

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT
[VOLUME]**

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

115th Sitting

2 p.m.

Monday, 17th January, 1977

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., Speaker

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

Senior Ministers (9)

Cde. H. D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

(Absent – on leave)

*Cde. H. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Mobilisation

(Absent – on leave)

***Non-elected Minister**

*Cde. H. O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Absent)

*Cde. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance

*Cde. S. S. Naraine, A. A.,
Minister of Works and Housing

*Cde. G. A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

*Cde. G. B. Kennard, C. C. H.,
Minister of Agriculture (Absent)

*Cde. C. L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development

*Cde. F. R. Wills, S. C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice (Absent)

Ministers (5)

Cde. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

Cde. S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture (Absent – on leave)

Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House

*Cde. O. M. R. Harper,
Minister of Health (Absent)

*Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs

Ministers of State (9)

Cde. M. Kasim, A. A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

***Non-elected Ministers**

- Cde. O. E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)
- Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)
- Cde. C. A. Nascimento,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister **(Absent)**
- Cde. K. B. Bancroft,
Minister of State – Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro) **(Absent)**
- Cde. J. P. Chowritmootoo,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara) **(Absent)**
- *Cde. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection **(Absent)**
- *Cde. A. Salim,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice) **(Absent)**
- *Cde. F. U. A. Carmichael,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

- Cde. J. R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Minister of National Development
- Cde. M. M. Ackman, C. C. H.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Office of the Prime Minister,
and Government Chief Whip
- Cde. E. L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

***Non-elected Ministers**

Cde. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Cde. R. H. O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education and Social Development

Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing

(Absent – on leave)

Other Members (19)

Cde. L. M. Branco
Cde. E. M. Bynoe
Cde. E. H. A. Fowler
Cde. J. Gill
Cde. W. Hussain
Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh
Cde. K. M. E. Jonas
Cde. M. Nissar
Cde. L. E. Ramsahoye
Cde. J. G. Ramson
Cde. P.A. Rayman
Cde. E. M. Stoby, J. P.
Cde. S. H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.
Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.
Cde. H. A. Taylor
Cde. R. C. Van Sluytman
Cde. L. E. Willems
Cde. C. E. Wrights, J.P.
Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.

(Absent – on leave)

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. B. Jagan

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran

Other Members (12)

Cde. J. Jagan

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J. P., Opposition Chief Whip

Cde. Narbada Persaud

Cde. C. Collymore

Cde. S. F. Mohamed

Cde. L. Lalbahadur

(Absent – on leave)

Cde. C. C. Belgrave

Cde. R. Ally

Cde. Dalchand, J. P.

Cde. Dindayal

Cde. H. Nokta

Cde. I. Basir

(Absent)

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh

Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F. A. Narain

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

17.1.77

National Assembly

2 – 2.10 p.m.

2 p.m.

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

OATH

The Speaker: Following my call upon the representative of the People's Progressive Party's list of candidates, I have been informed that the name Isahak Basir has been extracted from the list as the person to fill the seat in the National Assembly vacated by Cde. Basil James. I have been informed by the Chief Election Officer that Cde. Basir has been elected to become a member of the National Assembly. Before Cde. Basir can take part in the proceedings of the Assembly he would have, as required by Article 76 of the constitution to make and subscribe, before the Assembly, the Oath of Office.

Leave To Members

Leave has been granted to Cde. Stoby for today's sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1977

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to resume consideration of the Estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1977 totalling \$417,283,736.

Assembly in Committees of Supply.

The Chairman: Pages 70.

HEAD 27 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,060,542 for Head 27 Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I wish to speak on page 70 subhead 7, Subsidy, Guyana Marketing Corporation. I would like to ask the Minister if this subsidy represent losses suffered by the Corporation or is it a sum that will be used to maintain, or to introduce, guaranteed prices for farmers' product. If the latter is correct I think the sum is justified. Further, if the Government even asked for more so that our farmers can be guaranteed for the produce they are involved in, then we would have no objection to vote a higher sum so that we may maintain the guaranteed process and the other incentives that the farmers are accustomed to. If, on the other hand, it is for losses suffered by the Guyana Marketing Corporation then let me say we will oppose it because I am sure the Minister of Agriculture will admit that this predecessor or predecessors have very eloquently from time to time said this is the last year; this will not occur again. The G.M.C. has reached a point where it can take care of itself. It has been viable. If it is not viable in 1977 something is radically wrong. I think the time is ripe not for a subsidy but for an investigation into the operations of the G.M.C.

The Chairman: Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, page 70 subhead 1, item (11), Stock Verifer. The legend says "Three new offices created by Supplementary Estimates in 1976." Before I go further I should say that that legend is correct. Therefore, before we go further to ask a question, could we have a correction. If three new posts were created in 1976 it could not have been 7

posts in 1975. It must have been 4. That must be a printing mistake. 4 in 1975, 7 in 1976 and 7 for 1977.

Incidentally, the same thing obtains with respect to item (19) where you have the post of Senior Office Assistant. The legend says “New office created by Supplementary Estimates in 1976.” So that it was not there in 1975. Reduce the 1975 Establishment column by one and change the total to 144 instead of 148. Let us do it properly. That, I am sure, must be a printing error.

Getting back to subhead 1, item (11), Stock Verifier. These three officers were created in 1976. I want to take the opportunity of saying here that we must have people to verify our stocks and we also must have stocks. How can we have an increase of Stock Verifiers without having stocks. I want to tell the hon. Prime Minister that we are very short of stocks of fertilizers. There is, in fact such a serious shortage that I am sure the hon. Minister has been made aware of it over the week-end. Not only that, somebody went to the Ministry of Agriculture in December to purchase insecticide and he was sold on gallon. He wanted much more. He said “This cannot do, I need more.” And he was told “Come back next month” because we just do not have stocks to sell you more.”

2.10 p.m.

I say that it is all well and good; let us have more stock verifiers. But let us keep stocks so that verifiers can do some work rather than merely sit there and tell people “we just do not have stocks.”

Dealing very quickly with subhead 7, Subsidy Guyana Marketing Corporation. This is at the same level as was requested for 1976, \$1 million. I want to say that obviously the government must be dissatisfied with the performance of the Guyana Marketing Corporation because as we all know a Committee has been appointed to investigate its operations. I must

say also that many persons are also very dissatisfied – I want to bring this to the hon. Minister's attention, he may not know about it – about ham which they bought from the Guyana Marketing Corporation at Christmas and which turned out to be bad and had to be returned. I do not know whether the hon. Minister is aware of it but we have received a lot of complaints. Complaints were made to me personally. I would certainly like to know what the position is and what plans the Government has to make the Guyana Marketing Corporation to make it a more viable and more efficient organization in the immediate future without waiting for the Committee's Report.

I want to touch very lightly on subhead 8, Electricity. We note that the revised amount for 1976 is the same as the amount voted, \$210,000, but the estimate for 1977 is \$120,000, that is \$90,000 less for electricity; this is very excellent indeed. I commend the Ministry in respect of the saving of \$90,000 on electricity. What I would like to know is how the Ministry proposes to do this, because you see I would like other Ministries to follow the example. What plans do they have to reduce on the electricity vote by nearly \$100,000? Maybe the hon. Minister will, like the hon. Minister of Trade and Consumers Protection, turn off all the air-conditioners in the offices, but even if all the air conditioners are turned off, I doubt if all whether it would still save as much as \$100,000. Could we please get these plans which the hon. Minister or his staff, has in mind for saving the sum of \$100,000 so that we can commend them to other Ministries?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister of Agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Kennard): Cde. Chairman, with respect to subhead 7, Subsidy to the Guyana Marketing corporation, I wish to assure the hon. Members who raised this point that the subsidy is intended to defray the cost of guaranteeing prices to farmers. The G.M.C. often buys from farmers at high prices and sells to the consumers below the prices paid to farmers. This necessitates a financial deficit. The subsidy is intended to defray the cost of that guaranteed prices scheme. Though \$1 million we hope will be voted, yet the marketing Corporation is required to submit from time to time details of the actual cost of guaranteeing these prices which cost is then directly reimbursed from this vote. Depending on the volume of

production, depending on the gap between the price to the farmers and often lower prices to the consumers, expenditure might be within the vote. If production was very high and the gap between farmers' prices and consumers' prices very wide – as has happened on previous occasions – a request is made to this House for supplementary provision. We trust, however that this year the increasing efficiency of the Corporation would ensure that the expenditure is kept within the voted provision.

With respect to the general efficiency of the Corporation which has been improving over the years, there has been appointed a Committee of experts under the chairmanship of Cde. W.G. Stoll, who is well-known Accountant, and with other management specialists to look into the general operations of the Guyana Marketing Corporation with a view to making recommendations as to areas where efficiency might be improved. This Committee is now sitting and steps will be taken to implement their recommendations when received. The plans to make the Corporation more efficient would rely very largely on the results of this investigation.

The Guyana Marketing Corporation is a member of the Guystac Group of Corporations and Companies and the Minister of Agriculture is the subject Minister responsible for the broad outlines of its policies in so far as they impinge upon and relate to agricultural production. As a member of the Guystac Group, the corporation receives services from Guystac in terms of internal audit, management, labour relations, and so on, so that there is this additional input, quite apart from the Corporation's own staff to ensure efficiency and its integrity.

With respect to the report about some hams, we have a large number of friends and acquaintance who did buy hams from the G.M.C. and who have been very loud in their praise of the very high quality of the ham sold by Guyana Marketing Corporation. If there have been one or two cases, as I presume there will be in most commercial enterprises, of a rotten ham in the barrel then perhaps we ought to get the specific case so that we might investigate the complaint. But having regard to the general position with the hams, very often a purchaser would buy hams and leave it open to the elements, as it were, to the sun and normal atmospheric conditions. The

result is the ham goes bad but responsibility rests with the customer and certainly not with the G.M.C.

The G.M.C. has a quality Control Section at the Bacon and Ham Plant which ensures that every ham that leaves the G.M.C. is of sound marketable quality. But, the G.M.C. is willing to examine any specific complaint from any customer and to do the necessary if required.

With respect to the observations on the Stock Verifier and the Senior Office Assistant, as usual our very vigilant comrade, the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, is right. There has been an error in the printing and there are now seven Stock Verifiers and, of course, there is a Senior Officer Assistant. In principle, the increase in the number of Stock Verifiers is due to the need to monitor the stocks at the larger schemes and of the three new ones, one has been assigned to the M.M.A. project, another to the Sea Defence Project and another to the Tapacuma Project. I wish to state that with respect to the stock levels, the Ministry has been fortunate in having good carry-over stocks of inputs for agriculture, spares, and the like from last year into this year and I would wish to assure the hon. Member that there will be stocks to verify.

There has been, I understand, a reported shortage of fertilizers which reported shortage was given some publicity a day or two ago. This is the result of delayed shipment as these are commodities we have to import into Guyana. We are in the hands of the manufacturers. If there are strikes at the manufacturing concern, then stocks will arrive late, as we said. We are in the hands of the shipping lines that bring these things to Guyana and therefore if something goes wrong with the shipping lines, stocks are delayed. If there are waterfront strikes in the exporting countries, we again suffer from delayed arrival. There has been some delay in the last large order of fertiliser for the rice industry but the situation has now been remedied and with respect to a particular report about the shortage in Essequibo, the Members will know that on the very night of my arrival to that lovely Arabian coast, six thousand bags of fertilizers were received and were promptly distributed the following morning to farmers throughout the Essequibo Coast and, I believe, immediately applied to the rice crops. This shows too, the sort of expeditious

17.1.77

National Assembly

2.10 – 2.20 p.m.

action that is taken by the Ministry of Agriculture whenever there is complaint. By the way, I visited Dena sluice as well to observe a restart of repairs at that sluice.

Insecticides and the ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture stocks a certain range of chemicals including insecticides but the Ministry of Agriculture is not a commercial organization and relies on commercial organizations whether in the State sector such as the G.R.B. or the Guyana National Trading Corporation to keep sufficient stocks to meet the requirements of farmers and gardeners. And I am sure if that particular customer had gone either to the G.N.T.C. where there is a very large department which services agriculture or to the G.R.B., if he was a rice farmer, he would have obtained a fair supply of the particular insecticide. We in the Ministry just carry small stocks largely for emergencies.

Electricity. It is the endeavour of the ministry of Agriculture to operate at maximum efficiency and at minimum cost and in the contribution that we propose making to the nation's survival in the year 1977, having regard to the realities of the economic situation and the imposed budgetary constraints we are waging our own war on waste and ensuring that what-ever service or input that we have is used to the very best advantage.

In the case of electricity, we have already instructed the various departments and staff to exercise extreme care in the use of electricity, by turning off lights etc. if one made a survey, many of the lights that are on during the day, we can deep them off during the day; to reduce the number of lights at night; to reduce the use of air conditioners; to reduce the unnecessary use of electricity and electrical gadgets and by the exercise of extreme vigilance in this regard and care

2.20 p.m.

in the use of a resource which is increasing in price because of the B.P.E.C. countries continually increasing the price of oil to make fuel which is converted into electricity in Guyana.

We have to reduce our consumption by these various means and by appealing to the people's loyalty. We feel sure that with the co-operation that already we are receiving from staff we would keep within the voted provision. If, of course, circumstances happen to be beyond our control, then we might have to return for some small supplementary provision, but at least having the vote at this level ensures a certain amount of discipline on the staff by indication this is all we must spend, rather than giving them a lot of money and they perhaps spend that and even more. So, having a lower voted provision has a disciplinary effect on the staff. I will do my best not to return for supplementary provision.

Head 27, Ministry of Agriculture, \$2,060,542 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: pages 71 to 75.

HEAD 28, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE – AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$9,748,544 for Head 28, Ministry of Agriculture – Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I wonder if you will permit me to begin and I will give you the items I am referring to as I speak?

Permanent Establishment. I would like the Cde. Minister to say if all the positions are filled. If not, how many vacancies now exist and in what particular areas? How many persons are acting beginning from the Chief Agricultural Officer Deputy and continuing.

Having made that point, Cde. Chairman, I want also to draw the Cde. Minister's attention to certain anomalies which, to my mind, exist in salary scales. This is an important Ministry, if not the most important in the country because it is from this that every single other thing will emanate and if the men who have to serve this Ministry are not well treated and if they can point to areas where people serving in virtually equal positions – maybe a different area but more or less the same type of category – are paid higher, than I think that gives rise to justified grouses and there could be no doubt that such anomalies exist in the Ministry of Agriculture excluding, of course, the Chief Agricultural Officer but starting from the Deputy.

Now, what I would wish to point out is that the Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer is paid under A 36 but the Deputy Chief Works Officer is paid under A 38. Why? Both positions are important. Both men are assumed to have the qualifications required for the respective positions hence why this disparity in salary? And I call upon the Minister today in this House to explain and to tell us that this anomaly will be removed with effect from 1st January, 1977, taking into account that it is supposed to be an "austerity" year. Of course, Principal Agricultural Officer is on A 33 but Project Manager, Matthews's Ridge, who does not come under the Agriculture Head but comes under Head 29, Lands and Surveys is paid under A 35. I take it that Principal Agricultural Officer has to do the whole country and this officer will opt to act and probably to fill permanently either Deputy or Chief Agricultural Officer positions. If this is so, why is it that this officer is not receiving what I think he is entitled to receive and in fact we see such a great anomaly between that and the post of Project Manager. What is Project Manager? He has blue eyes? Why is he paid under A 35 and we pay the Principal Agricultural Officer under A 33?

2.30 p.m.

We have spoken of and we recognize the incessant brain drain in this country and the need for us to keep these men, particularly in this Ministry, and I would hope that an enquiry can be made into the staffing of this Ministry with a view to removing these glaring and scandalous anomalies, if I could put it that way. That scandalous point I make with particular reference to

Project Manager, Matthews Ridge. I would not make that point with respect . . . to the ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Works and Housing. It is Permanent Establishment dealing with items (1), (2), (3), (4). Then there is the engineer, a person paid under A 36.

The point I wish to make further, having pointed to those anomalies, is that we have important offices not filled in this Ministry like the Microbiologist. No Plant Pathologist. Of course, we all know and the Minister is expert in this. He deals with fungus and all of that, which is very vital and necessary at this time when we want to ensure the greatest yield and the greatest production. Hence, we must have all the necessary technical skills so that the farmers would be properly serviced and educated to ensure that we get the best of what we can offer.

Item (25) provides for 3 Crops Agronomists. My information is that we have only one. Again we see the need to have these positions filled and we see the need to have people trained. There should be more scholarships, more training in the Ministry of Agriculture, and the best people ought to be given the training, people who are already there, people who have experience, people who have been servicing this productive sector from the bottom – and I will come to tell of them just now in the estimates – men who have not been exposed to university discipline or that type of training but men who have worked with their fingers for several years, some ranging from 16 to 18 years.

I remember Dr. Pawar in particular when he was here. I visited there on one occasion and we were looking at the various experiments and work that was going on at Mon Repos and he pointed to those men and said, “These are my Ph.D.s and M.S.C.s and what have you.” Indeed he told of the skills and the experience of these men. I will come again in a moment to show that these men who have given service without the main officers, the technically qualified men, and who continue to give substantial service in this field, remain static well below the line, underpaid, and if I am permitted, robbed. These men have continued to make a tremendous contribution. I would be the last to speak against it but to my mind the practical aspect is more important than the theoretical.

We know a number of men who can grasp a point very quickly and point to so and so, and say “This is what is to be done”, and “That is what is to be done.” I know this from practical experience in managing, but ask them to do it. They do not know what to do. Probably they do not even know how to fiddle with the screwdrivers, and the tyres and what have you in other fields, and this is more technical. It has to do with diagnosis, pathology, pests, and what have you, what type of treatment to be given to the various plants.

That being so, the services these men have given over the years must be recognized in the first year of the plan and I am today taking the liberty of being the spokesman for them. They are unknown. They are forgotten and there can be no doubt that they will die unknown in this country for the tremendous service they have given to the agricultural sector of this country. This Ministry has over the years lost a number of brilliant men and there were times when these men had to carry the burden, and they have done it admirably. I am not saying you do not need these technical men. You do need them, but while you need them you must recognize the service that these have been giving.

Then I see in item (27), it looks to me like a mistake, it might not be, I see 1975:57, 1976:57, 1977:57, Senior Agricultural Technical Assistant. Does it mean 57 persons because I see later 3 Senior Agricultural Technical Assistants. Unless it is the total of the whole thing.

Here I wish to speak out for these men. Under item (27), we find these people I have been speaking about. They remain static at either Grade I or the higher grade, Grade II Agricultural Technical Assistant. The Minister will not deny, I am sure, that he knows some of these people very closely and his advisers will tell him of their experience. What is preventing this Ministry from promoting these people to senior Agricultural Technical Assistant because I am very confident that they will still make positions admirable with experience and their skill. What should have happened at that level is that the government should have provided that type of training that would have taken these men in and given them the additional discipline and so qualify them for greater service to the agricultural sector of this country. I am aware, Cde.

Chairman, that the Principal Agricultural Officer is to go on some sort of training programme. The Minister will be in a better position to tell me where these centres are.

2.40 p.m.

