at Suddie and that by 31<sup>st</sup> December approximately 60% of that construction is expected to be completed. The full completion is expected by the end of February making it a rollover project.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Project code 2401600 – Land and Water Transport: This project entails purchase of a truck. Would this truck be used for transportation of drugs and medical supplies? If the truck would be used for that, would it be a refrigerated one?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The answer to both questions is, yes.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Project code 2601600 – Furniture and Equipment - Health: I see a list of equipment that would be bought. Could the Minister please layover to the House how many of each will be bought and where they will be installed?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The request is noted, and the information will be provided.

*Programme: 725 – Health Services - \$150,355,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates. (9.05 p.m.)*

**Agency: 73 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara (9.06 p.m.)**

### **Current Expenditure**

**Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$236,834,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: In light of this allocation which is required for this is basically the expenses by the Regional Democratic Council (RDC). Could you indicate what is the reason for a decrease in this allocation?

*Mr. Figueira in the Chair*

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that the requested sum was actually requisitioned by the RDC and based on the activities this is what the Estimates ended up being. It is based on the request of the RDC.

**Mr. Chand:** Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: You have for next year a complement of seven contracted employees. However, the cost would be \$12,248,000 which is an increase from \$9,593,000. What is the explanation for this massive increase despite the fact that the complement is reduced by two? Could he advise me the designation of the two employees who have not been retained for next year? What has become of those employees? Are they retrenched?

*Mr. Chairman resumed the Chair*

**Mr. Bulkan:** Whilst indeed the staffing complement has been reduced by two and the budgetary allocation increase, I am not so sure that 28% can be described as a massive increase as the Hon. Member suggested.

The reason for the increased allocation is that one of the new appointees is a Deputy Regional Executive Officer (DREO), a post which carries a higher sum and the increases also is as a result of the annualised increases for the full complement of the staff.

Regarding the reduction by the two employees, I am advised that is of the result of retirement.

**Mr. Chand:** The Minister advised us that indeed there was a reduction of two and there is an additional employee. How is it we still have seven employees? If you reduce by two employees, it would take you to seven employees and if you have an additional employee it will take you to eight employees.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I regret the lack of clarity. It would actually have been three retirements and one new addition, which is the DREO.

**Mr. Chand:** Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: In a similar fashion you have the work complement decreased by two, but you have an increase in the wages and salary allocation by as much as \$5,700,000. Could we get an explanation for this?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It is essentially to cater for the annualised increases to that complement of 34 members of staff.

**Mr. Chand:** The staffing details spoke to 104 employees for 2018 and 107 employees for 2019. Yet, we saw a significant increase in the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) contributions. I suppose it is the employer's contribution. I shall be grateful for any explanation towards this.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Again, we are getting into the realm of superlatives perhaps Sir. The increase is actually from \$7,356,000 to \$7,965,000, which is an increase of approximately \$600,000. It is to cater for NIS for 107 employees where if the salaries are higher, as we have established, then there will be a commenced way to increase. In this case it is modest. It is 100 employees. It is not what is being presented here. It is for the NIS.

**Mr. Chairman:** There will be one more question, Hon. Member. Then I would put the question.

**Mr. Chand:** Line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: Approval was for \$390 million and only \$240 million was spent. Again, budgeted for 2019 is \$390 million. Could the Minister assure us that this money would be spent for this line item? Could he also give us some examples of the materials and supplies that he is talking about?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I believe the question would indeed have had greater validity or merit if the sums involved were as related by the Hon. Member which is millions, but in actual fact it is thousands.

It is a modest sum. It is to purchase items such as torchlights, weather gears, outdoor supplies, and safety jackets. The sum of \$390,000 is in the scheme of things and it is not that huge sum.

*Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$236,834,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 731 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$18,000,000**

*Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$18,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$398,227,000**

**Mr. Chand:** Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: We have seen here a significant increase from the Revised 2018 \$194,584,000 to \$238,739,000 for 2019.

*9.17 p.m.*

Would the Minister please provide us with some examples of what additional work will be done to entail this significant increase?

**Mr. Bulkan:** It might be so easy to identify which might be the additional locations. The project scope and the areas that are catered for under this provision is considerable. It could be a combination of increased scope of works within the programme area. There may even be additional areas. The list is quite long. I think in the interest of time it might be easier for us to layover this information. The area includes newline irrigation in Vreed-en-hoop, Bogle side line, Winsor Forest, Vreed-en-Hoop collector drain, Ruby main drain, and Parika main drain. It includes area in Tuschen, La Jalousie, Zeelugt, Kashmir, Naamryck, Parika, Alike that is in the river. I think it might be over 100 locations.

**Mr. Chand:** Could the Minister layover that as he promised.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, the Minister has indicated that he would do so.

**Mr. Chand:** Line item 6264 - Vehicle Spares and Service: It increased by more than 100%. Is it that the vehicle fleet in Region 3 has significantly increased to entail this, I would say massive increase in the spares and service of vehicles? Could we be provided with some details?

**Mr. Chairman:** There would be one other question. Then, I would put the question.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that as was the case with other regions where the sums that are reflected here in these documents are not actually the Expenditure to the 31<sup>st</sup> of December. There are other committed sums that would be captured and that would be reflected in the Reconciliation Report that the Minister of Finance refer to on Monday.

The sum proposed for 2019 is identical to what was allocated in Budget 2018 –which is \$5,500,000. It is self-evident that the fleet, though remaining the same, is becoming one year older.

Therefore, the maintenance is expected to go up. The average age of the fleet, a number of the tractors, one is 16 years old and there is a 21-year-old pick up. Some of the items are six years and under and their out-board engines are actually fairly new because this year would make it one year since it would have been obtained.

I am advised that the \$2,222,000 is not the full sum that would be utilised under this item in 2018. It will go up a little higher.

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: There is an increase by three employees, but the allocation has increased by a \$47 million. Could you indicate what is the reason for such an increase? What is the designation of the three contracted employees referred to?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Could the Hon. Member repeat the increase that he said in the sum?

**Mr. Croal:** The sum is \$27,091,000 to \$34,006,000.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I thought I heard you gave a greater figure. It is an increase of \$7 million. The staffing has gone up by three. Also, it is to cater for the annualised increase. The three new positions, I am advised, is two sluice attendants and one ranger. It is essentially for the annualised increase as well as three additional employees.

I could provide the full list if the Hon. Member is so desirous. It is to allow for salaries, gratuity, vacation allowance, NIS contributions and the works.

*Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$398,227,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$88,000,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Could you layover the breakdown for each of the areas identified under this programme for us?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes, Sir. It is actually one-line item, but, several activities under that line item. It is actually 8. I agree with the Hon. Member. In the interest of time it would be easier to layover this.

*Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$88,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 733 – Public Infrastructure - \$168,756,000**

**Mr. Chand:** Line item 6116 – Contracted employees: One complement for next year and one was employed this year, but the sum allocated for employment cost reduced from \$3,467,000 to \$1,331,000. Would the Minister please advise and give an account for this reduction and it is one employee and or is it the same employee with the same designation?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The reason for the decrease is due to the appointment of an Engineer and a Supervisor of Works to the fixed establishment or the pensionable establishment. The payment is for the remaining one person on the programme who is one Checker. That is responsible for the decrease or the reduced allocation in 2019.

**Mr. Croal:** Could you layover for us line items 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings, 6251 – Maintenance of Roads, 6252 - Maintenance of Bridges and 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure? In that information that you will layover to us, could you kindly indicate to us the areas, as well as a, brief description of the works to be done, and the budgeted cost?

Line item 6281 – Security Services: Hon. Minister, there is an increase in allocation here. First, could you indicate who is the current service provider and when did this contract started? Secondly, what is the reason for the increase allocation?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Just to confirm the request for layover relates to maintenance of buildings line items 6242, 6251, 6252, 6255.

Line item 6281 – Security Services; the service provider is Sentinel Security Inc. The contract started in Mid-November 2018 and it is for one year.

**Mr. Croal:** Follow-up: What is the explanation for the increase?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am sure the Hon. Member was in the House when the supplementaries were interrogated extensively and much of it had to do with security and the comprehensive explanations were provided at that time. It is not so long ago. That information was provided at that time. I am sure it is fresh in the Hon. Member's mind.