I know that some clearing was going on at Bartica. I am not without information that the clearing is not complete much less the starting of the building. When the training is started, I think this is to cope with the proposed scheme, and the people are to be trained in particular areas and the people will be given an opportunity to train them and put them in the field. The ground work has to be done. I did not see it and I am sure hon. Members of this House would like to hear from the Cde. Minister on what has been done so far, when training will commence, where these centres will be, how many persons are going to be trained each year, in what type of disciplines, what types of service they will give, so that we can see that we need to look at these things more keenly and more closely. I am sure the Cde. Minister will want this afternoon to tell us about this. I am sure I am giving him this opportunity because I want to speak very feelingly for these men and want to succeed in letting the Minister share in the feelings of the men whose cases I am putting up and this is an area in which they have served well.

Now I make the other point with respect to the Ministry of Agriculture. I am not saying that his cannot work in other areas but there is need to restructure the whole staffing in the ministry of Agriculture. I am talking about the technical aspect, not the administrative aspect, and there should be more ... Because when you have these secondments and you have the Deputy acting as Chief, and another man coming up from various other areas, I sometimes ask myself what discipline the man has when he reaches up there or just immediately below. But then he has to manage and mobilize the whole agricultural sector. Because of this fact, it is necessary to have more training for your personnel so that when they are appointed to Chief or Deputy or something there they will have the skill or experience to contribute effectively. I respect their respectful skills, but conditions may have forced them to act in certain areas for which they do not have the necessary discipline. But, as I said, the training should end should

not end until the next ten years, based on that I want to propose. In addition to what we have got occurring in the Estimates, positions like Agricultural Officer, senior Agricultural Officer, Specialist Agricultural Officer should be created within the structure and framework of this Ministry and the men who are serving would have better promotional facilities. At the same time the service will be more effective in the agricultural sector. I would wish to ask the hon. Minister to give consideration to that.

Item (38), Poultry Officer. Is this position filled or has the Government called the men who is on retirement to continue at this moment? If that is so, I am sure the government helps the man. How long will he be able to continue? The Minister knows what I am talking about. Is the Government training anybody? How is this position going to be filled? I think the Prime Minister is on record and I think today's papers talks about the type of education people should have. I have no doubt in my mind that there are many with the skills whose talents can be mobilized by some scheme provided by the Government. These men should be offered the necessary scholarships and training so that they will be able over a given period to have people prepared and trained to serve in areas like agriculture and other such technical fields. It is only then that the things the Prime Minister has been talking about can become a reality. But to say it and not to do it is a waste of time. What we have been having in this country is a lot of talking, a lot of proposals, but I have not been able to see the action. What we need is more action.

I also wish to ask about the post of Fisheries Officer. A lot of noise has been made in the House about fish and so on. I am sure the Minister will agree that they fall better under his Ministry. I made it my duty to go on the wharf one morning to see what really is the plan. The plan is that when the fish reach there they are stink already. You cannot attempt to put that under refrigeration. This is one of the reasons why people have not been buying, forgetting the fact that some areas are not getting. People are complaining about the way it is brought in. It is done by way of contract.

This being so they are not eager about what they bring in as long as they satisfy the requirement to the contract. They bring fish in order to operate their trawlers in the sea. People must be given an opportunity to buy cheap fish. For that reason we will need the Fisheries Officer. According to my information, there is somebody acting there. I do not know whether that person is just holding on like so many people are holding on in many positions in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Page 74, subhead 4, Library and Publications. Those of us who occupy the Opposition benches would be the last to say that the Ministry of Agriculture should not have a good library. We would wish agriculture to be promoted on a scientific basis. How big is the library? Where is it? Is it limited to the public? Those are the questions that I would wish to pose. With respect to publication, will the Minister today tell us why no report from the Ministry of Agriculture has been published since 1970? This is a shame. There are many Ministries in the Government that are not publishing their reports. If we have reports we will know what you are doing. When Budget time comes we will be able to contribute to the debate more effectively. The Minister would not have to come here and read out. Let us see the areas that you are not tackling in the agricultural sector. The last report we have is 1969 and I was looking at it this morning. I have not seen the 1970 report. It seems as if there is no Report since 1969.

2.50 p.m.

What is very unique about this Ministry, is that there are two Ministers. One spends his time in the practical work and one gets down to the paper to see the administrative side function well and to ensure, too, that the Ministry is not without competent officers.

I have been reading the Government's articles in so many different magazines on all sorts of things. Let them write; let them reveal the truth today in the agricultural sector because one of the things that bother me – and I would be the last to say that – is that the Minister has been misrepresenting figures in the House. Those figures are questionable. I wonder if the people

have not been feeding him with the right information. If it is that he has not been fed with the right information and, as a result, he comes with the wrong information and it turns out that we have a misrepresentation of production in this country. When the report comes out year after year as it has been coming out up to 1968, one would be able to assess and to praise. We are willing to praise you. If there is need for criticism we will criticise. If there is need for suggestion we will suggest. If there is one area of this Government, to my mind, that must be severely criticized, it is the Ministry of Agriculture for so many failures in so many areas. When we should have been self-sufficient in 1976 we find ourselves on the brink of starvation.

Perhaps the Minister would tell us about the report on subhead 23, Dairy Farming Expansion – Maintenance Expenses. Cde. Chairman, Dairy Farming is a sore point in this country. In the report which I have read extensively, the development of the industry is strongly recommended. The Government has gone to the Linden Highway, at the Moblisse scheme and has attempted to introduce farmers and persuade them to go there. People are not easily persuaded to move from places where they have lived all their lives. I don't adduce that as an argument to say they must not go. I don't take that static position. The point that I make is that the scheme is not attractive enough.

People have to remove and break up their livelihood and their homes and go to other areas. I understand there will be assessment of what their assets are and where they are moving from. This is contrary to all socialist concepts. By now we should have had a condensary so that we can move on.

The Chairman: Two minutes more.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, we see that in Dairy Farming Expansion – maintenance Expenses that the approved estimate last year was \$250,000 and this year the estimate is \$30,000. It shows there that there cannot be any serious development during this year. The Estimates clearly indicate that.

To move on to a significant aspect of my contribution if you will permit me, Cde. Chairman, I would refer to subhead 34. I am the main speaker over here –

The Chairman: The rules say half an hour.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 34, Subsidy to Guyana School of Agriculture corporation. That area has need for a lot of development. I found that there are persons teaching in the Guyana School of Agriculture who are not qualified. The result is that students are not exposed to the best training. In fact, if you have one man who is qualified in one particular field and put him in another field surely he should be able to do his best. There are many areas where this happens and agriculture has been, and still us, the backbone of the country. We need officers who have got the discipline and experience needed. What I think should be done, is that there are a number of officers serving in the technical field in the Ministry of Agriculture who have got both that discipline and experience. What we wish to propose to this Parliament this afternoon is that officers who have the experience, who are exposed to the daily problems, that they be brought within the scheme of training so that they be allowed to teach at the Guyana School of agriculture. To my mind, this looks like a sound proposal.

The other point I wish to make is that there should be established at the University of Guyana an agricultural faculty. I want to call for the establishment of this faculty at the University of Guyana and ask the Cde. Minister what is being done in this respect.

The question of selecting students leaves much to be desired. There is need for selection to be on a fair basis.

3 p.m.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, starting with page 71, subhead 1, item (2), Supernumerary Chief Agricultural Officer. When we were discussing this in December, 1975,

when we were considering the Estimates, I remember that on page 69, I made a note about this post and the hon. Minister said Mr. Carter has been seconded to a Training Programme by World Bank. I should like to ask how is this programme progressing. I distinctly made a note of what the hon. Minister said, that the Guyana School of Agriculture was doubling its intake. Has this in fact happened? He also said that regional training centres will be established in the North West District between Port Kaituma and Matthews Ridge/Arakaka, but it certainly needs a lot more money to improve buildings and accommodation and to improve facilities generally. Are there any more regional schools like this? Would the hon. Minister tell us about this Training Programme which was supposed to be spearheaded by the officer seconded which made it necessary for the supernumerary post? What is the position with regard to the training at the University of Guyana? A Degree course at the University of Guyana was not the answer to the problem? Maybe the hon. Minister can tell us what is being proposed at the University of Guyana for agriculture.

Item (13) Manager (Crop Agronomy) Production on the same page under the heading Research and Laboratories. This office, I would like to observe, appears to be filled, and since there is a man on the job, I would like to raise a matter which I would humbly beg the hon. Minister to look into. It has been told to me that Diamond Estate particularly yields less sugar. This is being done in order to increase production. But in fact, I am sure the hon. Minister would agree that if you do cut the young cane the cane sucrose is wasted and lost. If the hon. Minister is not aware of this I should like him to investigate this since this affects the economy of the country as a whole.

Subhead 1, item (26) Office Manager, Central Agricultural Station. We note that for this office the sum of \$6,360 was approved, but the revised amount is \$3,180. Is this post vacant? It does appear to be so because the revised amount is much less than was originally asked for. If the post is vacant how soon will it be filled?

I should like to use this Head to reiterate a general observation which I made last year, and which the last speaker touched on and that is the fact that there are a lot of posts in this Ministry that are still vacant. This Ministry is vital to the economy of this country; we all recognized this, and therefore I hope that the attitude would not be that we should not fill the posts and so effect the savings on the Personal Emoluments for this year. I would say that it is a wrong policy to say let us therefore have a saving in this austerity year. This to my mind is pennywise and pound foolish. We need to have all these posts filled and if we are to give agriculture the necessary boost that it needs in order to selvage our economy, we must fill all the posts and not merely think we will save on emoluments to cut down on these monies.

I would in fact want to associate myself with the remarks made by the last speaker in respect of salary scales and vacancies. I myself have made similar remarks in this House. I have been told that the matter of higher salary scales is for the Public Service Commission and, the Appeals Tribunal resulting from the job evaluation exercise. Fair enough. We recognize all these things. I suspect that this is the answer that I will get from the hon. Minister. But what I want to say is that I am sure that personal representations of the hon. Minister would be a significant factor in helping in this situation. We know that he is a very efficient public servant, he was certainly an efficient public officer even though I have heard it said he is misguided. I am sure no one questions his integrity in his present post. I am sure his representations would be heeded by the relevant authority.

Turning over to page 72, Item (62), Agricultural Technical Assistant Trainees. Let us look at the figures. The approved figure for 1976 and the 1976 revised figure are the same, \$122,400. What we are asking for this year is only \$92,640. When we look at the last column, we will see that there is a decrease of \$29,760. If we use up all the \$122,400 for 1976, such a drastic cut for 1977 of nearly \$30,000 could have some effect on this Agricultural Technical Assistant Trainees programme. In fact, how can it be done? I cannot see how it can be done. If there are fifty bodies in 1970 being paid \$122,400 how can the same fifty in 1977 with salary increments at scale A7, how can that cost \$29,760 less? Unless the answer is that there are so

many vacancies that you will be able to effect savings. But I cannot see how there will be savings in view of the fact that the revised figure in 1976 is the same as the approved estimates for 1976. If you expect to spend all the money then the presumption is that all fifty people are appointed and you should not have a reduction of nearly \$30,000.

Dealing with item (124), Agricultural Technical Assistant I, we note that the approved estimates for 1976 for this item was \$2,288, but the revised figure calls for \$17,208. I cannot understand why this revision is over five times the amount approved for 1976. How can one man on scale A13 be getting this amount of money? The maximum of the scale is \$5,016. And I cannot comprehend this revised figure in 1976. But what bothers me is that the same thing happened in the revised figure in 1975 as was listed in the 1976 estimates which I have here on page 72. The Minister said then that it was an error but since the same sort of thing is repeated again here, I wonder whether there may not be some specific reason.

3.10 p.m.

When I look at item (133), Cleaner, A1 the same thing appears there. The sum asked for was \$3,696 but this has been revised to \$20,830 for two cleaners? I am wondering whether there is not some reason other than an error or a mistake as the hon. Minister said last year. History is repeating itself. I am wondering whether these officers cannot be making the same mistake twice. Is it that these votes are being used for some other purpose? Is it that other people are being paid from these posts other than the persons listed here?

Item (138), Station Allowances. We see in the Approved Estimate for 1976 \$2,115 but in the Revised Estimate, the amount reflected is \$21,600. The same amount is being asked for in 1977. This is a very big increase and I would like to ask who are we additionally now giving Station Allowances to? Is it another category of persons that have suddenly been included in respect of Station Allowance?

One page 74, we deal now with the very first subhead, subhead 2, Transport and Travelling. The 1976 revised figure is the same as the approved \$400,000 but in 1977 the sum being requested is only \$200,000 that is half as much as 1976 or 1975. I would like to ask as general question here and maybe I can include such subheads as 9, 10, 12 and 23 in respect of this question of drastic reductions from 1976; I will deal with them altogether. Subhead 9, Purchase, Production and Distribution of Seeds and Plants. The 1976 approved estimate was \$145,000; the 1976 revised estimate is \$145,000 but the estimate for 1977 is \$105,000, a reduction of \$40,000. Subhead 12, Maintenance of district Offices, Demonstration Stations, Offices, Nurseries: there the reduction from 1976 is \$24,000. Subhead 15, Veterinary Preventative Measures; the reduction is \$160,000. Subhead 23, Dairy Farming Expansion – Maintenance Expenses; the reduction between 1976 and 1977 is \$220,000 and the general question I would like to ask is: does the Minister not think that the Ministry will suffer seriously as a result of these reductions and that the reduction would seriously affect his agricultural programme for 1977?

For example, let us take the first one, subhead 2, Transport and Travelling. We all know that the OPEC countries have sent up oil prices. We know that gasoline and travelling will cost more generally and yet Transport and Travelling here is being reduced by \$200,000, that is by 50 per cent. How can we do it and maintain our same level or programme? Similarly, in respect of all the others that I have talked about. How can we do it without affecting the efficiency of the Ministry?

Subhead 35, Refunds of Revenue. The revised figure in 1976 is the same as was requested, \$40,000, but the estimate in 1977 I snow reduced to \$11,648. I do not know how they round off the figures to \$11,648. I do not know what basis was used for the calculation but what I want to ask: In view of the fact that \$40,000 was required for 1976, will the 1977 provision of \$11,648 be enough? I do hope that the Government austerity year programme does not include refusing to refund money owing to taxpayers under this head.

Subhead 37, National Exhibition of Local Produce. We note that the revised figure of \$80,000 is not being asked for in 1977; instead, only \$20,000 is asked for 1977, a reduction of \$60,000. I cannot understand the legend. It states: "Mirror maintenance works." I am not sure what "Mirror maintenance works" has to do with National Exhibition of Local Produce but maybe the hon. Minister has an explanation. Since we are talking about local produce, is the hon. Minister aware that the local produce produced by the Food Processing Plant at the Industrial Site has been going bad and a lot has been returned by merchants? Merchants have had to return stock produced by the Food Processing Plant. I am aware that a food technologist was brought in from abroad late last year. Would the Minister say whether he has been able to solve the problem? This is certainly my wish, that Guyana does succeed, and I am heartily behind this programme. I would not like to hear any criticism at all. What has been the problem? We are sure it is being remedied.

3.20 p.m.

I am making another point. A farmer came to me and he said he took in his produce to the G.M.C. and he stood there and waited but he could not get anybody to attend to him, so he just dumped his produce there and said: "You can take it to the Dharm Shala if you don't want to attend to me." These things must not be allowed to be happening. This was Old Year's Day. It is still a working day.

On page 75 there is a subhead, Conveyance by Air of Hinterland Agricultural Produce and there is a legend opposite this, "Provision no longer required." How is it that the sum of \$30,000 was required and used in 1976 and nothing is being asked for in 1977? How will hinterland agricultural produce come to Georgetown this year?

Cde. Dalchand: Page 71, Veterinary Officer and Livestock Officer, items (36) and (37). I would like to ask the Cde. Minister whether he is aware of the serious shortage of these officers and because of the shortage of these officers farmers cannot have the use of these important

services. Many farmers who for some reason have to get the use of all these services have to pay expensive transportation for these officers to travel from Georgetown.

Page 75, subhead 40, National Cane Farming Committee. The National Cane Farming Committee is not functioning in the best interest of farmers. In 1974, by legislation, \$½ million was provided to this Committees to assist the farmers with the rehabilitation of their cultivation. Will the Minister say what is the present position with the fund, how much money was actually lent to the cane farmers for 1974, 1975, 1976, and what rate of interest the farmers were called upon to pay, how much money of this fund was spent by the Committee to buy tractors and trailers, how many trailers were bought and what has happened to the trailers, what has happened to the money?

Is the Cde. Minister aware that for the cane rehabilitation farmers have to borrow from the Guyana Agricultural Co-operative Bank and they are being called upon to pay 9½ per cent interest? Why has no statement been published for 1975 showing how the sugar crop was disposed of?

Cde. Nokta: Page 74, subhead 23, Dairy Farming Expansion – Maintenance Expenses. A school teacher friend of mine one day asked his children in the class where do we produce milk, and one child said: Bookers Supermarket. Guyana is a farming country and it is quite a confusing question to ask the children where do we produce milk. Most of the milk in this country comes from a tin. Some years ago, a plot of land at Bartica was allocated for a dairy farm. This land is now taken over by the Government and a school is occupying it. I would like to ask the Minister if a plot of land was not provided. All the cows are roaming on the streets of Bartica.

Subhead 36, Farm Youth Training. I suppose this is in relation to the Wauna-Yarakita district. They used to call them Farm Crops. They are now calling them Farm Youth Training. This project started some time ago and it had sixty youths. When last I checked, there were only

fifteen youths. The budgetary allocation has been cut by \$2,000. This project is going to ruin and what is going to happen to those students who are there?

On the same page there is subhead 13, Apiary. Not very long ago in the Waini, an apiary was established and as I understand it, over \$½ million was spent, houses were built along the Waini River Bank. I would like the Minister to tell us how much money we are getting out of the Waini apiary.

Cde. Rayman: An important question to the Cde. Minister would be on page 74, subhead 36, Farm Youth Training. Many young people are in need of agricultural training. Can the Cde. Minister say what steps are being taken to train them?

Cde. Ally: I would just like to ask one or two short questions. The very first question is whether the Cde. Minister is aware of the fact, on page 72, item (51) in relation to field assistants, that some of these officers have actually been given the name by farmers, “fifty-fifty?” This name has been given to certain officers because, unless the farmer decides to give 50 per cent of the incentive to the agricultural officer, he cannot get the incentive bonus.

Another matter is the question of flood relief. At the moment there are many people entitled to flood relief but because they refused to give a part of that money to the officer, they have not received it. The agricultural officer has promised to look into it. I hope the Minister will look into it and remedy the situation.

There is another one on page 74, subhead 12, Maintenance of District Offices, Demonstration Stations, Officers, Nurseries. I would like to ask the Cde. Minister why greens and ground provision farmers cannot get the necessary fertilizers and insecticides at the district offices through the Ministry of Agriculture. Will the Minister say why farmers are not supplied with the necessary fertilizers for their crops? They have to go to private dealers and pay large sums of money for these things. They are really suffering.

In one case one ground provision farmer decided to go to the Guyana Rice Board bond at Springlands to see if he could buy some fertilizers and insecticides but he was turned away. They were only supplying fertilizers to rice farmers and not to greens and ground provision farmers. I hope the Cde. Minister would look into this matter.

There is another subhead, subhead 27, Maintenance of Vehicles. The 1976 revised estimate is \$225,000, and there is also subhead 2, Transport and Travelling, the 1976 Revised Estimates, \$400,000. There is a reduction in the amounts requested for 1977 under both subheads. Why should this be so? The Minister himself knows something about this. I hope he will investigate and try to remedy the situation. Some of these vehicles are being used for political purposes and one could find them by the rum shops and cinemas and they get damaged in areas outside the areas to which they are assigned. I think taxpayers are being called upon to pay these monies because people who have no right to use these vehicles are using them and when the vehicles get damaged taxpayers have to pay. I hope the Minister will look into this and see whether the situation can be remedied. I think we can cut out a lot of that.

3.30 p.m.

Page 75, subhead 45, Subsidy on Poultry Feed. I would like to ask the Minister if it is possible for us to produce our own poultry feed in this country. Is the Minister aware of the fact that the people who are really eating chicken today are the small men? But because of the increased price this is becoming impossible. Mutton is out of the question. Beef in some areas cannot be had so the people really turn to chicken and this was really the thing that they can buy. The increased price has taken chicken out of the reach of the poor people. I hope the Minister will look into this. I would like the Government to rethink its position and to put back the subsidy on chicken so that the small man can eat chicken again.

Cde. Kennard: Cde. Chairman, we have certainly had a large number of questions and in the interest of time I will have to endeavour to put them under subject categories as far as that is possible. In some cases, of course, it will be necessary to answer some specific questions.

I would like to make a comment on the general question of staff. Questions were posed by my hon. Friends such as: Are all the vacancies filled? How many vacancies do we have? If they are not all filled, how many people are acting? And the need to review the general structure of the Ministry to create more promotional posts like Agricultural Officers and Senior Agricultural Officers and the like. Cde. R.D? Persaud mentioned that particularly.

On the question of acting appointments, it is true that we have an Acting Chief Agricultural Officer. We do have an Acting Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer and some of our Principal Agricultural Officers are acting. As explained last year, this was caused by the secondment of the substantive holder of the post, to be responsible for the I.B.R.D. Project for the training of our young people. He is still on that assignment and, therefore, these comrades are acting in those positions. They are, of course, being fully recompensed for the additional responsibilities which they have undertaken and which they are performing to the entire satisfaction of the Ministry and the farming committee. It will not be possible to fill those posts permanently until the substantive Chief Agricultural Officer decides whether he will remain permanently in the new area of specialization in which he is engaged or whether he wishes to return to the Ministry.

With respect to promotional posts, these Estimates are examined very carefully. We will find that there are a large number of promotional posts and, in fact, we are doing exactly what Cde. Persaud has proposed. There are posts of Agricultural Officers, Senior Agricultural Officers, Production Managers, Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer, Chief Agricultural Officer. There are a number of promotional posts. With respect to experienced agriculturalists, I wish to assure my hon. Friend that it is the practice to recognize experienced employees of the Ministry and to appoint them to high posts. For example, while formerly one had to obtain a degree in

agriculture to be appointed to the post of Agricultural Officer, now we have appointed three uncertified non-degree holders to the post of Agricultural Officer and we propose increasing that number.

On this matter of the Project Manager for Matthews Ridge, it is proposed that that post should be transferred over to this/Matthews Ridge/Arakaka/Kaituma Development Authority and that Project Manager would be the chief administrator for that whole Authority. The Authority will have the status of a Public Authority, and hence the salary attached to that post.

In addition to the remoteness of the area, the qualifications required of that officer are such as to attract the salary as has been shown in the vote and without at all casting any adverse reflection on the qualifications or the duties assigned to the post of Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer, the post has attracted that salary under the proposed Matarkai Authority. The post is in the process of being transferred to the appropriate vote for that Authority.

On the general question of salary scales, I appreciate the expressions of support for grading Agricultural Officers and people working in agriculture. I am pleased that Cde. Persaud has referred to the Agriculture Ministry as being the most important Ministry. The hon. Member Feilden Singh also referred to the Ministry as being vital. When one hears the word “vital”, there is no need to enquire further into why there are two Ministers of Agriculture. One cannot cope.

In terms of training, we recognize the importance of training people. I wish to announce that we have 128 Guyanese who are being trained for degrees in agriculture all over the world the Caribbean, the socialist countries, some western countries, some Commonwealth countries. Yes, a total of 128 young Guyanese are being trained for degrees in agriculture. When trained I am sure they will fill those vacancies which now exist.

17.1.77

National Assembly

3.30 – 3.40 p.m.

I admit that there are some vacancies but these are rapidly being filled as officers become available. Where we do not have Guyanese officers immediately available, we are recruiting from outside. Quite recently, for example, we recruited three Veterinary Surgeons from India. They are taking up their positions and one has been stationed in West Demerara to fill the need that Cde. Dalchand has said exists in that area. In addition to recruiting from outside where there are no suitable Guyanese available, we are involved in a very large training programme to train people at our own Guyana School of Agriculture.

3.40 p.m.

I wish to confirm what I had said last year during the Budget Debate in Committee that we have doubled the intake of students of the Guyana Schools of Agriculture. There are today 185 students in residence at the Guyana Schools of Agriculture. The intake for the academic year in 1974-1975 was 52 and the intake for the current academic year has jumped to 92.

In the Burnham Institute there is an intake of 18 students for the period 1974-1975. 25 in 1976-1977. Furthermore, at the National Institute for the training of animal Health Assistants located at Mon Repos, we have six Guyanese admitted to training as animal health assistants. Not only are we training in the existing institutions but as the Government announced last year, we are looking at the question of establishing a faculty of Agriculture at the University of Guyana from the academic year 1977, that is, from 1st October.

We have been doing a lot of priority work in terms of getting the faculty going. We have a Committee that has dealt with the syllabus and the staffing, to get the faculty going. We have had advice from the Government of New Zealand as to the structure of the Degree Course and we have received at least two offers to finance the faculty of Agriculture at the University of Guyana. So we are getting support from outside and support from within.

On the question of subhead 36, Farm Youth Training, this applies to farm care. At the primary school level agricultural training is being increased. Some of the students who graduated from the Guyana School of Agriculture do return to the primary schools as agricultural teachers and to each school we have school gardening activities. We have school farms at the multilateral schools. At Bladenhall some 7,000 bags of rice was reaped. So that you have the students exposed to practical agriculture as well as being trained in the class room.

At the Community High School, and there are 13 of these schools, the same type of training will be done and perhaps stronger emphasis will be laid on it, because after all, no matter what you learn in the school room it is the practical thing that will make you a farmer. So the orientation is very effective in the community High Schools.

At the Kuru Kuru college we have a training programme for agriculture for the students. Also Secondary Schools, Multilateral Schools, and at the Animal Health Assistant Centre, and then, of course, from the academic year 1977-1978 at the University of Guyana.

We don't think it is necessary to increase or lengthen the training period at the Guyana School of Agriculture. It is two years because the students can leave to do a further two years at the University. This is a total of four years which is normally the duration of degree training at most agricultural colleges in the world. Some give Degree Courses for three years; we are making it a four years degree course including the practical aspect of training so as to ensure that we provide the best possible agriculturalist for this country.

There are hoards of other questions. What is happening to the World Bank Project? Training of Youth. In addition to all this training, not to mention National Service, in addition to that general type of training there is the establishment of the 6 rural training centres for young farmers which would enable some 1200 young farmers to be trained each year. The course is intended to be only of a year's duration. We hope to turn out a large number of farmers to return to their farms to do land development or land settlement schemes.

17.1.77

National Assembly

3.40 – 3.50 p.m.

So far we have selected various locations such as Mahaicony/Abary, Bartica, one in Essequibo. The architects have designed plans and it is hoped to award the tender to the construction of these centres some time during 1977. It is doubtful whether construction will be speedy on any of these centres until 1978 and possibly 1979.

The reason why the Technical Assistant Training vote has been reduced is simply because rather than trying to train these people within the Ministry, we have decided that out of each body of students at the Guyana School of Agriculture, we would select those who are qualified to fill vacancies as technical assistants in the Ministry. Hence the reduction in the vote for training them in the Ministry.

3.50 p.m.

A question was raised on Fisheries Officer. Actually we have three and you will find that there is a Senior Fisheries Officers. And on page 71, item (20) there is provision for two fisheries Officers, both University trained and qualified people. So there are three qualified Fisheries Officers in the ministry who can look at the various problems such as the one described a while ago. Poultry officer, a successor has been identified and as soon as the present officer is retired the young successor who is understudying the more senior officer in that Division, this young virile successor will take his place. **[Interruption]** Apparently three seems to be some fear about his health.

Dairy expansion. We have in Guyana a very peculiar situation where milk is concerned. In terms of dairy farming as such specialized dairy farming – we have a very small dairy industry in Guyana, and it comprises the producers in the outskirts of Georgetown, and one or two dairies on sugar estates and the big Bel Air Dairies, that we have now nationalized and taken control of. But Georgetown receives most of its milk from the creek areas. What we have are large quantities of milk from the creek but this is not really a dairy industry. On the creek areas farmers keep cows, this is a different thing from dairy farming. Surplus bulls and old cows are

sold for beef, or cows after giving birth to calves are milked and they ought not to be milked, since these nondescript animals produce barely enough to feed their calves. So that the milk that is coming from these cattle, the experts have said, we ought to discourage. It is milk that is not clean, the milk is required by calves, and not for human consumption.

The policy is to establish a true dairy industry and not to have milk as a by-product of the rice industry. There is competition between man and beast on the Coast. There is not enough land on the Coast for beast; there is land for human habitation, but not enough land to allow straying cattle flowing over the countryside. We have decided in some areas where people speak of the cattle nuisance to move out the cattle, such dairy cattle as we have, to areas where land is available. Research work has been done over the years and we are supporting research all the time which indicates that grass does very well in these intermediate areas along the Soesdyke/Linden areas on brown sand. I am extending a personal invitation to members to be my guests to visit Mobilissa to see where the work is going on. Please accept that invitation because I would like to educate you and seeing is believing we will, therefore, move into that particular ecological area wherever the soil is suitable, going further up along the road that is being built to catch the Berbice River where a large number of dairy farms will be established to produce good clean wholesome milk for the population of Guyana. We hope to settle thousands of our people in the regional food plan. Very shortly, the Caribbean Development Bank is going to consider an application for a substantial loan to enable these dairy farms to be established. But we are going into this, the expansion of this dairy industry where we will get clean wholesome milk to feed our population.

I have dealt with the question on the Guyana School of Agriculture and therefore the question of the subsidy relevant to the Guyana School of Agriculture. The G.S.A. does a great deal to support itself, for example last year farming activities in which students were engaged earned \$439,000, and I think great credit is due to the School for having produced and sold \$439,000 worth of produce, thereby cutting down the subsidy that is required. This year the

challenge to the School is to double their production in order to further reduce the subsidy and ultimately aim at supporting itself from its own production.

The suggestion that young cane is being cut at Diamond will be investigated. But our knowledge is that the old canes are being carried over from year to year, which we have to cut in order that the young cane can come up.

The Waini apiary. I will send a bottle of honey to every Comrade. Reduction on various items; cuts have been made on many heads in the Ministry but in this year of austerity we have to cut and contrive and try to help ourselves. Steps like that will have to be taken with respect to most of these votes in order to contribute to the nation. These cuts do reflect the austerity programme but nevertheless I gave the assurance that we shall use our ingenuity and, in co-operation with the farmers, endeavour to keep the agricultural production drive at its steady upward pace. Those appear to be some of the points of greater significance and if in the course of my one or two points have been left out I apologise to Members. *[Interruption.]*

Head 28, Ministry of Agriculture – Agriculture - \$9,748,544 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, we have got two hours more to finish two Heads and three Divisions. One has to bear in mind that the Minister has to reply, so will you kindly see how best we can keep within the schedule.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On resumption - -

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Pages 76 to 78.

HEAD 29, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE – LANDS AND SURVEYS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,550,457 for Head 29, Ministry of Agriculture – Lands and Surveys, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud:

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, I will restrict my contribution to page 78 to take care of what I would wish to ask. This page reveals, to my mind, an indictment against the Government. When one looks from subhead 2 right down to subhead 24, there is a minus sign in the last column against every single item. And these are important areas of agriculture! They are productive heads and indeed if they are treated so scantily in the provision of funds, one can imagine what will be the position of production during this year, 1977.

It is true to say that Government Housing Scheme – and I am talking about those areas like Cane Grove and some others but with specific reference to Cane Grove – are the worst. Some time ago we spoke of Planation Hope. In my view, Cane Grove is the second “Hope”. There is no sanitation, the worst kind of housing; people live there in subhuman conditions and there is the question of toxic soil where land has been allocated to people. I do not want to name anybody. I personally had a very good look at the Cane Grove area and many people there had virtually to stop planting and they have no other means of livelihood. One or two persons made

representations to the Ministry of Agriculture pointing out their difficulties and have requested new lands so that they can rehabilitate themselves. What I want to ask the Cde. Minister based on all these subheads in this: What plans does the Ministry of Agriculture have to rehabilitate these schemes?

Garden of Eden Land Development Scheme, subhead 15. This is a scheme which has been introduced. The farmers there have countless problems. There are all types of problems and to merely put “service charges”, as I want to call these votes and to reduce those service charges substantially – as I said it is a minus head; it shows minus in agriculture – would mean that these people have to suffer even more severe hardships during the year 1977 than in previous years including 1976. Take Garden of Eden as an example: it has some drainage and irrigation facilities. They have some problems when the koker is opened at Land of Canaan and they complain as we all know. Something should be done to control that. Besides that, if Garden of Eden is taken as example you should not leave them and just collect revenue. Do the normal things that you would do in the normal – I wanted to say “Civil Servant” way – in the normal routine manner, avoiding the term “Civil Servant”. If not, it means you will be doing a great dis-service not only to the farmers thereby discouraging them, but a disservice to agriculture. It is this type of treatment to agriculture that has resulted in what we see at Mara. The people have virtually vacated that area. I think the time has come when the Government must do something to rehabilitate all these schemes that are here.

Speaking about schemes on the West Coast, we have got Vergenoegen Land Development Scheme and all those schemes. These people have countless problems. The Cde. Minister, I am sure, would like to tell this House this afternoon, as he has the opportunity, what plans he has specifically for Cane Grove. These people need more than sympathy; they need action; they need service, and they need help and thus I call for that help for Cane Grove.

Subhead 20, Resumption of Statelands – Working Party Expenses. I notice there is \$4,000 provided. I would like to know where these lands are and how early the Government

will resume them. I felt with the nationalization of the sugar industry, most of the Crown Lands would have been now under Government control. I think there are applicable to Crown lands.

Under subhead 21, Investigation of Applications for Lands, what really is being done? On page 76, at item (24) there is provision for a Secretary, National Land Selection Committee. The Minister is not unaware of this. We have about a million acres of good land, of arable land, of fertile land and if he looks at the available reports – I am trying to look at them – the greater acreages that are available are virgin land not put to use. What is this committee doing? How many new acres of land have been allocated and to farmers from where? Has there been any form of allocation? What is the criterion for land allocation, bearing in mind that the Government would not want to give farmers inadequate acreage of land with the result that they would not be able to support themselves. I think a total scheme in land allocation is needed. Criteria for land allocation should be known; you need to examine all the reports to ensure that the farmers plant the crops that can be best grown on the land given. We are not without experience – and I do not want to deal with details. We are not without experience even within recent times where lands have been given out and farmers have been told to cultivate certain types of crops, that it has been proven that the soil is not the best, that there is toxic soil.

I wish to refer to it although it comes under the Capital Estimates. The soil at the Linden/Soesdyke area, for example. I have seen quite a few farmers there and they have a number of problems. The Minister is reported as saying that the Ministry must shift to the darm. I support that statement but I want it to become a reality. Let the officers go there. Let them go and enquire into the problems of the people. They can go to the East Bank, East coast Demerara starting from any point. Even at Craig there are a number of farmers who have problems. At Garden of Eden, there are problems; in the Soesdyke/Linden area, there are problem. In the Linden area, as I said it is a soild problem. As a result they have been complaining. If the farmers cannot continue in the Soesdyke/Linden area – I understand from reports that this is so and some have been telling me that the soil is not the best – then I would strongly support that they be given alternative land and they be helped so that they can rehabilitate themselves.

Subhead 8, Materials, Equipment and Instruments. I wonder, Cde. Chairman, as this is my last point under this Head, if I can call on the Minister to carry out an investigation to find out the exact extent of its assets in machinery, tractors, combines, bulldozers, trailers and everything in all the areas throughout the country. Could he at the same time find out how many of those machines are not in working order because we get figures that the Government has “X” number of combines.

4.40 p.m.

This is a sore point, particularly for the rice farmers. Every year they are complaining. They have a water problem. There is either no water or too much water. Apart from the water problem, they have a machinery problem. There are all sorts of complaints. For instance, the complaint of discrimination. There are ten farmers in a line, you remove a machine from that area and you take it to a completely new area. There are tremendous difficulties and at the same time farmers become very frustrated when such things happen. I am told that last year there were a number of machines lying idle in the Black bush area not repaired, not service.

I notice in the estimates there is an engineer. Has he ever gone there? Fingers ever got greased? What we need is an engineering section to service and rehabilitate those tools that appear on this page. We want these officers to go there to teach them how to service the plough, how to service the various machines, carry out that type of exercise so that those who have machines, can preserve them and get greater and maximum use out of them.

There is another thing I would strongly support on this question of machinery. I am sure the Minister has had representation from all around on the question of machinery. He is not unaware that big farmers – I call no names, the Minister knows them, we know them – should be allowed to purchase their own machinery because they have large plots. They have such large acreages that they can be allowed to purchase their own machinery. The smaller farmers are the ones, I feel, who should enjoy the facilities of renting Government machinery. They should be

given priority over those who can afford to buy and who can afford to own their own machinery in view of the extent of their acreages and cultivation.

Our complaint is – and this is justified, I do not want to call anybody's name – that these very big farmers who can afford these facilities get the use of the machinery, and the smaller ones do not get the use. I hope that the Minister will look at that and look at this whole question of machinery. There should be a proper inventory of the working ones. It should be stated exactly what the requirements are. The Ministry was not doing this when I was there the last time. Put down on paper what are the requirements, where the farmers are planting, how many you need in the spring crop, how many you need in the autumn crop, see that when the time comes you can offer them something. If you cannot service them, try to get more machinery so that the farmers will not have the problems as in the past as a result of no water. They lose when they wait too late to reap and so they have problems. Those are all the points I wish to raise.

The Chairman: *Hon. Member Mr. Singh.*

Mr. M. F. Singh: Page 76, subhead 1, item (11), Project Manager, Matthews Ridge. This apparently is a new item and the legend says "Formerly Project Manager." The hon. Member did allude to this and partly answered the question which I was going to ask. I was under the impression that Matthews Ridge no longer exists as such but will be the Matarkai Authority. If that is so I think that this should not be reflected here at all.

The Government has upgraded one of these three posts of Project Manager and is attributing the higher grade to the establishment of this Authority. I would say that this should be removed completely from the Estimates and the expenditure should be taken in under the Regional Development capital head of \$2 million which is on page 101 of these Estimates. It is \$2 million allocated to that project and we should not have a duplication and a double set of expenditure for this project. Let us have one set of expenditure and keep a tidy house.

In respect of item(24), Secretary, National Land Selection Committee, we note that the amount approved in the 1976 estimates was \$3,936 but the revised estimate is \$1,968, giving us the impression that the post was not filled during the year. Was this post in fact filled during the year? Is the post vacant or is it filled? If it is vacant, how soon it is going to be filled? Will the hon. Minister tell us who are the members of this National Land Selection Committee and what is the Committee really doing? The Secretary certainly did not appear to function during the whole of 1976.