**Mr. Chand:** Line item 6273 – Water Charges: From \$869,000 to \$1,500,000. Could an explanation be given for this increase?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The sum of \$1,500,000 is budgeted to cater for the provision for water supplies for the Government quarters at Enterprise, Leguan, the works compound at Vreed-en-Hoop, the Public Works compound at Crane and the Works Compound at Plantain Walk. A total sum of \$1,500,000 which is marginally less than the 2018 allocation. The Revised 2018 indeed was a little less. The calculations of the RDC is the sum of \$1,500,000 would be needed to provide this product to those locations that I have identified.

**Mr. Chand:** Would the Minister advise us that in fact there are new buildings that would be supplied with water next year than were supplied this year? Please advise on those buildings.

**Mr. Bulkan:** No, Sir.

9.32 p.m.

*Programme: 733 – Public Infrastructure - \$168,756,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*



## **Capital Expenditure**

### **Programme: 733 - Public Infrastructure - \$156,000,000**

**Mr. Chand:** Would the Minister be kind enough to layover the roads and also the bridges that will be either rehabilitated or whether there are new bridges that would be addressed next year from the allocation here?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, with your concurrence, I think it might be useful for the Members of the House and the public to have access to this information. Would you allow me to read it into the record?

**Mr. Chairman:** I must ask the Hon. Minister whether, are we visiting 100 or 40 items of presentation?

**Mr. Bulkan:** No, Sir. It is eight items in the case of the bridges and four in the case of roads.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am relieved. Please, proceed.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Member, for bridges it is a construction of a heavy duty reinforced concrete bridge with a pedestrian part at Best Village at an estimated cost of \$25 million. It is to improve access to the West Demerara Regional Hospital, Best and Crane Villages and it is to benefit approximately 5000 residents, construction of a heavy-duty reinforced concrete bridge at the Leonora Diagnostic Centre access road at an estimated cost of \$12 million which is gained to benefit a considerable number of persons, including the Cuban Medical Brigade whose living quarters are stationed there, a construction of a heavy-duty concrete bridge Edinburgh Access Road at an estimated cost of \$12 million, and a similar bridge at Retreat Street, Parika, at an estimated cost of \$12 million to provide access to approximately 150 residents and 20 small businesses located there. There would be another bridge at School Street, Hague, at an estimated cost of \$12 million to provide access to 60 residents as well as the community play field and a nursery school.

A bridge would be at Hague Backdam at an estimated cost of \$10 million and it will provide access for 1200 residents as well as farmers. There would be construction of a footpath bridge at De Kinderen Burial Ground at an estimated cost of \$2 million to improve access to the community's

burial ground and construction of a green heart footpath bridge at Belle Vue Housing Scheme at an estimated cost of \$3 million to provide access for approximately 500 residents.

For the roads, there would be rehabilitation of the Leonora Diagnostic Centre access road at an estimated cost of \$12 million, rehabilitation of Jai Dam at Tuschen North at an estimated cost of \$12 million, which would provide access to the places of Worship, Nursery School, and to benefit approximately 958 residents, rehabilitation of Old Road Nismes at an estimated cost of \$30 million to provide access for 400 residents and access to 300 acres of farm land and rehabilitation of roads in Edinburgh at an estimated cost of \$14 million to provide increase access for approximately 350 residents as well as the Village Mandir.

**Mr. Chand:** Has the Minister read all the needed roads from his list? Why did he leave out Free and Easy, Tuschen Housing Scheme, Canal No. 1 Polder, Canal No. 2 Polder? Can you please advise?

*[Mr. Speaker hit the gavel]*

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised by the Minister of Public Infrastructure that we need to leave roads and activities for his Ministry to conduct. Several of those would be catered for.

**Mr. Chand:** Follow up: Do I understand the Minister of Communities assuring us that the Minister of Public Infrastructure will address these roads that I talked about in 2019?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I did not give such commitment. I gave a general statement.