One page 77, item (83) Duty Allowances. I need an explanation there. The amount sought and approved in the 1975 estimates -- Something is wrong in the heading of the columns. It should be 1977 Estimates, 1976 Revised Estimates, 1976 Approved Estimates. What we have here are Estimates for 1976, that obviously cannot be right. We will have to tidy up our house there. That must be a typographical error. Bearing the correction in mind, the estimate for 1976 was \$35,030 and the revised figure is \$4,400 but we are asking in 1977 for the same \$35,030. If we want only \$4,400 for 1976 why are we asking for \$35,030 in 1977? Why was this revised to such a low amount or, alternatively, why are we asking for so much more for next year. Either it was revised too low or too much in being asked for 1977. There must be some explanation for this.

One page 78, I want to take subhead 20, Resumption of State Lands – Working Party Expenses, and subhead 21, Investigation of Applications for Lands, together. I am not dealing with the figures here but would like to ask particularly in relation to these two subheads and the Secretary of the Land Selection Committee, will the hon. Minister tell us about these two bodies, how they are functioning, and what they are really doing, what is involved?

The last question is on subhead 23, Wauna Land Development Scheme. The revised amount is \$70,000 but what is requested in 1977 is only \$50,000, a decrease of \$20,000. We would like to ask the hon. Minister whether that \$50,000 alone would be enough to carry the

scheme, to keep up the level of production and the level of work that the scheme has at the present moment.

4.50 p.m.

Supplementary to that, in respect of this Wauna Land Development Scheme, is the hon. Minister not aware that the palm threes which are being grown and which are intended to produce oil, are not thriving as far as I understand, as they should be? In fact, I seem to recollect somebody telling me that even the hon. Minister himself is under the impression that a different species of palm trees should have been used. My information is that they are not thriving as they should be thriving and that a different species is contemplated to replace what is being used at the present moment. If it is wrong I will accept the correction.

The last general remark is to reiterate what the previous speaker said. All these heads have suffered from decreases totaling \$609,200, that is, over half a million dollars. One would surely have to come to the conclusion that the level of efficiency of the programme in the Ministry must necessarily decrease. What does the hon. Minister have to say about this?

The Chairman: Cde. Roshan Ally.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Chairman, I would like to ask a few questions on page 78, subhead 13, Black Bush Polder Land Development Scheme. Is the Minister aware that the settlers at Black Bush Polder who stored their paddy at the Yakusari Mill, when they went there to process the paddy into rice were told that a part of their paddy could not be found and that up to today management has refused to pay settlers for their paddy? One of the settlers, Parbattie Boorday, has filled a writ against management of that mill.

The Chairman: Do not let us discuss that if a writ has been filled. Let us top right there.

Cde. Ally: I would like to ask the Minister whether it is the intention of the Ministry to compensate these farmers for paddy lost. I would also like to ask the Minister whether he is aware of the fact that the Yakusari Mill is out of working order at the moment. I hope he is also aware of the fact that when the Mibikuri Mill was broken sometime ago it took one year to put it back into working order. I hope the Ministry would see to it that the same thing does not happen to this mill because it is costing farmers a lot.

There is no other place of storage, therefore they will have to take their paddy to those broken mills and at the time of processing they will have to re-transport their paddy to the Mill that is working at the extreme and because the middle mill is strictly for the G.R.B. rice and not for farmers. They incur a lot of unnecessary expense.

There is another question I would like to ask the Minister. What has become of the tomato factory at Black Bush Polder? How soon will it be put into operation? Will the Minister say how much it is costing Government per year for its safe keeping? Will the Minister say whether it is the Government's intention to produce tomatoes for the mill? If so, how soon and where will the tomatoes be produced? Will the Minister say whether it is not bad planning to put a tomato factory at Black Bush Polder without looking at the possibilities of getting the necessary tomatoes for such a mill?

I would also like to ask the Minister whether he is aware of the fact that the burial ground at Black Bush Polder is some miles away from the residential area and the dams leading to the burial ground are in a miserable condition at the moment. Settlers are claiming that when the weather is wet it is impossible for them to take their dead there. I hope the Minister will look into this as early as possible and see that these dams are made into all-weather instead of fair weather dams.

Is the Minister aware of the fact that farmers at Black Bush Polder are not getting the necessary irrigation water when they request it, but management there is dictating for the farmers

and they supply water when they feel like doing so? Because of this, in most cases settlers at Black Bush Polder are facing a bad weather at the time of harvesting. I think this year it will be the same thing because farmers are still planning there.

I would also like to ask the Minister whether he is aware of the fact that although agricultural machines at Black Bush Polder are badly needed by the settlers there to cultivate or to harvest the crop they are hired by private farmers outside. There is corruption going on, this is bribery. As long as a man has money and he can shuffle money to the man in charge, the money is gone.

There is another very important thing there. I think Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud actually asked the question but not in connection with this. What is going on at the moment at Black Bush Polder? Machines are repaired today and tomorrow they are still there without parts. People are claiming that employees are going away with the parts and, therefore, you cannot keep the machines in perfect order at any time. I think these things should be looked into because they are costing people a lot of money.

I would also like to ask the Minister whether he is aware of the fact that farmers at Black Bush Polder go into the agriculture office at Black Bush Polder for inputs and cannot get. People from outside can go and get. This happened in my presence when farmers went there for fertilizers and they were told there were no fertilizers. The farmers said, “Mr. Ally, come a little this way and let us hid and you will see fertilizers coming out.” There were two cars there from No. 69 Village. There is no doubt about it. I saw it with my own eyes. The care were well filled with fertilizer. I think the Minister is aware of the fact that, according to technical advice from the Ministry of Agriculture, triple fertilizer should be thrown on the land before the planting takes place. This rice is about 6 weeks old and triple fertilizer cannot be had in the Black Bush Polder settlement. If this is the case the result will be that these people will never get the maximum out of the crop and when they fail to pay their rent the settlement will put pressure on these farmers. The farmers are doing everything possible but the management of

Black Bush Polder is putting pressure on the farmer sand making it difficult for them to pay the rent. I think these things should be looked into very urgently.

The Chairman: Cde. Minster, I would advise you not to answer the question dealing with compensation. Any answer will limply admission or no admission. If this is a matter for the courts, when that is determined the matter will be resolved. In replying please do not answer that particular question.

Cde. Nokta: Page 78, subhead 20, Resumption of State Lands Working Party Expenses. In the North West District, a handful of private owners have got in their possession, through loans from the Government, thousands and thousands of acres of land leased from the Government. It is a very cheap sort of lease. I have correspondence here which says 20 an acre. These people hold up these lands; they are not cultivating it and in some cases they are sub-leasing these lands. As a result of hoarding they are affecting production and now they are getting fantastic sums of money from people who need lands who have to go to them to rent these lands.

5 p.m.

We have a case where a person in Mabaruma – I won't call the name, I don't like to call names here but I can do that if you wish – had an arrangement with the proprietor there some time ago and he was farming some lands. Now he is called upon to pay \$20,00 an acre for this land. This land is leased by the government to an individual at 20 cents an acre and hen in now subleasing at \$20 an acre robbing a poor man of \$19.80. This matte has been already reported to the Minister of Agriculture and the Lands and Mines Department since June but to date we are not in a position to bet any firm decision from the Government as to what they will do in connection with this man who has so much land in his possession and is sub-leasing it. I want to urge this House and to urge the Minister that in the interest of production the Government must now take away these lands from these very big landlords who own these lands and give it to

people who will be in a position to cultivate. It is State Land and people who want it now have to go and sub-lease at \$20 an acre.

Subhead 21, Investigation of Applications for Lands. It is customary for a farmer who needs land, especially in the North West and the riverain areas, to go to the Lands and Mines Department and make what we call an application. He has to pay down \$19.50. But then for farmers to get an official lease from the Government, it takes a year of sometimes two years during which time the farmer is either forced to go and cultivate land at his own risk or he just site and waits. I wish to call on the Minister to see to it that when people apply for lands some devise is worked out so that they can have possession of the land urgently in order to produce.

I know of a case where a certain individual in the North West District applied for land and was given and within three months the lease was rescinded. That individual spent hundreds of dollars. Letters were sent to the Lands and Mines Department asking why was the land taken away and to date no replies have been received. I wish to ask the Minister to investigate this matter and see to it that these bottlenecks, which surely affect production are cleared off.

Now, Wauna Land Development Scheme. I invite the hon. Minister to go to the North West. I hope he will go soon. The Wauna Land Development Scheme is an area which is being run with very meager allocations from Government. The people there are not living; they are just existing. They have bad housing, very bad roads even to go into the farms. There is a lack of transportation to come to the market and generally, living conditions are bad.

Last year the sum of \$70,000 was allocated. This year only \$50,000 is allocated. I wish to tell the Minister that to reduce this amount to \$50,000 will be doing the people of Wauna a severe harm. I don't know whether he has anything against them, but to reduce this money to \$50,000 will cause settlers of Wauna to suffer immensely. I hope that he will find money in some other way to spent in that area so that the people can have work and be able to earn their living.

The Speaker: Cde. Minister

Cde. Kennard: Cde Chairman, there has been the general observation that the requested provisions under “Other Charges” on page 78 for Land Development Schemes, in particular, have been reduced. That is no. This is apparent I think, in all the Estimates for all Ministries. Ministries in 1977 have to operate with less funds for the well-known reasons which have been debated.

Having said that I would also like to make the observation that with respect to the Land Development Scheme listed in the Estimates, there is some compensation or some compensatory device to make good the reductions that are apparent under the Head Ministry of Agriculture because many of these schemes now benefit from works that are being done regionally by the regional Ministry. The benefit form funds that are provided to the Ministry of Co-operatives and National mobilization for community development and the like and they do benefit from the allocation to the Ministry of National Development. For example, just recently, some roads in Garden of Eden and those were referred to, were repaired using funds from the Ministry of National Development for the people’s benefit. So that all is not as perhaps dismal as it might appear at first sight, because these various schemes will benefit from funds that have been assigned to other Ministries involved in community development, land development and the development of people.

Some specific questions were asked about Cane Grove. Areas have been set aside and have been designed for housing and will be receiving the attention of the Housing Ministry so that that endeavour does not appear under the allocation of the ministry of Agriculture. Farmers have gone on poor soils, toxic soils like Cane Grove. In some cases these toxic soils still have the capacity to produce. Varieties of rice are now being involved that have great tolerance to aluminum toxicity and then there is the treatment of toxic soils, or the correction of toxic soils – and these are aluminum soils, heavy soils – by the application of super phosphate or the application of calcium carbonate. That treatment is well known and has been applied

successfully by enterprising farmers. I would advise any farmer who is farming on such soils to apply those remedies. We are asked about rehabilitation. The general drainage of Cane Grove is constantly being improved and this is highlighted by the pumps that are about to be commissioned at Cane Grove. This will greatly improve the drainage and the life of the farmers and productivity of their lands.

5.10 p.m.

The resumption of State lands. The allocation there is apparently less than for last year. That provision is for an on going exercise. The working party continually works on resuming State lands that are not being productively used of lands that are being misused. The working party of course has to get on the ground to do the necessary examination in order to resume State lands and this is an on-going arrangement. We are distributing State lands and have done so in fairly large quantities as I said during this debate and I have just confirmed it. From 1972 to 1976 the Ministry distributed 397,000 acres of State lands.

The suggestion has been made that perhaps in some areas we have distributed land of low productivity, bad soils as has been said. It is said that the Soesdyka/Linden soils are not particularly good. The fact is that while chemically the soils are less fertile than other soils, for example, the coastal soils, physically it is much better, that is to say it is free draining and therefore suited for a number of crops. I referred to grasslands a little while ago but we know that those lands are suitable for pineapples but most farmers in those areas, and this is the system which we recommend, should rear livestock whether it is poultry or pigs or cattle and if one went into the areas one would see most farmers rearing poultry. The soils are ideal for poultry rearing. What is more the farmers take manure that is derived from poultry for fertilizing the land. So that we have a rotation. We have a complementary type of agriculture, the soil benefitting from the production of poultry and the manure, correcting the nutrient status of the soil and lifting their fertility and making the soil suitable for the growing of vegetable crops or citrus which does particularly well in that area and other crops as well. So that these soils cannot be written off

because with good husbandry and with a proper rotation system involving livestock, whether it is poultry, pigs or cattle they can get very high yields and therefore a satisfactory income.

The suggestion that the Ministry should look at its inventories of machinery and equipment is a very good one, because we might be having a lot of equipment and we must find out how much and in what condition they are. I wish to say we have already done this exercise and a permanent arrangement, has now been established. The Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister has been put in charge of this special assignment to undertake a total inventory of all the equipment in government Ministries and agencies to evaluate their condition, their mechanical status and to ensure that maintenance takes place of a very high standard and quality. What is more, there has been set up under the Chairmanship of the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister a Committee which is called a machinery Procurement Committee under which no Ministry or corporation, including the Rice Board, can make a purchase of equipment without going through that Procurement Committee. The Procurement Committee evaluates the order, inspects so to whether really the order is necessary at all, or should be varied or a better type of equipment should be ordered and then either rejects the application or modifies the application or approves it **in toto** or subject to modification. So we have gone much beyond the idea of Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud with respect to this whole matter of taking a proper look at the equipment that we have, monitoring the maintenance and monitoring the whole question of ordering. This has already had very beneficial effects in terms of the quality of maintenance and in terms of saving very valuable funds on foreign exchange in the Government sector.

With respect to actual use of machinery, the Cde. Minister of State Cde. Nascimento, who is a qualified Engineer, has been having a look at the whole matter of machinery use, whether it be Land Rovers, Tractors, Buses, or lorries and the like and arrangements are being set up at the moment to ensure that those are efficiently operated, that there are central pools of chauffeurs and drivers and operators and that these people are well trained. A whole

programme of training has been designed and is in the course of implementation to ensure better machinery operation.

Insofar as actual operation in the field is concerned – I believe the remarks were made about favouring big farmers in some areas and giving the small farmer a hard time or jumping from here and reaping here or ploughing there, the apparent disorder – we acknowledge that complaints have been received with respect to some of these antics which take place in the country-side. I would be obliged that whenever any suspicious matter like this arises it should be immediately reported so that the necessary action can be taken. In reality however what also takes place is that the machinery must be used to the best advantage and if an operator and the supervisors find that a tractor or combine is working in one area but the crop is not fully ripe adjacent to where that equipment is working, quite naturally it must go to an area where the crop is ready to be harvested, where it is ripe. If it is working in one area where the soil is good but next door the soil is wet and soggy and impossible to plough it must move from there and go to better land so that the nation benefits from effective deployment to ensure maximum use. These are practical day-to-day things which occur and ought not to be misinterpreted as favouritism or something else. These things do take place. So we must bear the realities of the situation in mind before we pass judgement or condemn people without trial.

Observation have been made with respect to duty allowances and why the provision is more than last year. The reason is that we have now recruited more surveyors. The hon. Member Mr. Singh will be delighted to hear this because he was sorry to learn last year that we were having difficulties in recruiting land surveyors. Our staff has been increased, so that the duty allowances has gone up correspondingly.

The National Land Selection Committee operates as an impartial and objectives body to select the persons from among the applicants who should get land. The members are chosen from the community at large for their knowledge of land problems. The Committee comprises Cde. A. Wallace as Chairman, Pandit Deodat Sharma, Member, Cde. Aubrey Roberts, Member,

17.1.77

National Assembly

5.10 – 5.20 p.m.

the Chief Agricultural Officer or his representative, the Chief Land Development Officer or his representative, the Chief Co-operatives Officer or his representative, and the Chief Community Development Officer or his representative. This is therefore a very balanced Committee in terms of representation, and it enables them to look very objectively at the various applications which are received from cane farmers, rice farmers, ground provision farmers and all farmers. We need objective people without conflict of interests.

I take the point that State land that is being abused, misused or not used should be reclaimed by the State and we should not have these alleged bandits receive land and speculate or profiteer on the land at the expense of the small farmers. Our programme of land reform is going to include very severe action in all such cases for this new year, 1977.

5.20 p.m.

The reduction at Wauna is more apparent than real because Wauna has been selected as the area for this big expansion of the African Oil Palm. The Oil Palm is doing very well in that area, contrary to any rumours, and the people in wauna will be afforded a level of employment to which they have not been exposed in the past because Wauna will be the area for the African Oil Palm project to be run by the Guyana Agricultural Products Corporation. This will be financed to the extent of several million dollars. Actually, the first tranche of the loan that is expected from the Caribbean Development Bank is in the sum of \$2.8 million and when that becomes available you can see the economy of the whole Wauna area and the quality of life of the people in that area being steeply improved as a result of those activities.

Cde. Roshan Ally has asked what appeared to be about 50 questions which might be difficult to answer in the short time and I would strongly suggest to my comrade of the Corentyne that he should make full use of the Order Paper which allows periods when Ministers are asked questions rather than throwing questions at them in the tick of committee discussions such as this. I would assure him that each of his questions would then have the opportunity to

be thoroughly investigated and a detailed reply given for his benefit and for the benefit and information of Members of this House. I think it is a bit unfair to descend upon a minister with a rice bag full of questions of which there has been no notice and the advisers are not there to give the type of reply that I think would satisfy him. I would reply to some of the questions, omitting a reply to that about which I have been advised by our learned Cde. Speaker, the question of compensation for alleged lost paddy.

I do not know of the case at Black Bush Polder. I am not aware of that particular case where some farmer came and he did not get fertilizer but another man came with a bag or with a motor car and he got. If I get the particular day when it occurred, the name of the farmer, the car number, I would give what would be a reply. The Member deserves a reply. The Tomato Pilot Experimental Unit was set up at Black Bush Polder in order to afford farmers the opportunity of disposing of surplus tomatoes which they, the farmers, were growing. The factory is there and is ready to go into operation whenever there are surplus tomatoes produced by the farmers. The State has no intention to go into tomato production. We are leaving it to the farmers themselves. There are almost two thousand of them at Black Bush Polder with the “know-how” and the capacity to produce tomatoes and we, the Government, do not want to compete with those farmers. So, let them go ahead, produce the tomatoes; when it is in surplus, we will process the surplus because the factory is intended for that. But the farmers are finding it very profitable to just grow the tomato and to sell it fresh to the markets, Port Mourant, New Amsterdam and Georgetown and in some cases, are exporting to Nickerie bouchers and tomato and since they have these export opportunities they are therefore not supplying the factory. Whenever they so choose to make use of the ample facilities available at the factory, they will be brought into use immediately. It is there to avoid waste and rot and that is the only reason why it has been put there, all in the interest and in the well-being of the farmers of the area.

Cde. Harrypersaud Nokta my esteemed fellow farmer and friend from that great part of Guyana, North West Region - - [A Comrade: “He doesn’t belong there.”] I think he has had his question answered with respect to the prompt dealing of the resumption of State lands. The

Commissioner of Lands is sitting next to me and I am sure he has heard the remark that farmers must be dealt with promptly. I myself just recently visited the Lands Department and did make a plea that farmers must be given the leases promptly so that they can promptly return to the fields and produce. The Commissioner tells me that the whole processing of leases is being accelerated and that the Commissioner is prepared to grant permission for the occupation of land where a lease is going to take too long because a lease requires surveying on the spot, for example, which might take a long time. The land might be flooded or there might be a shortage of surveyors but once it is known that the land is not occupied by anyone else, permission for the applicant to occupy the land can be speedily given. So, he gets permission to farm while the method of awarding the lease is being looked at, that is, the land surveying, submission to the President for his signature and the like and I hope the farmer would take full advantage of this procedure of occupying lands by permission pending the issue of leases.

In addition to this, new technology has been introduced in the Lands Department where the coast and the interior areas of Guyana have been mapped by air photography and it is proposed to set up a system of land distribution based on the identification of land by air photography and a system of registration of land based on the use of air photograph. This is going to save many months, if not years spent in the issue of title since it would obviate putting people on the ground and surveyors plodding through the jungle to get land properly surveyed. This is the new technology from which farmers will soon benefit.

I think I have dealt with most of the salient points that have been raised by Members. I think I owe a reply about annual reports. I would say that this whole question of annual reports is being looked at in terms of Government in general. So much has been done in recent times and so much has been written in recent times that the volume of all this weighs very heavily on the printers causing these delays. I have been assured that the printers having dealt with priorities such as immediate legislation, printing of Budget and the like, will have the necessary time to proceed with the printing of annual reports and I trust that among these reports will be a report from the Ministry of Agriculture.

I think I also owe a reply about why the item Conveyance by Air from the Hinterland for hinterland produce appears not to be an allocation under agriculture as is customary. I wish to say that provision for such transportation has now been transferred from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Regional Development.

Head 29, Ministry of Agriculture – Lands and Surveys - \$2,550,457 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

5.30 p.m.

The Chairman: We have got one Head and two Divisions and we have one hour. I propose allocating 15 minutes to each Head. If any time is saved on one Head, we will carry it over to the other Head. I also propose giving the Opposition 7½ minutes and the Government 7½ minutes to reply. Pages 79 and 79A.

HEAD 30 – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE HYDRAULICS

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,893,284 for Head 30, Ministry of Agriculture – Hydraulics, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I would like to ask the Cde. Minister to tell us what is the position with respect to staffing under this Head, another important Ministry which deals with drainage and irrigation, subhead 19, Sea Defence – Maintenance and Operation, and subhead 20,

Maintenance of Drainage and irrigation in other than declared Areas. Could he name those areas for us, and explain the vote of \$125,000.

Under subhead 21, Maintenance of Trenches and Lands Georgetown, we are all aware that as soon as there is heavy rainfall Georgetown is virtually converted into a deep sea. In some of the suburban areas, Prashad Nagar and so on, people cannot step out of their homes. We would like to know, now that there is a provision, what will be done to stop this in the future. We talk about Garden City but as soon as there is rain it becomes something else.

Subhead 24, Special Grants to Drainage and Irrigation Board in Lieu of Areas Incompletely served in the Mahaicony/Abary Drainage and Irrigation Area. I would like to ask the Minister under that subhead – I am not dealing with the M.M.A., I will take it under the Capital head – what plan the Minister has for the Mahaica area. There is a pump at Cane Grove. What central plan has he, since the Mahaica will not be served by the M.M.A., for Mahaicony because it is only when Phase I of the M.M.A. is completed that Mahaicony can be served. So until the next three or four years the farmers will have to suffer, both Mahaica and Mahaicony. Those are all the questions I have.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister

Mr. Kennard: We acknowledge that there are vacancies in the Hydraulics Department and we have been finding difficulty in recruiting qualified people to the posts. At the moment we are recruiting four Guyanese who have qualified with the appropriate qualification but we are supplementing the lack of candidates to fill vacancies by engaging consultants to work in the Ministry of Hydraulics. We have at the moment three firms of consultants at work to give engineering designs and engineering advice and the like and to supervise construction work.

Subhead 20, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation in other than declared Areas, name the areas. Those areas are other than declared areas. The drainage is, of course, all along the coast of Guyana as the expediency and the emergency would dictate. In the detailed programme of work for the Ministry this year, some of these areas are mentioned and they include such areas as Hogg Island, which is outside of the normal areas, some parts of Leguan and other parts of Wakenaam.

Linked with the question on the Georgetown area, we are, of course, improving the drainage for the Georgetown area and the lower East Coast by putting in the additional pumps which we see being installed at the moment, one at Bel Air, for example, a very large pump which will give effective drainage to the people in the suburbs of Georgetown, the areas on the East Bank of Essequibo, for example, near to Maripa, Bonaskia, Hubu, which will benefit from this provision this year as indeed on the Corentyne, the Crabwood Creek area, Port Mourant backlands. These are just examples of the many areas which will benefit from that particular vote.

What plans do we have for alleviating the problem at Mahaica and Mahaicony with drainage this year while awaiting the start of the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Project? We are continuing to rehabilitate the existing drainage systems in the Mahaicony area. We are going to redig canals that have been slit up in the Mahaicony area. We cannot go into the lower Mahaicony River, deep into the heart of the Mahaicony River. Unfortunately, that will have to await the mahor Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary project but around the existing empolder we have already begun to re-excavate the drainage trenches and this should give some relief as would the Cane Grove pump give relief to the Cane Grove area. But in the river itself, apart from assisting the farmers to empolder their lands through the loan of draglines and the loan of Hymacs and giving the additional assistance of funding that excavation through the Agricultural Bank so that farmers or groups of farmers can empolder their lands, erect mini-empolders, the major command works must await the full Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary \$90 million project. But the

17.1.77

National Assembly

5.30 – 5.40 p.m.

farmers will get loans through the Agricultural Bank for mini-empolders. They will get the loan of Hymacs and draglines from the Ministry, and in the areas nearer to the road, we are rehabilitating existing drainage systems of villages.

Head 30, Ministry of Agriculture – hydraulics - \$2,893,284 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: pages 80, and 81, Division XIII, Ministry of Agriculture.

DIVISION XIII – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$14,689,000 for division XIII, Ministry of Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud.

5.40 p.m.

Cde Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde Chairman, I am really disappointed in this Head because this capital expenditure Head shows a reduction from \$42,557,650 in 1976 to \$14,689,000 in 1977. This is the Head that deals with a number of things. In fact, as can be observed from the Estimates itself, diversification has no vote. There are many other important items which have no vote. This has not been a case of pruning, this has been a case of no provision. I cannot personally see any serious Minister of Agriculture not fighting the Minister of Finance to ensure that there is provision so that what he has written in a recent booklet, just received, can become a reality.

Cde. Chairman, the 1966-1972 Development Programme was put aside and you will remember what the then Minister, Henry Thomas, said. But then 1966-1972 Programme has not been achieved.

I went to the National Exhibition. I remember the officer who was demonstrating the M.M.A. Scheme looked very well. It was well demonstrated and the officer obviously has competence. I asked a question then and I will ask it here in a \$19 million project that is so vital for agriculture, referring specifically to M.M.A., the provision at the end of last year was not more than \$10. When we look at this year's Estimate we see calls for \$3 million specifically. Has the loan been approved? When will the specific amount be given to the officers concerned to carry out the project? It is specific and has not been received. The possibility exists that they will not get it until November 1977. I hope this is not the case. If this is so, it means this project will be further delayed.

I have been constant advocate for this project and I really cannot put it down because of the thousands of acres that can come under cultivation and the large number of families that can be benefitted. Hence, I would like the Minister of Agriculture to tell us what is happening there.

Intercropping. I am talking to a Minister who knows. I personally have not been able to see whether, among the coconut trees, any intercropping going on in any part of the country. There is some diversification, but has the Minister considered things like channa, mittai and mung beans? We have shown the capacity to produce these. There might have been some consideration but we want to see greater acceleration.

The point I am making is that the Estimates don't show the seriousness of the implementation of the policy because even if you have investigated and there is potential – and I know there is because, having read these reports, I am not without knowledge. Why is there no move up to now? We do not want another Mittelholzer. We want reality. Every Guyanese, whether he is in the Opposition or in Government must be concerned with food because we want

to survive and if the nation is allowed to go without the necessary protein and what have you, what will we have left? With all the substantial votes put in the National Service, People's Militia and Defence, those men will not have the endurance and the physical capacity to fight against what we wish them to fight against if that time ever comes in this country. It looks clearly to me that it is this segment of our country that must be nurtured and served fully. Even if the pruning knife reaches everything else it must not reach to the extent where there is no provision at all in so many significant and important areas.

Talking about pumps, there is the Cane Grove Pump. But the point I make is that the government has said that pumps would have been in other areas. The Minister might care to name the other areas because the areas listed in the 1972-1976 Development Programme are Tapakuma – 8 pump units, Haslington/Belfield – 4, Cane Grove – 5, Sheet Anchor – 4, Bloomfield/Hogstye – 2, Black Bush 10. This is from the Development Programme unless this is wrong. The amount suggested was \$15 million. We have not really gone 50 per cent of that. At this time I am talking only of pumps and let me tell those who do not understand agriculture that the pump can only be utilized in so far as excess water is controlled. It is a two-way stream. We are talking about irrigation. Right now there is a water crisis on the Essequibo Coast. I spoke to one of the biggest farmers this morning – the Minister knows whom I am talking about – and he confirmed that there is a water crisis. The people cannot get water now and they are suffering. So we want development in drainage and irrigation to see how they go together.

The Chairman: Two minutes more.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: the pump cannot do everything. It is a question of conserving water. The Minister probably will be obliged to tell us what has become of the Canje Scheme. He may be obliged to tell us what has happened with the Boerasirie scheme. Between Ruby and Bonasika, we have lands. These are areas where, in fact, you have got some substantial work relating to drainage and irrigation down there.

Let us talk about the votes for sea defence. There has been a cut and, in fact, the Minister cannot justify the sum of \$3 million under subhead 44, Sea and River Defence. The amount of \$5 million was provided in 1976 and \$2 million in 1977. Look at the number of plots. All of these would be affected. What of the Phoenix koker? I know you have done some work there but there are other areas in other parts of the country and this vote is a scandalous amount in sea defence. Imagine we have reduced the vote in a country like this. The amount of \$5 million, in my view, was not adequate last year and this year we have brought it to the shameless amount of \$2 million. Hence, in view of all that appears very clearly on paper here, we see that Government cannot justify its seriousness to really affect water control.

The Minister talks of good husbandry. Water control and good husbandry are prerequisites to successful agricultural development and growth in this country. It is not on paper on this occasion. We want to see it not only on paper but also executed. Then and only then will we reach that point of food sufficiency. Then and only then we can justify that this is the bread basket of the Caribbean. It is and it can be, but there is need for serious approach, planning and policy in this area of our economy and surely we can make it a success. At the moment I cannot see it as I look at the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh, you will have three minutes, regretfully.

Mr. M. F. Singh: I am not even need that. Page 80. I will be very short. Subhead 5, Guyana School of Agriculture. The amount of nearly \$1 million was spent last year. At least it was revised and we know that the hon. Minister did tell us that this school has doubled its intake. From the point of view of what was materially done, could the hon. Minister say what this money was spent on? Is it for expanding buildings? What the position is and will the quarter million dollars being requested for this year be enough to complete this expansion programme there?

Subhead 30, Veterinary Diagnostic laboratory. I remember I raised this last year when the sum of \$½ million was approved in the 1976 Estimates. We see this has been revised to \$60,000. Obviously, not much work was done. The legend states here: “To complete a building for the veterinary laboratory. Canadian grant.” I would like to say that there seems to have been some difficulty in getting this project off the ground. I think this was first said in December 1975 and the same words used. Have we actually started the construction of this building? What is the problem here and where will this building be constructed.

5.50 p.m.

In respect of subhead 37, Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary scheme. I would like to support what the last speaker said and ask for a progress report on the M.M.A. Scheme because we seem to be making progress very slowly.

In respect of subhead 43, Purchase of Equipment. Could we have some details as to the equipment to be purchased with \$1 million. In respect of subhead 44, Sea and River Defence (Force Account) I would really like to make some additional points.

The Chairman: I am afraid you won't have much time on that.

Mr. M. F. Singh: This cannot be enough for the simple reason that nothing has been voted on page 83 of this Estimate for the Second Sea Defence Project. The Second Sea Defence Project entails an IBRD loan and if we look at last year we will see it was at the level of nearly \$3.7 million and it was marked “To provide for the construction of Georgetown Seawall Slipway and outfall channel”. The hon. Minister said last year that the tenders for the slipway and outfall channels had been invited. We know that has been done. It was asked if contracts have been awarded for them. Where is the money that will be used to give contractors to do this work? None is here and it cannot be met from this vote. I say so because, as the last speaker said, it is not even enough to do the ordinary work elsewhere. What is going to happen to the sea defence

programme on the East coast where at high tide the sea water comes over and floods the road? Where will they be deployed? Have they been retrenched already? I am a very worried about sea defence programme. Nothing has been voted for that. Where will the money come from to complete it and not only to complete this one but for all the other sea defence works all over the country?

The Chairman: Cde. Rayman. Page 80 subhead 41, Miscellaneous Works and Equipment. Heavy rainfall in 1976 destroyed access dams making them impassable and prevented farmers from ingress and agrees to their cultivations. Could the Cde. Minister state whether these dams were repaired and where?

Page 81 subhead 53 Loans to Guyana Rice Board. The rice mill at Burma was completely destroyed by fire in 1976. Could the Minister state whether it was insured and whether a new mill has been installed?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Kennard: Cde. Chairman, how many minutes please?

The Chairman: 10 minutes.

Cde. Kennard: The General reduction of the votes on this page is – I am repeating myself – a reflection of the austerity measures and the fact that we have got to be more self-reliant in some respects, including the capital works under land development. We have got to be more self-reliant in some cases, to mobilize the people to involve themselves in additional self-help work; to accomplish this work. That is the philosophy behind the reduction in Capital Provision under land development within the general scope of the financial constraints.

Now with respect to subhead 5 “Guyana School of Agriculture” which has been reduced this year, the member asked what was the sum of nearly one million dollars spent on in 1976. We spent it on more laboratories, more teaching facilities, a new dormitory building, a new food technology building and so on. A visit to the school would show the substantial works that were done last year. Those works should cope with the increased intake of students in 1977 hence the reduction in the Capital Provision.

Subhead 30, Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory. The foundation work for this laboratory has begun. It is being sited at Mon Repos. The architectural drawings have now arrived. As you know, this laboratory is being funded from a Canadian grant and there was difficulty in the release of funds under that grant last year but the sums have now begun to flow and we trust that the work will be expedited.

On the whole question of sea defence and reduction in this vote, there is an exercise that is taking place right now of a general review of the financial provision under sea defences. At the same time, I wish to say that some of the works which were in hand last year are now completed as a visit to the seawall would show. And in some areas on the Essequibo sea defences were completed last year and, in any event, a lower level of expenditure would have taken place for 1977. The East Coast will be completed.

There is a general review taking place at the moment with respect to the financial provision. As you know, with sea defence like national defence, as I said before, it is difficult to forecast to the actual decimal point what is the financial requirement. I trust that the review will give us the tools to do the job as necessary.

Much has been spoken of the M.M.A. Project during the debate. I find it difficult to add to what has been said. But funds should begin flowing from the Inter-American Development Bank so as to make what has been a dream for many a year into a reality. Pumps are being installed. In some areas since this pumping scheme was designed, there has been additional

engineering surveys which have reduced the need to have pumps installed in all areas which were originally intended. Some of these areas it has now been discovered, could well be drained by gravity. So there is some variation. But for 1977 we shall be installing two pumps at Onverwagt; and two pumps at Gibraltar in the Corentyne Area. Pumps are being installed to assist the Tapakuma project as well as part of the whole Tapakuma scheme. A large number of pumps will be installed there during this year.

Diversification and Development of Agriculture. The deletion of the provision is because of financial constraints. Diversification is being achieved by assigning the production of various crops to Corporations such as the Guyana Agricultural Products Corporation, and the National Service. GUYSUCO, I am pleased to say, will not be a sugar corporation but will be producing other crops in rotation with sugar cane and also would be involving itself in fish culture to make more fresh water fish available. So that the end product of diversification would be achieved in terms of more peas including mung beans and, dhal being available to the population by sectoral diversification techniques. Farmers are being encouraged at the same time to involve themselves in rotation. For example, the rotation of rice for some areas is possible and the coconut farmers are constantly advised to intercrop their coconuts with the necessary things like ground provision, peas, beans and the like.

These, within the limited time available, are my comments on the general observations made. **[Applause]**

6 p.m.

May I quickly just answer the last question by Cde. Rayman. During the flood, dams were indeed destroyed and it was difficult to get into farming areas. We were in an exercise for the last five months, leveling, grading, bull-doing dams and we have completed the bull-doing and grading of over 101 miles of land benefiting some 220,000 acres. The mill at Burma was destroyed by fire. I am pleased to say it was insured and we expect to collect some \$1.2 million

of insurance for the mill that has been destroyed. Two mills are being installed there, one to be installed by the end of March and the other mill by the end of June with a capacity of over 2,000 bags of rice per day.

Division XIII, Ministry of Agriculture, \$14,689,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: page 82.

**DIVISION XIV – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
IBRD/IDA PROJECTS – LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,600,000 for Division XIV, Ministry of Agriculture –IBRD/IDA Projects, Livestock Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, subhead 1, on Ranch Investment, the Minister can probably tell us where this development will take place, Loans for Ranch Investment. I want to ask specific questions. Has the Government totally abandoned the idea of coastal development for dairy farming? The other question I would wish to ask comes under Development Studies, subhead 4. I think there is some study with respect to converting our molasses to petrol. I wonder if the hon. Minister would tell us, if this is true, what progress is being made, how economical it would be and when a start will be made. Of course, you have got Versailles Estates taken over by Government and of course that can be an area for operation. I think if there is exploration, we heard that from the Minister of Mines, if there are studies along these lines for the conversion of molasses into fuel- we know we used to make alcolence in the old days – the very popular surgical spirits will take its place, but we can revert back to our own production of these things and surely it will be welcomed. Probably the Minister would like to tell us something on that.

The last question is on subhead 4, Development Studies. Is foreign exchange involved. We are cutting on vital services and we are now going to import buffaloes. From where will we import the buffaloes? If we are importing, how much will it cost and where will they be kept? The legend states: “To provide mainly for the purchase of buffaloes for development. I.D.A. credit.” Whatever it is, loans or credit or grants, or what have you, it is the list of priorities I am talking about, whether it is so vital and necessary for us to at this time of austerity. The Minister has just concluded that it is because of this is a year of constraints that so many other significant areas have been affected. Why should we bother with buffaloes at this time. But we want for the purpose of information, we are without information. Can the Minister answer?

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, page 82, subhead 1, on Ranch Investment. I note that the whole of this \$2,371,000 is for specific finance. The legend states: “To provide for long term sub-loans for on ranch investment. I.D.A. credit.” I presume this is a specific programme in respect of the livestock development project. Am I right in saying that this is the project in which private ranchers and private ranches are involved. If this is so, how many private ranchers or private ranching companies are involved in this and to what extent are they receiving assistance under this project? To what extent is Government spending monies out of this for Government development as distinct from private sector development?

The Chairman: Cde. Nokta.

Cde. Nokta: Cde. Chairman, page 82, subhead 1, on Ranch Investment. I wish to ask the Minister if he is aware that in the Rupununi District it has been reported that vacqueros from Brazil are chasing Guyanese cattle across the Border to Brazil. Is he aware that this can be a dangerous trend because horses that come across to chase the cattle can bring across foot and mouth disease. Secondly, some time ago we were told by a former Minister of Agriculture that

we were going to rear manatee to clear the trenches, now we are hearing about buffaloes. I would like the Minister to tell us where will we keep these buffaloes?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Kennard: Cde. Chairman, on the question of dairy farming, the general policy is that on the Coast where, as I said, there is this intense pressure of population of land, and intense competition for land, the priorities are people first, crops second and livestock third. Having said that, it is the policy to encourage on the Coast individual farmers and farm families to keep a restricted number of cattle on their farms and to grow fodder for those cattle so as to meet their own needs for milk, the needs of their villages and communities and to sell the surplus to Georgetown.