*Programme: 733 – Public Infrastructure - 156,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

## **Current Expenditure**

### **Programme 734 - Education Delivery - \$3,446,309,000**

**Mr. Croal:** Line item 6272 - Electricity Charges: You had a budgetary allocation of \$51,500,000 expended close to \$20 million but now you are asking for the amount that was budgeted for in 2018. Firstly, could you indicate how did we had an underspending? Secondly, what is the expenditure on 2019?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that in addition to the sums indicated here for the 2018 expenditure there are some other uncommitted sums to be added. The 2018 Actual would be greater than what is reflected here. Therefore, the difference would not be as great as was suggested. I am sorry that I cannot be more specific than that at this time. The calculations are that the budgeted sum in 2018 is more in keeping with the actual needs of the region and that is why a similar sum is being proposed in the 2019 Budget.

**Mr. Chand:** Line item 6284 - Other: There is a significant increase. Could the Minister advise the reason for this increase? Could he also give some details as to what are the things that falls under this line item?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The principle activity that caters for the increases in 2019 is to allow for the payments of sweeper cleaners whose rates are being increased from \$21,500 to \$41,200 approximately per month. An increase in the rates for supervisors and invigilators for all national assessments namely grades two, four, six ,and nine teachers at the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) , Vreed-en-Hoop Exams as well as teachers management and Caribbean Examination Council (CXC); stipends for 150 work study students at \$20,000 each, the additional 25 sweeper cleaners for grades A and B schools, and it is to also facilitate payments for national events such as Education Month, Independence Activities, work study and other honorariums.

**Mr. Chand:** Follow up: Could the Minister advise, is the Cleaners new pay, that you spoke about, will now be in compliance with the National Minimum wage?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I believe it is the case that these sweeper cleaners are not working eight hours or full time, but as I said, their wages are being increased from where they were, approximately \$21,500 to almost \$41,200 per month. It is a huge increase.

**Mr. Chand:** Nobody has a quarrel to pick with the Minister with respect in the increase in pay. Could the Minister advise us how many hours per week will allow them to receive that pay? How many hours did they work before to receive the pay of \$21,000?

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that approximately 30 hours per week. It is the standard for the sum that I quoted here for approximately \$41,200 monthly.

**Mr. Chand:** The Minister did not answer the question whether it was in keeping with the National Minimum Wage that they are paid not and the new pay, if it is in keeping with the National Minimum wage, demonstrate that these workers were highly underpaid in the past, *vis-à-vis* the minimum wage.

*[Mr. Chairman hit the gavel]*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Mr. Chand, are you finished?

**Mr. Chand:** Yes, Mr. Chairman.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I think that it is an observation being made. It was not a question.

*Programme: 734 – Education Delivery- \$3,446,309,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

*9.47 p.m.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 734 - Education Delivery - \$177,710,000**

*Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$177,710,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Current Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$1,495,902,000**

**Dr. Mahadeo:** I would like to bring the Minister's attention to line item 6272, Electricity Charges; \$80 million budgeted for in 2018. The revised sum was \$26.684 million, over \$50 million less. When I looked at the grand total it was \$1,270,480,000. That was what was budgeted for and we spent more than that. So, my question is: Where did the additional fifty-odd million dollars go from this line item for 2018? And, after spending \$26 million revised for 2018, we are now requesting \$86 million for 2019. Could the Hon. Minister please advise?

**Mr. Bulkan:** Mr. Chairman, I am advised that, as was the case in other regions, it is not an underspending. The difference between the figures that are reflected here and the 2018 allocation

is actually committed. The expectation is that the 2018 actual would be, more or less, in accordance with the 2018 Budget. Hence, this is what is responsible for the request for the 2019 provisions to actually be greater than the 2018 budgeted, by the sum of \$6 million. So, the calculations of the RDC is that the 2018 allocation will be exhausted and that the figure which is reflected here – the \$86 million – is what will be required for electricity for the region for 2019.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** I understand the Minister to say that the budgeted amount for 2018 will be spent by the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018. However, my understanding of what was said before by the Hon. Minister of Finance is that this revised 2018 figure is the projected sum up to the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2018. It therefore means, that this \$1,274,355,000 is going to go up by a minimum of, at least, \$50 million more for moneys that will be expended when we would have budgeted just \$1.2 billion. So, again, I am asking if I understood the Minister correctly when he said that the \$80 million will be spent by the end of this year and that this figure, \$26,684,000, will have to be corrected.