But the major dairy development will take place away from this highly populated Coast where land for dairy farming is scarce and where farmers prefer to grow crops whether it is sugar or rice instead of keeping cattle. It is a move into the intermediate savannahs which will be connected up by roads to bring milk for consumption quickly into Georgetown, Linden and elsewhere. At the same time with the M.M.A. project developing, large areas have been set aside for dairy cattle farming between the Berbice River and the Mahaica River to be pursued on a small farming basis. That in a broad out-line is the general dairy plan.

Buffalo is part of the programme. In some countries they are finding that the buffalo is now so highly developed by scientific breeding and husbandry that it produces as much milk as the dairy cow. Brazil has done a tremendous job with dairy buffaloes which give as much milk as the best dairy cattle. Some people are crossing the buffalo and the cow in order to produce a new type of animal. We have imported 200 head of buffalo from Australia which we now have located at Ebini, Mara and Mon Repos. They are doing exceedingly well, they are more tolerant to the rugged conditions, and resist ticks and some diseases to which cattle are prone. We do

feel that there is a place for the buffalo, whether it is the beef buffalo or the dairy buffalo, in Guyana as indeed this animal has succeeded in many tropical countries.

With respect to the livestock project we have approved so far seventeen loans but have issued ten loans to private ranchers in the Rupununi and along the Coast. We have issued loans to two co-ops and have pending an extra five loans to two beef co-ops making it seventeen loans in all amounting to well over \$3 million.

6.10 p.m.

Reports about cattle rustling in the Rupununi are not new. People have been rustling all over the world ever since cattle came on earth. The people in Hollywood have made a lot of money in their various films about cow-boys and rustling in their pictures in the early days but it appears that we have not reached the proportions and the sophistication of rustling as they have in those wild west countries. There is a little “thieving” here and there in Guyana in cattle, which incidents are constantly reported to the Police who are doing a good job and as we know, many convictions of these rustlers have taken place. We are taking increased vigilance in the Rupununi to prevent any possibility of Guyanese cattle being driven over the Brazilian border by any rustler, be the Brazilian or Guyanese. The Police are taking the necessary action.

Experiments are proceeding with the possibility of making alcohol that could be mixed with gasoline for use in driving various engines and in order to reduce our importation of petroleum. It appears that one can use up to 20 per cent alcohol mixed with 80 per cent gasoline without doing severe damage to an engine. Beyond that you have got to redesign your engine or else there is some problem that would arise. We are working closely with the Brazilians who have this as a commercial, on going and industrial product. They do products alcohol there for blending with gasoline to provide power for their motor cars and trucks and the like. We have got information on the design of suitable plant and shortly we will be sending a small team from the Guyana Liquor Corporation into Brazil to see how far their work has gone and with a view to

seeing whether we can apply the results of their work to Guyanese so as to cut down on our imports of petroleum which is ever-increasing in price.

We are also doing work on the production of yeast. The Liquor Corporation is looking at yeast to reduce the importation of yeast for baking purposes and yeast for feeding to man and for feeding to livestock, using molasses as the raw material. Finally, we are already making a substitute for the imported food seasoning such as Ajinomoto that is a proprietary name for mono sodium glutamate that is what is called Ajinomoto and all the various other names and it is present also in marmite. Those experiments have been successful. Guyana Pharmaceutical Ltd. has already started some pilot production of a locally manufactured marmite based on fermentation of molasses.

Division XIV, Ministry of Agriculture, IBRD/IDA Projects – Livestock Development Project, \$2,600,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 84.

**DIVISION XVI – MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE – IBRD/IDA PROJECTS
TAPAKUMA IRRIGATION PROJECT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,500,000 for Division XVI, Ministry of Agriculture – IBRD/IDA PROJECTS – Tapakuma Irrigation Project, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, subhead, 1, Civil Works. I would ask the Minister to tell us where this sum of \$3,300,000 will be spent. This is of course, a loan. What areas are listed for Drainage and Irrigation. It is good to telegraph these messages because the Minister was talking about empoldering lands. Some time ago when it was said that the

M.M.A. scheme would be implemented, the people did a lot of that and they are waiting up to now. I hope that this would not be the position because we know internal work has to be done and that sort of thing. The priority ought to be clear and planned so that they know exactly where they are going and so that the people know what work could be done and in what areas.

The other question is on subhead 2, Land Levelling and Clearing. I want to ask the Minister if in that vote something would be done positively. I have been talking about Boeraserie and I think he knows what I am talking about; drains and trenches have been covered with bushes and that sort of thing and you can put a large number of families there. You have land there; your Committee can go into operation immediately to consider applications from West Demerara, East Bank Essequibo areas and you will be able to relieve so many things including unemployment. I want to know if the Boeraserie scheme would be benefited from this vote under subhead 2. I think those are all the questions I want to ask under this head.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Subhead 1, Civil Works. I presume that these civil works have to relate directly to what is listed on top, Tapakuma Irrigation Project and that it has to do with the Tapakuma Project and nothing else. I note that in the Approved Estimates for 1976, \$1.4 million approximately was voted but this has been revised to a mere \$39,000. In 1975 December when we were discussing the 1976 estimates, I made a note that the Minister was very enthusiastic that in 1976 we would be pushing ahead with this Tapakuma Project and to quote him, we would be bringing 56,000 acres under improved drainage. He also spoke about the Cozier Canal and Somerset and Berks and 6,000 other additional acres, but, as usual, we seem to be making haste very, very slowly in these Irrigation Projects. That is what worries me. In the vital areas of agriculture, these vital irrigation projects, we seem to be making haste very slowly. The legends are similar to what appeared in last year's Estimates: "To provide for drainage and irrigation." "To provide for the purchase of materials and equipment." The same thing appears. Why is it that we cannot get ahead with these projects? And the Minister was so enthusiastic last year! Why is it when we anticipated spending \$1.4 million, we spent only \$39,000. Is there some particular reason why these works cannot get off the ground? Will the

17.1.77

National Assembly

6.10 – 6.20 p.m.

hon. Minister tell us what are the prospects for this year? Will we come back next year with a revised figure of \$39,000 instead of \$3.3 million? What will be done this year as far as the Minister knows? Will we really get on with the job? In what specific areas will work be done on this entire project?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Kennard: Cde. Chairman, the works planned for the Tapakuma area this year involve improving the irrigation facilities between Zorg-En-Vlist and the Cozier Canal. It includes also the installation of an extra pump at Dawah.

6.20 p.m.

With respect to Boerasirie which is not really catered for under this vote, but to answer the question, we propose this year to continue the excavation of the collector and the construction of intake regulators in the Potosi/Kamuni area, to excavate subsidiary drains, and to do some land clearing in order to settle people there. I wish to assure the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh that we are going to push ahead this year at Tapakuma. The contract will be let for the actual civil works in June. As you know it has to be advertised internationally under the World Bank rules. It will be let in June and the works thereafter should go full steam ahead.

*Division XVI, Ministry of Agriculture – EBRD/IDA Projects Tapakuma Irrigation Project
- \$5,500,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.*

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, this evening we will do the Minister of Education. The Sitting of the House is suspended until 8 p.m.

17.1.77

National Assembly

6.20 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 6.20 p.m.

8 p.m.

On resumption - -

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Page 30, Head 8.

HEAD 8 – TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION

Question proposed that the sum of \$118,916 for Head 8, Teaching Service Commission, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 8, Teaching Service Commission - \$118,916 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 129 to 132, both pages inclusive. Head 42, Ministry of Education and Social Development.

HEAD 42 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$13,335,175 for Head 42, Ministry of Education and Social Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: Page 130, subhead 1, item (45), Community High School Supervisor. Earlier today I was listening to the Minister of Agriculture and, if I understand him correctly, he mentioned that thirteen community high schools are expected to be established. When I looked

at the Estimates, items (45), I noticed that nine supervisors will be employed to supervise thirteen community high schools. This appears to me a little excessive for thirteen community high schools and I would like to ask the Minister of education to say whether thirteen community high schools will indeed be established and whether it is absolutely necessary to have 9 supervisors.

On page 131 at subhead 13, Adult Education Classes, I would like to ask the Minister of Education if she can explain how extensive this project is and if she is in a position to say how many adults are engaged in such classes, whether there is strict supervision over the conduct of these classes, and what other plans the Ministry has for the promotion of adult education classes since she considers it to be extremely important in the promotion of mass education of the Guyanese people.

Subhead 17, Contribution to the University of the West Indies, I would like to ask the Minister of Education what benefit do we get from this contribution, what disciplines our students study at the University of the West Indies. Here I would like to recall what the Minister of Health said, namely that, of the thousands graduation in the field of medicine over the years, the region only benefited from about 300 doctors. It would be interesting to know what percentage of this three hundred we have had and whether the Minister does not consider that a review be made on this contribution or to see whether it would not be more feasible for us to institute those facilities or those disciplines in our own university and promote them here in Guyana. This we feel might be less expensive.

8.05 p.m.

Subhead 20, Grants to Voluntary Organisations. We would like to ask the Minister how many organizations have been receiving grants, what these organizations are and what are these voluntary organizations promoting.

Subhead 22, Grants to University of Guyana. I would like to use the opportunity to ask the Minister what is being done or how are students today being recruited to the University of Guyana. To my mind there seems to be quite a lot of complications at the moment because a student desiring to go to university is required to take an entrance examination but success in that entrance examination does not automatically mean that that student can enter the University of Guyana. What is happening now – and we would like the Minister to say whether we are right – is that that student, before he or she can enter the University of Guyana, would have to compulsorily agree to volunteer to do National Service and would have to do National Service satisfactorily.

The process does not stop there. Having attended National Service, that student is required to take an oath of secrecy and to take a further oath to say that he submits himself to military discipline. A violation of any one of these stages would mean that that student will be excluded from attending University.

Obviously this long drawn-out procedure is very complicated and I do not think it is the intention to use these strictures imposed upon students aspiring to higher education, strictures which pose barriers to our young people who want higher education. If these things are going to prevent them from acquiring higher education, then in the final analysis it will be Guyana that will suffer and our country will become poorer.

We think these barriers are a violation of the Constitution of Guyana and strike at the very root of the right of Guyanese to higher education. Already, we have seen the adverse consequences as a result of this procedure. The 1976-1977 academic year in-take at the University of Guyana shows clearly that a number of our students, particularly women, are prevented, as a result of these barriers, from entering the University of Guyana. This is clearly seen particularly in the faculty of Natural Sciences. We would like the Minister to say whether she approves of this procedure for student to go into the University of Guyana and in view of the great shortages of technical personnel, of teachers, in this country whether the Ministry would

not review its position on the issue of National Service as it relates to Guyana and whether, at this stage of such great shortages, the Ministry would not consider giving the certificates to the six students who were denied their certificates even though they graduated and whether it would not consider taking back these twenty odd students who were asked to withdraw from the University because they did not go to National Service.

Subhead 27, Contribution to Council of Legal Education. I would think that here the issue of free education again is focused. If my information is correct – I would like the Minister to say whether it is so or not – then the students who pass through legal education in Barbados and afterwards in Trinidad will have to take care of their own boarding and lodging costs and, in addition, they have to pay fees. I have noted here in the Estimates that there has been an increase in our contribution to the Council of Legal Education. If we want to be meaningful about free education, then I see no reason why that principle should not be extended to our students who have to study law outside of Guyana. They have very high expenses and it is only fair that the Ministry of Education should look into this question with a mind to helping these students to take care of some of their high expenses and to help them or assist them in paying the fees since these students when they come back most likely are going to give their services for the benefit and development of Guyana.

Subhead 29, Contribution to Caribbean Examination Council. I understand that the first exams are scheduled for 1979 but so far I do not know what subjects will be examined first. I would like the Minister to say what subjects are contemplated to be examined first and whether our P.T.A.s have been consulted on these subjects because we feel that parents should be made aware of matters which will affect their children. Students too should be made aware of what will happen in 1979 with respect to the Caribbean Examination Council.

We would also like to ask if there are any progress reports on this question and whether these progress reports can be made available to the public for study and whether the subjects that

they will be examining in 1979 would be recognised by private employers and will have international recognition and standing.

Subhead 33, Expenses – Emergency Teacher Education Programme. I would like to ask the Minister if she would kindly expand on this since we are not aware how this amount of money will be spent. We would like her to give us some details on this question.

Page 132, subhead 38, Overseas Examinations, Local Expenses. Here again the issue of free education comes to the fore. A student taking two subjects G.C.E. pays \$55.10. Two hundred students writing the G.C.E. examination will pay local fees of about \$1,800 and examination fees to the tune of \$24,500. We are in full agreement with the promotion of free education and on this subhead we would like to ask whether, in keeping with this principle, the Ministry contemplates assisting and defraying eventually, if not now the very exorbitant costs that these students would have to bear for examination fees, both local and foreign. I think the Cde. Minister will have sympathy with these things, particularly at this moment when we are facing an economic problem, when we have an austere budget. Such high costs would no doubt place greater burdens upon parents who have to take care of their children's examination fees and it is only fair to ask that these fees be subsidized and that the principle of free education be extended to this level also.

815 p.m.

Subhead 39, Contribution towards a dictionary of Caribbean English Usage. We would simply like to ask the Minister if she can inform us as to how far they have gone on this project of a Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage and how soon will we be able to examine such a dictionary?

Subhead 40, Talking about Education. We think that we should be able to spend less on talking about education and spend more on the practical task of implementing and carrying out our educational programme.

The Chairman: Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Page 131, subhead 12, Education of the Blind. We have been asked to vote \$2,900 this year and the Revised Estimate for 1976 was \$2,000. It is a small increase of \$900. Would the hon. Minister please tell us if we are still sending students to Trinidad to the School for the Blind for educational purposes and what is the standard used in the Ministry of Education with regard to trained blind personnel, whether they are trained here or in Trinidad or where have you. When blind persons come back to Guyana are we able to integrate them with the sighted people so that they can help contribute to the development of our country? Or are they just put into the Blind Institute to be another person to teach blind students how to weave baskets?

Subhead 22, Grant to University of Guyana. I give full support to what the previous speaker has said regarding National Service and personnel at the University of Guyana. We feel it is absolutely wrong to make that a condition of entry into the University. However, be that as it may, new students going into the University of Guyana are well aware of this. They have to sign a form which states that they undertake to do National Service. I really don't see the point of it because we are always told that the intake for National Service is more than they can cope with. The Government talks about humanitarian cases, its concern for people, there is this matter of those who last October could not get their certificates, those who previous to the introduction of the so-called "free education" were attending part-time classes. They paid their fees. It is not their fault that they are now getting free education. They have made sacrifices, are they to be deprived of this? They have given up a lot. Many of them have been working men and women who had to reorganise their homes, their families in order to go to the University. Are they so many that they should be deprived? It is not their fault that midway the

free education came in. The Government talks of humanitarian cases. Could the Minister not, on these grounds, consider doing something for these people?

Now we come to subhead 23, Grants to Necessitous Students. There has been an increase of just about \$2,000 because \$10,000 is being requested for these students. We have no quarrel about this. We are glad that the Ministry recognizes that there are necessitous students. This is where the business of free education is really a bit of a farce. It is all very well to say you go to school free from the Kindergarten to the University. Everybody knows that the child that comes from the home where parents can afford to get textbooks very often can afford to send to Barbados or Trinidad to purchase the books because we don't have them in Guyana. Much depends on whether the child comes from a home where it gets enough to eat, a balance diet, where it has proper conditions for study without being in an overcrowded room with perhaps one little light trying to study. Doesn't the Minister see that this talk of free education is a farce? There are always those who because of these other conditions will have the advantage over the child whose parents, through no fault of their own, are not in a similar position. Can the Minister say how they decide who gets these grants for necessitous students? What criteria are used? How do they decide who is a necessitous student and who is not?

Subhead 29, Contribution to Caribbean Examinations Council. The Minister said we would not be having the Caribbean examinations until 1978. She told us this last year; I have a note here. I understand we are going to have them in 1979. I believe the subjects are going to be English, Mathematics, Geography, Caribbean History and integrated Sciences. Would the Minister say if that is correct? If it is not correct, would she please correct me and would she please say if we will have these examinations in 1979. How far are we on the way to preparing the syllabus; in getting the people who will mark the papers, do the tests and so on. What is most important of all is this: will we have the textbooks in good time so that the children can have them to get ready to take these examinations in 1979?

Turning over the page 132 subhead 37 subhead 37, University Course for Teachers of the Deaf. There is a slight increase of about \$2,000. The legend says “Increased cost of course”. We have no argument about that. We never argue about money well spent in education. What we would like to know is how many persons are taking this course. How much longer have they got before they will complete the Course and when they are finished and trained where will they be posted?

Subhead 44, Contribution to the Institute of International Relations. In 1976 the Revised Estimate was \$69,372. This year we are asking for \$75,414. In view of the fact that all the Ministries are making every effort to cut down their expenses there must be some very good reason why this amount has gone up. Could the Minister tell us why and would she tell us how do we gain from this Institute of International Relations.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Chairman, page 130, item (37). I would like to ask the Minister if she is satisfied with the increase here as the legend says “There new offices created by Supplementary Estimates in 1976.” Is she satisfied that 11 officers here would be able to cope with the problems we have where the school welfare work is concerned. I raise the question because today we have such a big problem where a large number of children of school age can be found around cinemas and restaurants during school hours and, worse of all, nothing is being done in relation to that.

8.25 p.m.

I am wondering whether the Minister can tell us what work has been done over the past year in relation to this problem which, I am satisfied, is known to one and all. If work is being done, can the Minister tell this honourable House what progress is being made?

On page 131, subhead 16, Sports Training, can the Minister tell this honourable House if her programme for 1977 entails providing training officers in the various schools? From

information received there is a pile of sports gears in schools, particularly at the multilateral schools where there are no training officers to ensure that the sports equipment is being utilized. If my information is correct, can the Minister tell us what plans the Ministry of Education has for the year 1977. The Estimates do not reflect the personnel for such an exercise particularly in the multilateral schools.

Will the Minister tell this honourable House what work will be done, if they do not have as ports, officer responsible for such programmes if the Ministry intends some time in the very near future to have these appointments made. But I see the provision for 1977 is to be increased from \$5,000 in 1976 to \$10,000. Can the Minister tell this honourable House if she feels that that sum voted is adequate, knowing that sports training is vitally important for young people, that it would help them physically to develop as well as give them a better mind in relation to their work.

It has been observed not only in developing countries but particularly in socialist countries that a great deal of emphasis is placed upon this particular line of training at a young age. Could the Minister tell us whether the increase of \$5,000 is adequate to take care of this programme which is expected to be in the various schools with the exception, as I can see under other heads, of Queen's college and possibly Bishops' High School. I can see no increase under the other schools. Can the Minister tell us if this is adequate to carry out such a programme?

The Chairman: Cde. Willems

Cde. Willems: Cde. Chairman, on page 131, subhead 11, boarding and Lodging expenses, etc. for Amerindian Students attending Secondary Schools. Is the Minister satisfied that secondary school places are available for all children after leaving primary schools and that there is equal opportunity for children in secondary schools?

Cde. Ram Karran: Sir, a small point on page 129, item (5), Superintendent of Works II (Buildings). I just want to find out if the Minister is aware of the school that toppled at Hague and whether the Minister is not running or trying to run a parallel service with the Ministry of Works and Housing to have technical officers attached to his Ministry.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister

The Minister of Education and Social Development (Cde. Baird): Cde. Chairman, the first question on the appointment of nine supervisors for community high schools. I think this needs some clarification. Cde. Speaker, during this year we expect to establish twenty-five Community High Schools. I think it is important to inform this House that the Community High School programme is intended to complete provision for secondary education in this country.

I have to point out that secondary education is not so described merely because it is offered in a building designated a secondary school. Education at the secondary level may be provided in any convenient place. It is the programme that places the education offered at secondary level.

At this point I think it would be useful for me to point out that we are mounting Community High School programmes as fast as it is possible to place these programmes in specific schools. Until such time that it is possible to establish Community High Schools, such programmes will be implemented in the secondary departments of all-age schools. Programmes have been carefully planned and organized to promote the development of the kind of society we want to build, programmes that will produce the kind of people, the kind of attitudes which support the development of a socialist state.

The question referred to nine supervisors for thirteen schools. At the beginning of the plan, we started by establishing two pilot community high schools and we are increasing this number gradually. I think by the end of this year we should have at least a minimum of twenty-

five community High Schools established in the country, and all secondary departments of all-age schools will carry the Community High School programme.

Because of this, nine persons to supervise twenty-five Community High Schools and Community High School programmes in secondary departments of All-age schools will not be adequate, but we must remember that these nine supervisors are not operating on their own. The nine supervisors are working with education officers who are in the system. These will also be assisted by teacher educators in Teacher Training institutions. Teacher educators have a responsibility also for supervision of the schools. It is not a one-man show; it is a combined effort in which a number of people, including those who are developing curricula, i.e. curriculum officers, will go into these schools to see that the programmes are carried out effectively; so supervision will not be left to nine supervisors. Supervision is a co-operative effort.

Adult Education, how expensive is this project? I am pleased to say that the adult education programmes are implemented throughout the length and breadth of Guyana, e.g. Corriverton, New Amsterdam, North West, Ruimveldt. They encompass a wide variety of subjects or activities which will equip participants with the kind of skills required. In the past, adult education was restricted to activity for enrichment. Now it is a carefully structured operation in which we try to give specific skills required by the people who participate in adult education programmes, e.g., refrigeration, woodwork, home economics, welding, special classes in administration, statistics. I think adult education activities also give opportunity to those young persons who did not complete their formal schooling to continue. If you look in the Estimates you will notice some of the schools named, in which programmes are carried on, but programmes are offered in other schools particularly for the younger people, young people who might have left school at some time without getting the full benefit of the formal education system. Those young people receive further education in the school plant after normal school hours. These activities are regarded as “further education”, but some people prefer the term “adult education”.

Adult education is rally a part of the education system and is therefore supervised by the Ministry of Education and Social Development. We hold meetings from time to time to plan and to ensure that adult education programmes are related to the whole education system. So if one were to visit these adult education centres or to examine the programme he would find that to some extent it reflects what goes on in the formal system.

8.35 p.m.

I think the hon. Member requested to know, if possible, the numbers of people who were receiving further education; I think I have the number here: 4,951, as far as I am aware at the moment.

Subhead 17, Contribution to University of the West Indies. As we know, we are now not a contributing territory to the University of the West Indies because we have our national university but, we at the moment, contribute to 25 places at the University and we pay the economic cost, in library science, in law, in engineering, in medicine, in the professional education of teachers of the deaf. I think those are the subject areas to which we contribute. It is true that it might be in the long run, the ultimate, that the University of Guyana provide all the courses but we have to remember that we are part of the CARICOM group and that we have to consider very carefully the implications of separating ourselves from the University of the West Indies.

For the last six months of the year, there was a committee called the Inter-Governmental Committee which met, usually in Barbados to discuss ways and means of establishing or developing a Caribbean University system; this meeting was attended by Ministers of Education in the Caribbean and representatives of the University of Guyana. Guyana was represented at all meetings and contributed to the effort to develop a Caribbean University.

We looked into a lot of details, characteristics of programmes, whether the Universities in the territory were really contributing to national and regional development. We looked into details like the emphases of programmes – were they merely academic programmes or did they have their roots in the communities which they served. And so while ultimately more faculties and departments will be established at the University of Guyana, I think we should have a very long and serious look at whether or not it will be useful to us to do this.

We are very concerned that the courses offered here are relevant courses and meaningful courses. For example, in Medicine, we pointed out that if doctors were to serve the communities effectively and efficiently, it might be useful to consider not only having them do their internship at the end of their course in a hospital, but perhaps it would be useful for students during their periods of study, to do an internship or some sort of service in communities away from the centre so that they will have a chance to look at certain health and social problems and really begin to understand how people really live and appreciate what community needs really are. This is an example of the work being carried out in this sub-committee. There is a report which will be published and discussed at a meeting scheduled to take place shortly. Perhaps, at some other time it will be useful for me to give the House some information on this.

Now, coming to subhead 22, Grant to University of Guyana, I am going to respond to both the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva and to Cde. S.F. Mohamed. First of all, I want to say that every institution of higher learning has certain requirements for entry. At the University of Guyana the entry requirements are as follows: a minimum of 5 ‘O’ Level subjects and I should point out here that it is really a minimum. In the early days of the University, it was very easy to gain entry with a minimum of 5 ‘O’ Levels, but since the University has developed and has earned the confidence of the nation, you find that students who are better qualified seek entry to the University of Guyana, students with more than 5 ‘O’ Levels, and students with ‘A’ Levels.

There is an interview, and then there is an entrance examination. All these are relevant to entry because the 'O' Level examination, as an examination in itself, is only one form of evaluation; interviews are face to face and they give interviewers an opportunity to identify the desired qualities in potential students. Today it is accepted that prediction of success in University education is not related only to academic qualifications. There is the entrance examination which is structured to evaluate another dimension of the student behavior, to evaluate whether that student thinks creatively because potential to benefit from university education is related to ability to think creatively. Meaningful education is not a matter of acquiring a lot of information and churning it out. One has to be able to interpret information, to analyse information and to express a point of view, not just repeating what somebody else says. This entrance examination is supposed to do this, identify creative thinking in students. As far as I know, the entrance examination is now being reviewed to ascertain how valid it has been over a number of years, as a predictor of success in university education.

And then, finally, National Service is one of the requirements for entry to University. The students, as far as I know – I am not sure about the year groups – signed an agreement that they will go to the National Service. Now, National Service, as far as this is concerned, is regarded as a part of their education. It is not an unrelated experience because, as we know, it is an extension of the formal education system and serves different purposes. I am not talking about University entrants, but generally speaking, there are a number of young people who have not benefited from the formal education system and in that sense many of these young people, let us face the fact, are not prepared to earn a living, not prepared to contribute to their own and the country's development. National Service therefore gives them another chance. So, some people who did not benefit from formal education can benefit from National Service or should benefit from National Service. All others who go to National Service, whether it be a doctor, a barrister, a teacher, a surveyor or other citizen will benefit in this sense: They will be given an opportunity to observe and appreciate other people; it is from the opportunities to learn from relationships with others with differing backgrounds, that all of us here in this House can benefit from National Service.

8.45 p.m.

Attendance at National Service is one of the requirements of entry to the University of Guyana. As far as I know, the number of students at National Service doing a year's stint is 182, and those who are serving for shorter terms number 927. The number of students who did not graduate because of refusal to do National Service is five. The number of students who withdrew from the University of Guyana because of National Service, as far as I have been able to find out, is 22. They did not give National Service. It is important to point out that since it is a requirement, then whenever the National Service is completed students will graduate. My knowledge is that two of the twenty-two students will graduate because they have completed the requirement for National Service. Whenever the National Service requirement is met, other students will graduate.

All the people referred to by the questioner are still at the University of Guyana. They register every year. Some students are on four-year courses, some are on five-year courses. They might have finished two years for which fees were paid but they are now receiving education free and even before education was made free, which was very recent, it was very heavily subsidized because as you know students paid just a little over \$100. Many students at the University of Guyana, some of whom were doing shorter periods of National Service, contributed to national development activities. They were involved in other activities, and I think it is fair that if a person received his education at the expense of the State, at least he can contribute service in return. The important thing that we must note is that National Service gives orientation in a social climate in which one can develop positive social attitudes.

Some people who have been to National Service and many young people who are afraid of National Service have spoken to me and they have identified some of the things that they think will make them better people. They admitted that they did not understand certain things. During National Service they became more sensitive to other people's needs, and sympathetic to people's problems.

Now I turn to the Caribbean Examinations. The hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva indicated that I said in the House that the examinations will be held this year. The exams are scheduled for 1979. Both members were right when they said the subjects will be English History, Geography, Mathematics, Integrated Science, English, including English Language, and Literature.

At the moment these syllabuses have been referred to the different territories for their final vetting, after which the syllabuses will be put into schools in September 1977 to prepare for the examinations in 1979. A meeting of the sub-committee of the schools Examinations committee will be held in Barbados in the middle of February to appoint examiners who will approve of the draft syllabuses to finalise the arrangements for the 1979 examinations. This is definite.

I think I should tell this House that in the Caribbean we were faced with a serious responsibility to ensure that the Caribbean examinations will be valid for our purposes, that they will be useful examinations. One of the problems is personnel. We have to train examiners. These are special skills and people must be trained to carry out these examinations. These were some of the constraints – to provide personnel who can do the job and who will not perform negatively. To answer the criticism about text books, I have to point out that it is true that these examinations took a long time to come into being, but you know that before a book is printed a lot of work has to be done to produce the material which forms the content of the book. This is what was happening all these years. Educators were developing curriculum material, which is not necessary material bound in a hard cover. What is important is that we now have the content, the method of teaching based on surveys research, to ensure relevance to our circumstances. Some of the material will be in book form and will be in the hands of the people who will teach. There is also provision for providing that material to the students so there should be no fear.

I turn to the Emergency Teacher Education Programme. That I think is subhead 33. That subhead is treating with a very important aspect of the educational system, preparing the people who will teach classroom teachers. It is really for the teacher educators. In the past, it was the practice to identify anyone in the teaching profession who was supposed to be able, or brilliant as we described them, to teach teachers, but we now have moved to a position where teacher educators have to be prepared to perform the task of teaching teachers. Teacher educators have to learn how to teach teachers so that any person identified to work in teachers' colleges, has to do a period of orientation and training. So there are two kinds of people who are eligible to teach teachers – persons who are already able by virtue of their previous training, and those who have the potential but must go through an orientation course. An evaluation of their response to such a course will determine eligibility for the important task of teaching and training teachers. The designation Emergency Teacher Education Programme indicate the urgency to provide a large enough number of teacher educators to cope with programmes for training classroom teachers.

I would like to point out that training teachers does not only go on in institutions. It is an on-going operation carried out in available buildings at convenient periods. Throughout any one year one will hear about teachers being called in for workshop sessions for making teaching material a very important activity because we no longer rely on "talk and chalk". Material has to be prepared, people have to plan teaching approaches, content has to be tested and restructured, indigenous materials to make equipment for teaching has to be identified and tested. Teacher training reflects all such activities which give trainees insights into how to teach, what to teach, how to ensure effective teaching and learning.

8.55 p.m.

Now, to answer the question on the education of the blind. It should be looked at in two ways. There is the Blind Institute for which money is allocated. I am not sure whether the question was related specially to blind adults or blind children but I will explain that the David

Rose School for the handicapped caters for children handicapped by deafness, mental retardation and blindness. I think I have said in the House before, that over the years it has not been easy to identify blind children for educational treatment at David Rose School. Children who are handicapped by blindness, for some reason, do not come forth as readily as those handicapped by deafness and mental retardation. We have had surveys with little success. At the school, however, there is one person trained to teach the blind. One other person has been identified for training.

With regard to blind adults who are trained at the Blind Institute, these serve the community in various ways. Some serve at the Institute teaching, reading A-B Braille and craft work. One person I think is a Telephone Operator and two others are piano tuners. In other countries Piano tuning is usually one of the occupations chosen by persons handicapped by blindness.

The training of teachers for the blind could be carried to some extent in Trinidad but up to the present time specialist training for teachers of the deaf and mentally retarded children is obtainable in Jamaica and England. I think some reference was made to the education of blind children, whether they still go to Trinidad. In years past, children who were blind were educated in Trinidad. This situation no longer exists. They are now educated here at home at the David Rose School for the handicapped.

Subhead 23, Grants to Necessitous Students. There are a number of students who find it difficult to provide themselves with clothes, shoes and things like that for school. This subhead appeared before education was free. In those times help had to be given for fees but now we give them help for clothing and in some cases for meals. When an application is made – parents make applications – our Welfare Officers examine the situation and satisfy themselves that applicants are needy cases, requiring help. It is true that the sum allocated for such grants could be much more than it is, but there are other ways of helping necessitous students – not only from

the grants allocated. One such way is through voluntary subscriptions from educators from time to time, while some institutions make donations for the same purpose.

The course for teachers of the deaf. I think I mentioned before that in the early days the teachers were trained at the University of Manchester which is an institution renowned for training specialist teachers of the deaf. At the moment such training is carried out at the University of the West Indies. I do not think it will be useful to reply to separate parts of the question, how they are trained and what happens to them. In our approach to training specialist teachers for handicapped education, there is a system where all people who work at the David Rose School for the Handicapped serve initially on a temporary basis for a given period during which they decide whether they will remain in handicapped education. When that decision is taken specialist training is arranged in appropriate institutions. Usually not more than two people go for training at a time. At the moment, all members of the staff are trained specially for teaching children handicapped by deafness, mental retardation and the blind. The teacher of Home Economics is not trained in special education.

Subhead 38, Overseas Examinations, Local Expenses. The question was: Why do we allow them to pay fees? This is a matter that is engaging the attention of Government. I think the House will agree with me that at the moment we have to be realists and attempt to do what is practicable. The financial constraints prevent us from considering this at the moment but I would like to draw to the attention of this House that the local fees are heavily subsidized and, as I said before, if there is evidence that someone cannot pay examination fees, help is usually forthcoming.

That is the position with respect to the payment of fees for examinations. When Government promised free education the intention related to basic textbooks to each child, reference books to each school at a substantial cost, certain other facilities, including opportunity for vocational training and other training, Government did not at any time promise to pay the

examination fees. But, as I said before, the matter of examination fees is receiving attention, but the financial constraints prevent us from making a decision at this time.

With respect to the contribution to the Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage, that dictionary is being compiled by a distinguished Guyanese scholar, Dr. Allsopp, as a project at the University of the West Indies. I think I pointed out some time before that the dictionary will be useful to us in the Caribbean from a teaching point of view. It is an attempt to facilitate communication in the Caribbean area. For example, in different territories, words are used differently and these differences are being documented. The dictionary will be of tremendous benefit, not only to education but to living as a whole. Guyana is contributing financially and in terms of service. Other territories have also made contributions.

Talking about education – I think the hon. Member was suggesting that we should talk less and do more. Perhaps the hon. Member is not really sensitive to what is going on despite the fact that in the presentation of the Budget I attempted to enunciate in detail all the activities that were taking place in education. I intended that those activities, if they were understood, will indicate to listeners that educational activities or strategies had the potential to develop the kind of society we wanted. Hon. Members will remember that I spoke about innovations like the work/study programme, for example, how important that was, that it was a part of the curriculum, not a frill. It was part of the programme which prepared people to function meaningfully in the society. I called attention to the fact that students were actually going into work situations and that responses made were evaluated to ascertain if the children were able to apply what they learnt at school to the task in hand to find out whether or not they were acquiring responsible work attitudes and relationships with others.

9.05 p.m.

Talking about Education is a programme intended to communicate with the public. It is intended to tell citizens what is happening in education; to prepare them for what is to come.

We have had several programmes explaining the purpose of certain forms of evaluation, to tell them what children are doing in different kinds of schools, the innovations that are coming into being, a new kind of curricula that we are developing and hence the new kinds of examination that will be relevant. We have had many educative programmes over a period of time, programmes for which listeners have expressed appreciation.

The programme “Talking about education” is here to stay. Because this is one way of preparing people for change, to explain innovations and developments in education as these come into being from time to time. Such is the purpose of “Talking about education”. Yet it is true to say that while we are talking, things are being done. I do not think that there is anyone in this House who will deny that there is a lot of activity in education. If time is taken to examine what is being done, I am sure one will find a link between educational activities and the outcomes one expects to observe.

On the question of Welfare Officers, I must first explain that Welfare Officers are not Attendance Officers. The function of the Welfare Officer is to identify problem areas. The thing is that they identify as many problems as is humanly possible. For example, truancy is a common problem. You talk about children not going to school and so on. This is only a small part of their work. What is more important to educators is to find out, after they have been playing truant, why they have been playing truant, For example, if they have school phobia – that is if they don’t want to go to school, or if there are problems at school that keep them out of school, or if it is a situation where parents go out to work and leave children unsupervised and disorganized.

Action is taken from time to time as long as a problem is identified. Action includes not only getting them to school, but getting the parents involved because in many cases, parents need some sort of help or support in the discipline of their children. So during this year there are plans to strengthen that staff, not necessarily by appointing more Welfare Officers but by utilizing other services within the educational system, by sharing members and organizations,

organizing the services in the educational system to help to reduce the incidence of children not attending school. Perhaps at another time it might be reasonable for me to go into more details about the kind of plans, the strategies we have for trying to overcome that problem. It might be a useful thing if members of this House could suggest ways of helping and co-operating in efforts to overcome problems such as these dealt with by Welfare Officers.

Head 42, Ministry of Education and Social Development - \$13,335,175 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 133.

**HEAD 43 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT – IN
SERVICE
TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME**

Question proposed that the sum of \$357,432 for Head 43, Ministry of Education and Social Development – In-Service Teacher Training Programme, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohammed: Cde. Chairman I have two matters to bring to the Minister of Education. Subhead 1, item (2) superintendant In-Service Training and item (3) Lecturer II/I I would like to know from the Minister of Education whether there is now a Superintendent for the Linden centre and how soon she will fill the vacancy that exists in the New Amsterdam centre. I believe – and she can correct me if I am wrong – that there is an acting Superintended Superintendent who expects to graduate some time whilst a number of graduates have applied to fill that position. So far, none of these has been appointed. I would like the Minister to say whether this information is correct and if so why does this state of affair exist at the New Amsterdam Centre.

Item (3). I understand further that there seems to be some staffing problems with respect to the New Amsterdam centre that has a total staff of four. We only have two graduates and of that you have an unfortunate situation where an Economist is asked to teach mathematics and at the same time there seems to be a shortage of science teachers since the National Service programme opened at the University of Guyana. These students have been asked to do science subjects in June. There is no science teacher and we would like to know what will happen in this case where there is no science teacher at the New Amsterdam centre.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman all vacancies to these posts are filled by the Public Service Commission and these applications are with the Public Service Commission.

With regard to the comment that somebody with economics is teaching mathematics. I am not aware of the particular situation but even if that is so I would like to indicate that we have passed the stage of teachers teaching one subject, if a person has what we call a major and subsidiary or the person has a general degree in which he offers more than one subject. If the person is teaching mathematics he is competent to teach mathematics. I would like to tell this House that at this very moment we are moving to a position, like other developed countries who can afford it, where our graduate teacher will have to teach more than one subject. In some countries they teach three subjects. I think it is to the credit of the teacher to be able to teach more than one subject. We do not consider that a complaint but we appreciate it very much.