**Mr. Bulkan:** I am advised that the sums committed under line item 6272 for the remainder of the year will take that 2018 expenditure to the budgeted sum. However, the Hon. Member extrapolated for the total expenditure, that if that one item is to go up in that proportion, that the sum of \$1,274,355,000 is expected to go up commensurately. But, if we look at the 2018 allocation total, it is \$1,270,480,000 and the revised figure according to these documents here is just \$4 million more – \$1,274,355,000. So, it is not uniformed across all of the line items, but it is just a marginal difference. It has to be read in light of that.

**Mr. Chairman:** There is one other question after this Dr. Mahadeo.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Just as a follow-up to that one and then I will ask the other question. The follow-up is that if we sum total this revised 2018, we will get \$1,274,355,000. And if Minister is telling me that this \$26 million is going to go up to \$80 million, then this sum total will also go up. At least, that is how I understand that this has been done.

Mr. Chairman, to make it easier, could the Minister, again, layover the number of Direct Observed Treatment Short-Course (DOTS) and Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) workers who are in the region and where they are located? On drugs and medical supplies, how much of this will be spent by the region? And I hope that they will follow the procurement process.

I would like to draw the Minister's attention to Contracted Employees, line item 6116. There is a proposed reduction in 2019 of seven. Yet, there is an increase in the 2019 amount over the 2018 by more than \$3 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain this discrepancy? We are seven less and \$3 million more.

**Mr. Bulkan:** Yes. It is a reduction, but it is not a discrepancy. Whilst the numbers have indeed gone down, as has been explained on other occasions, we are catering for 42 employees and the annualised increases for 42 employees allows for the increase in the 2019 allocation by the figure the Hon. Member referred to – approximately \$3 million. Had it not been for the staff reductions, it was expected that that increase would have been greater. So, it is because of the annualised increases.

*Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$1,495,902,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

### **Capital Expenditure**

#### **Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$117,260,000**

**Dr. Mahadeo:** Project code 2401700 – Land and Water Transport: The project entails purchase of truck and ambulance. Could the Minister provide this House with the approximate cost of the truck as separate from the ambulance? If it is a truck that will be transporting drugs and medications, will it be a refrigerated truck?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The respected sums are \$13 million and \$12 million. And yes, the truck is indeed an enclosed refrigerated vehicle for transporting drugs and medical supplies.

### **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER (10)(1)**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Prime Minister, I invite you to move the continuation of the Sitting.

**First Vice-President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]:** Mr. Chairman, I move that the session continues until the conclusion of the matter on the schedule for today.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Standing Order suspended.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member, Dr. Mahadeo, one question after this please. Please, proceed.

**Dr. Mahadeo:** A follow-up to the last question, Mr. Chairman. Minister, if I remember rightly, you had said that the refrigerated truck for Region 2 would have an approximate cost of \$15 million. So, I am presuming that this one would either be smaller or is it just a variation of quotations that you might have had? And the other one, just simply as I had asked before, could you provide for project code 2503100, Equipment, Health, a list of the equipment that will be bought and where they will be placed?

**Mr. Bulkan:** The equipment under health for the sum of \$57,860,000, as requested, will be provided to the Hon. Member.

The observation made about the difference in price between the two vehicles is a valid one and it requires further consideration and examination. I would like to thank the Hon. Member for making that observation, Sir.

*Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$117,260,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates. 10.00 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we have completed the work which was set for us for today. I thank you for your assistance, even though sometimes it appears to be given grudgingly; but, I am grateful for it whenever it is given.

Tomorrow we will continue, and you will recall the order. Regions 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 will be treated tomorrow, together with the remainder of the 230 agencies for Thursday. I thank you very much.

Hon. Prime Minister, would you move the adjournment.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** I move that this House be adjourned to tomorrow, Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

**Mr. Chairman:** I am afraid we will have to repeat that, Prime Minister, when the Assembly has resumed.

*Assembly Resumed*

**Mr. Speaker:** I now invite the Prime Minister to move the adjournment.

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** I move the adjournment of this House to tomorrow, Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, the Sitting is adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2018 at 10.00 a.m.

*Adjourned accordingly at 10.02 p.m.*