Head 43, Ministry of Education and Social Development – In service Teaching Training Programme, \$357,432 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 134.

HEAD 44 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

Question proposed that the sum of \$42,801,097 for Head 44, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Primary and Secondary Schools, stand part of the Estimates.

9.15 p.m.

Cde. Mohamed: Page 134, subhead 1, item (1) Headteachers. I would like to find out from the hon. Minister whether she has been keeping in touch with the current problems that exist at the Corentyne High School. We understand and we feel very strongly about what is happening that the coercive apparatus of the State has intervened in a problem relating to the Corentyne High School and a number of students, as a result, are being harassed by the Police. We do not think that these problems when they do occur should warrant Police Intervention. I would like to know whether the Minister of Education approves, or gave her consent for, the Police harassment that is meted out to the students of the Corentyne High School. We would like the Minister to know that such harassment creates wounds at times difficult to heal and they will have serious consequences later for the bringing up of our young people especially at this stage when we want to place so much emphasis on the development of our young people. We cannot understand how our young people are exposed to this colonial practice of brutality against high school students who have a simple educational problem. We would like the Minister to give some explanation on this issue and why the Police had to intervene.

Item (6), Acting Teachers. I note that a very high percentage, roughly 23 per cent of the total teaching staff are acting teachers. We also know that this category of teacher is exposed to a lot of abuses, particularly by some unscrupulous headmasters who find it convenient to keep teachers in an acting position and in fact use these teachers to a great extent for personal businesses. We cannot understand why at this moment we have such a great number of acting

teachers and we would like to ask the Minister of Education why this is so and why is it that there are teachers who are acting with five to nine subjects G.C.E. and with more than one acting year's service and still in that position. Why are these people not made permanent. This is a serious matter at this moment with such a high figure within that category.

We would also like to ask the Minister this question: How are appointments of teachers being made these days? We are not very sure. We have received various ideas. We are told that people are just appointed to become teachers and sometimes qualifications are not taken into account. We would like the Minister to offer some explanation on this question.

Subhead 6, Supplies to Schools. I should like to ask the Minister whether it is contemplated to reintroduce the system of free milk and biscuits and vitamin capsules. We know things are difficult for a number of people in this country, people find a lot of economy hardship. We know of cases where children sit an entire day in school hungry. We have had the experience of helping children going to school with handouts for lunches. We would like to know whether this amount of money asked for will indicate that we will be reintroducing free milk and biscuits, vitamin capsules and perhaps even if we are going to have free breakfast and lunches. This is important if we are going to really see education flourish because if our children are hungry they cannot study, they will not be able to learn. I think the Ministry of Education should pay some attention to this section.

Subhead 12, Purchase of Exercise Books for Free Distribution to School Children. You will recall that this is an important question particularly so at this time because, although the allocations for last year as related in the Estimates are higher, there are cases of several schools in Essequibo and on the East Coast not receiving exercise books for the last term.

If your allocations are going to be lower, than obviously we will not be able to supply these exercise books to our children who will need them. We would like the Minister to say how she is going to resolve that, to my mind, in-consistency and at the same time to say its

because of austerity measures, this had to be cut. Will she say whether she will look into the question of the cost of exercise books. Because since free distribution of exercise books were announced the prices of exercise books have risen from 17¢ to 35¢ and 45¢ each.

That brings me to subhead 14 which deals with the Purchase and Distribution of Basic Textbooks. We all agree in this House that the promise of free basic textbooks so far is a betrayed promise. We know for a fact that the nine textbooks that are considered to be basic have not been given to any student and there are some students who have not so far even received one textbook. To do this it is clear that the Minister will have to have much more money than she is asking for. And strangely, although they have not fulfil that promise we see a reduction in the vote. Obviously it is not intended to fulfill that promise which is a necessary adjunct to free education in this country. We would like to find out whether this Ministry has given up the idea of distributing free basic textbooks and, if so, what is the real reason. We know there has been a shortage since 1976 of text-books for students doing Geography Paper No. 2 and so far this book which deals with the developed and less developed world has not come to the people. The month of June is coming and students will have to do their G.C.E. We do not know how they are going to do it; they are not getting textbooks. They are not getting them to buy because of the restrictions on importation even though parents may be willing to buy and even the little you can buy the cost is prohibitive.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, items (1) to (7), I will take them together. They deal with the staffing of teachers. It would appear in practically every instance that the 1977 estimate is higher than the revised estimate for 1976. There is no need for me to go down the line, everybody can read what it says. When you look at the number of persons on the Establishment in most instances they are the same. Because of the low figure in the 1976 revised estimates there seems to be a great problem with filling vacancies for teachers in our schools. In view of the fact that the full amount is now being asked – I assume this is the full

amount so I see a greater amount is being asked – will the Minister say if this means that the posts will not be filled? I am going to deal further down again with teachers and personnel.

We come to subhead 1, item(9), Sweeper/Cleaner. I am sure the Minister knows this is an old favourite of mine, but it will have a difficult slant this time because all the schools are now under Government control and the Establishment in 1977 reads 569 as opposed to 287 in 1976. Does the Minister know that in the days when we had aided secondary schools, schools receiving Government aid, the cleaners in those schools always were paid at a lower rate of pay than the cleaners in the Government schools. Now that everybody is under the Government, can the minister say if they are now paying all the cleaners of all the schools and if they are all on the same salary scale?

9.25 p.m.

Subhead 6, Supplies to Schools. I support the previous speaker on this question of free supplies of snacks, milk and biscuits and vitamin pills and so on for our children. It is very sadly needed. We know, as he said, that there are children who go to school many days hungry on a little cup of sweetened sugar water and maybe a biscuit but I am wondering if this item applies also to supplies to schools for cleaning materials. We understand that in several schools the complaint is that the grant for this is not adequate. This may seem a small and trivial matter but it is very important that the sanitary facilities of the schools are kept clean. With a big school population you can imagine what will happen by way of sickness caused by lavatories and such like places not being kept properly cleaned due to inadequate supplies of cleaning materials. Could the hon. Minister say to what does this grant apply. Is it for cleaning materials or, as we hope, for facilities for the children by way of snacks?

Subhead 13, Bank Charges – Teachers Salaries. We are being asked for \$20,000 for 1977. The revised estimates for 1976 was also \$20,000. Would the hon. Minister say exactly to what aspect of teachers' salaries these bank charges apply? Maybe one of the reasons why

we have trouble with teachers in that when the money is short in the Government's coffers and there is not enough money to pay the salaries, it is always the teachers who seem to suffer. It is always the teachers who seem to get paid late. Does these bank charges reflect interest on overdraft necessary to keep the teachers quiet by having to find the money to pay them even if it is the 15 of the next month?

Subhead 14, Purchase and Distribution of Basic Textbooks. We have heard to previous speaker on this matter. I support him. There is one question I should like to ask. The hon. Minister of Trade and consumer Protection, during debate on that Ministry of Friday, was at great pains to point out that when we have shortages of commodities, consumer goods and so on, it was due to bad ordering on the part of firms. I have forgotten the technical terms that he used. He said they ought to order the goods nine months in advance. **[Cde. King: "Improved lead time."]** Improved lead time. Could the hon. Minister say if the Minister of Education has an improved lead time so that she will have the basic textbooks in time, so that she does place her order with G.N.T.C., or with whomsoever the Education Department places its order, in good time, allowing lead time so that the books will be here and the children can get them in good time for study for classes because, as I said when I was talking about the so-called "free education", the majority of these children cannot afford to buy them and there are many whose parents send to Barbados and Trinidad and what have you to try and get the textbooks. The idea is that we have free education for our children from the kindergarten to University and they need this in spite of the explanation I had from the Minister just now regarding the Caribbean Examinations. I must admit I do not quite understand it. I do think they need some type of textbook for reference, for study and so on. Could the Minister say how her Ministry does its ordering?

Subhead 16, Recruitment of Educators on Contract from Overseas. This is a new subhead and we are being asked to vote \$1,020,000 for this. Some time ago the Minister went away to recruit educators. I am subject to correction but I think it was 400 she was hoping to get. If my figure is not correct could she please correct me and could the Minister say how may

she was hoping to get, how many she actually did get and from which countries did they come and maybe, if she can, say how they are distributed around the country.

Cde. Ram Karran: I have three small questions with respect to item (12) Groundsman and item (13) Handyman. Is this all the explanation the hon. Minister can give – “New offices” and “Ditto”? surely in these day when Government is trying to get the students to fit in with agriculture and everything else in this “austerity year” to be called upon to spend \$59,550 for these two items seems unrealistic.

May I then move on to subhead 9, Grants to Hindu Organisations and ask the hon. Minister what are the Hindu organizations and the sums of money and why there is discrimination against other organizations. May I then move to the last question, subhead 16, Recruitment of educators on Contract from Overseas and ask the hon. Minister how many teachers have been recruited and if she can give the country of origin.

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, the first question I think came under Primary and Secondary Schools where the hon. Member alleged harrassment of school children by policemen. On the Corentyne, in one school, they were attempting to introduce activities in school that do not, in our opinion, promote national unity and they moved to a position in which staff and pupils from one school were trying to enter another school and interfere in the schools business. The Ministry of Education was called in and we had to mount investigations. There was an investigation in one school and before that was completed, we had problems in another school.

The investigations for both situations are in progress. There was a threat to the safety of records in the school and my information was that some attempt was made to remove the children and staff from the school to which they did not belong. At the moment, investigations are continuing and I am not in a position to comment on these at this stage. One school, I can say, has been closed by the Ministry of Education.

Item (6), Acting Teacher and vacancies. I think it is useful to point out that “Acting Teachers” means what it says: they are acting and they are acting in vacancies. They are acting for teachers at the University of Guyana and for teachers who might have left for In-Service Training or other forms of teacher education. They can only be appointed when there are permanent vacancies. If they are acting for people on leave, they cannot be appointed.

9.35 p.m.

Appointments of teachers in the Ministry of Education are done by a committee on certain criteria, qualifications, aptitudes, and so on. Somebody spoke about qualifications, it is important that qualifications must be relevant to the particular purpose. A person might have ten G.C.E. subjects or something like that but for the particular vacancy we want a person who have a particular qualification. We cannot appoint a person who has economics at that low level to teach another subject. The qualifications must be relevant.

I see this item, subhead 6, Supplies to Schools, caused a slight confusion. The word “supplies” you see there really refers to equipment and materials and not to things like meals. It is a part of the planning for the development of education to introduce school meals of some sort. At the moment there is a pilot project going on for nursery school children and that project is in progress in ton areas in each country where children are being catered for with such facilities as milk and other forms of food that are prepared by the home economics people. At least the programme is planned by the home economies people. This service will in time become a national programme but we have begun with the very young children.

I think the cost of the snack is fifty cents per head per day for this service and this is borne by the Ministry of Education at the moment. The areas are Berbice, North West, East Coast Demerara. They are samples because we have begun as a pilot project as that we can have some idea of the cost before we can extend and expand the programme. Part of the problem is to identify enough staff to be able to cope with this on a national basic. Dietary

provision has begun and has begun at the right point in development, with the very young children the nursery children.

The question of free basic textbooks. A lot has been said about textbooks. In 1976, 1.5 million copies of textbooks were ordered and in 1977 we have ordered one million copies. Some comment was made on the reduction. In any system after the operation has begun, we must evaluate the progress of the system after the operation has begun, we must evaluate the progress of the system and in evaluating it we have discovered that we do not need the same number of textbooks as we did in 1976. We must remember that these books are not the property of the children. These books have to be passed on to other children from time to time and because of this we will not need the same number of books as we needed in the previous year. Of course, we might find that next year we might have to increase the allocation because we have to take account of loss by various means, wear and tear and so on.

I am giving a breakdown of the number and cost of textbooks. In the primary school, each child gets a certain number of basic textbooks in what we call Prep “A” and infant classes. In both classes each child gets three books and at an average cost of six dollars. In the other classes, the children from standards 1 and 2, each child gets four textbooks at an average cost of nine dollars, standard 3 an average cost of twelve dollars and standard 4 an average cost of \$30. In the secondary departments of the all-age schools, forms 1, 2, and 3, each child gets eight books and six books respectively, the cost per child on the average ranging between \$25 to \$30. We go on to the secondary school, in which case the cost will be increased ranging between \$60 and \$65. The total expenditure on schools for the basic textbooks in 1976 is \$3½ million and in 1977 it will be \$2,420,000.

I said at some earlier point in my reply that each child in the school will get what we call basic textbooks. Each school is given reference books for teachers and pupils. These will be used to build up libraries because we believe that libraries are important in schools. The reference books for teachers in 1976 amounted in value to \$750,000 and in 1977 to \$600,000.

17.1.77

National Assembly

9.25 – 9.35 p.m.

We are referring there to basic textbooks and to reference books. The total cost of books for schools, institutions like technical institutes and libraries, amounted in 1976 to over \$4 million and in 1977 will amount to over \$3 million.

I want to point out that in any system there are constraints. One of the problems affecting this is the heavy demand that was made suddenly by us on the publishers and the people who provide the books. The publishers and the people who provide the books have a problem. When the shops in the past ordered books they would not order a book per child. They would order perhaps between 40 and 50 per cent of the total requirements. Because we are providing books to each child, it is a heavy demand on the people who are to supply the books. They could not cope in the initial stages with the heavy demands made on them and in some cases some books are being reprinted. There are very large supplies and this is one reason for some of the delay in the supply of books to Guyana. Over a period of time we have found that there is a great improvement in the provision of books and we hope that during this year some of these costs will be reduced. There are constraints in our obtaining books. Orders are placed in as good a time as we can do it. There are some books that are still outstanding. We hope to get these books because they are air-lifted in three weeks' time.

9.45 p.m.

With reference to subhead 9, Grants to Hindu Organisations, it is really Hindu and Muslim organizations. I think I named them before.

With respect to the question of bank charges, the teachers are paid by cheques for a security reasons and that accounts for bank charges.

Head 44, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Primary and Secondary Schools - \$42,801,097 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 135.

**HEAD 45 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
NURSERY SCHOOLS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,366,600 for Head 45, Ministry Education and Social Development, Nursery Schools, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: I have two questions Cde. Chairman under subheads 3, Supplies and Equipment and subhead 4, Courses for Nursery School Teachers. Under subhead 3 I would like to ask if the Minister is aware that there was a meeting organized by some of these nursery schools that were recently taken over in Georgetown and at this meeting parents were asked to make a donation of a term's fees – which I understand is \$55 – because the grants given by the Ministry to run the schools are not enough to maintain the standard of the schools. Parents were told that if they do not make the donations the standards would drop. I think this goes against the idea of free education. If parents are asked to pay a term's fees to keep the schools then it is no use talking about free education. I would like the Minister to give some explanation to this. It is a violation of what they say.

The second question is under subhead 4, Courses for Nursery School Teachers. I would like the Cde. Minister to say how many teachers are at the moment undergoing this course.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Under subhead 1, item (1), Headteachers. This we know is a new head this year for nursery schools. The establishment calls for 400 headteachers. Do we assume then that that represents the 400 nursery schools? If so, how many of these are actually at this moment in operation. Could the Minister say also, whilst talking about the staffing of teachers,

if any of the teachers who unfortunately she forgot to answer the question raised on them on a previous page were recruited from overseas are coming, specifically for nursery schools.

Subhead 7, Dietary. The amount we are being asked to vote is \$100,000. Would the Minister tell us if this amount and this subhead, Dietary, refers to snacks that she spoke about for the nursery schools, the ten pilot schools that have been established.

Cde. Ram Karran: I want to ask the hon. Minister, under subhead 6, Rental of Nursery School Buildings, whether it is Government's policy to close down existing nursery schools in certain areas so as to allow discrimination in those areas where small children have to walk long distances. They are exposed to the hazards of traffic. Is it not Government's policy to maintain the existing schools where they are?

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman, subhead 3, Supplies and Equipment. The hon. Member alleged that in one nursery school parents were asked to buy equipment. As far as I know, before we took over that nursery school important pieces of equipment and important facilities were removed from the school. These included a piano. The parents of the children of that school said that because they do not have to pay fees they did not mind contributing or replacing the material that was taken away. **[Interruption]**

The Chairman: The Minister has been asked questions and there are interruptions. Nobody can listen to what she is saying.

Cde. Baird: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. I want to point out that all schools have fund-raising efforts from time to time and I would have thought that Members on the opposite side of this House would have supported self-help activities. **[Applause]**

Subhead 4, Courses for Nursery School Teachers. I think it would be interesting for the House to know that at the moment we have got 1,516 nursery school teachers and there are 352 nursery schools ranging all over the country. Members will remember that when this was introduced in the House, I said we were instituting the first phase of the nursery school programme and we intended to cater for the 9,000 children who were in nursery schools as a first step to the introduction of the nursery school programme. There is now an over-provision of places by over 8,000 children. I just quoted those figures to give some information to Members of this House. The headteachers number 352. If there are 352 schools in operation, there have to be 352 heads.

Dietary, subhead 7. I was referring to this provision for the nursery school children. The answer to the query, whether the teachers from overseas include nursery school teachers among them, is No. Most of the teachers from overseas are from secondary schools. Is the policy to close down nursery schools? The policy is to close down schools that was believe are undesirable, if the physical state of the school or accommodation is poor. Bottom house schools will not offer the children the proper social climate and so in the organisation of nursery schools, we have closed some schools and found alternative provision. We have combined some schools. Where schools have been closed, there must be good reason. One of the reasons would be that we thought that the physical provision was inadequate or unsuitable.

Head 45, Ministry of Education and Social Development – Nursery Schools - \$5,366,600 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.55 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 136.

**HEAD 46 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT –
PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION CENTRES**

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,054,598 for Head 46 Ministry of Education and Social Development – Practical Instruction Centres, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman two questions to the Minister dealing with subhead 2, Equipment, Materials etc, Home Economics and Industrial Arts Centres and Departments. I would like to ask how many Centres of this type exist in Guyana, how they are distributed and whether there is an intention to erect further centres in this country.

Subhead 4, Equipment for Science Teaching and Science Museum. I understand one of the problems today is to get science teachers and science instructors. I would like to know that the expenditure here for \$45,000 will not be bought without a knowledge if whether we are going to have the kind of technical personnel and people who can handle this equipment because unfortunately there are many cases where we have equipment, but do not have the people who can take care of it. We would like the Minister to assure this House that that has also been considered and there will be people who will be looking after this equipment.

The Chairman: Cde. Minister.

Cde. Baird: Cde. Chairman subhead 2. The answer to the question is that we have 17 centres and 85 departments in which practical instructions go on in the technical field.

With respect to science education I think you will notice that we have an increase in the provision for science education. We talk about the science museum because we believe science education is a very significant contribution to education. It is a significant aspect of education and very meaningful for development of any kind.

Now, there is, all over the world, a shortage of science teacher. There is a shortage wherever you go in any kind of country except those countries which have had had a long opportunity to prepare for this sort of development. We, in Guyana are providing science

17.1.77

National Assembly

9.55 – 10.05 p.m.

teachers from the University of Guyana. At the last graduation I think we have over 40 teachers but one thing we have to contend with is that people who are trained in science sometimes are lost in education but they are not lost to the nation. All the teachers who qualified in science come back to teaching and it is one fact of life that we have to contribute to other sectors of the economy.

NB: PAGES OF THE TRANSCRIPTS ARE MISSING