

Official Report

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

12TH Sitting

Monday, 24TH August, 2015

The Assembly convened at 1.45 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Apology for delay in start of sitting

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we have spent the greater part of today awaiting for us to convene. Our delay was occasioned by a number of questions, principally - there were some subsidiary issues - by one question and then a second one later on today. We believe that both questions have been adequately treated and that the understandings and arrangements, which have so far emerged, will, later on today, bear fruit. In the meantime I must tell you that consideration of the Estimates of the constitutional agencies, which was supposed to have commenced today, will be taken at another sitting. Those agencies, Hon. Members, are:

- The Parliament Office

- The Chambers of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- The Judicial Commission

That is the Supreme Court.

- Police Service Commission
- Public Service Commission
- The Teaching Service Commission
- The Public Service Appellate Tribunal
- The Office of the Ombudsman
- The Guyana Elections Commission

Today, Hon. Members, we will deal with

- Office of the President /Ministry of the Presidency
- The Public Service Ministry
- The Guyana Defence Force
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs
- Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment
- Ministry of Legal Affairs
- Ministry of Housing and Water
- Ministry of Communities and
- Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Among the Ministries, I have mentioned Hon. Members, there are three which will be required so to speak, to standby in the event that we conclude consideration of all the others. Those Ministries are:

- The Ministry of Housing and Water
- The Ministry of Communities, and
- The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure where I can raise this but we did raise with you the problem of new Ministries not being, by order, gazetted, and therefore, put in quandary the entire Estimates. We are dealing with budget agencies that have not been created by law, in accordance with the Fiscal Management and Accountability (FMA) Act. You have not responded to that in the House, as yet. We are in a bit of a quandary as to what do to with the new Ministries, which do not exist, in terms of the FMA's list of budgeted agencies, which is required by law.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the Hon. Member. I am not sure whether we should appropriately treat this now or at 4 o'clock, but since you asked the question, Hon. Members, I will deal with it. We have taken advice on that question and we had the benefit of the treatment of such a matter in the year 2011 by constitutional appointments. What we have learnt, and we have been advised, that the example you gave, Hon. Member, which is the establishment of the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment, in fact, there was no special order establishing that Ministry. In fact, we benefited from research in the Parliament Office where a copy of the instrument, which was used in 2011, was made available to me.

Perhaps, the Hon. Minister thought that there was another order. In fact, this is the only order. We sought the advice of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel in the hope that we would have some new learning on it. We were advised that this is the only method employed and the only manner in which the new Ministries are treated. There is no need for a special order naming the new Ministries. That has been the practice. While I thank the Hon. Member for raising the point, it does not appear that it is a matter, which can be taken any further.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Speaker, just for my own clarification, I seek your indulgence too, for me to just satisfy myself that we are speaking about the same thing. Sir, there have been created a number of new Ministries. Under the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act, an Act that is designed to regulate the way public moneys are to be spent and accounted for by all agencies funded out of the national budget, a list is made and formed part of a schedule attached to that Act. All the agencies, which are to be funded through public funds, coming from our

consideration of the Estimates that have been laid before this House, are to be funded through this process. Therefore, they ought to be reflected in that schedule.

The new Ministries are not reflected in that schedule. Sir, it is our considered view that an order is required by the Minister of Finance, under section 80, I believe, of the Act, to add or delete to that schedule. That order is required to be advertised in *Official Gazette* adding new entities or deleting entities from that schedule. That is the only way that the Act will apply to the schedule. It is through that Act that these agencies will receive the requisite moneys. That Act regulates the way that they are to spend these moneys and account for these moneys. Our contention is that since the schedule has not been then these new agencies, these new Ministries, are not part of the financial architecture of Guyana, as yet. We are about to embark on a course of action that will result in them receiving public funds outside of the legal and fiscal framework that is in existence which deal with how entities are funded under the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act.

Mr. Speaker: Are you through with your presentation? If you would sit then the Speaker will speak.

Mr. Nandlall: Yes Sir.

Mr. Speaker: In my opening remarks, under the heading “Announcements by the Speaker”, I did say that at 4 o’clock, the efforts which were employed to deal with the issue that you have just spoken about. I believe that the Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira was speaking about a second issue, which was raised this afternoon.

Mr. Nandlall: It is the second issue that I spoke about.

Mr. Speaker: They seem to be the same, one and two.

Mr. Nandlall: No Sir.

Mr. Speaker: We are not going to have this conversation in this way, Hon. Member. We are not going to do that. We want to proceed and what I will say to you is let us wait until 4 o’clock, to see. We have been advised, and I rest on that advice, that there is no need to issue a separate

order in respect of the matter raised this afternoon. The matter raised this morning will be treated at 4 o'clock. I will suggest that you reserve any other comment for that time.

2.00 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2015

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

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

AND WHEREAS Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the financial year 2015 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2015-08-10.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2015, of a total sum of **one hundred and eighty-one billion, six hundred and ninety-two million and twenty thousand dollars (\$181,692,020,000), excluding thirty-nine billion, three hundred and eighty-six million, five hundred and eighty-five thousand dollars (\$39,386,585,000)** which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.” *[Minister of Finance]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will now consider the Budget Estimates for the year 2015.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will proceed in accordance with the Sub-Committee's Resolution and Schedule. I had asked you to bear in mind the exceptions which I had listed when we began.

Agency: 01 Office of the President

Current Expenditure

Programme: 011 – Administrative Services - \$858,621,000

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Committee what the designations of the eight additional contracted employees are, what their remunerations are, and what the date of their employment is?

Lt. Col. (Ret.) Harmon [Minister of State]: I think I should offer some explanation as to how these matters are dealt with in the event that they occur again. I want to state that, for the first period, we are dealing with matters which occurred under the Office of the President and which were done in the time of the previous Administration. Those issues as they relate to the contracted employees are, in fact, issues which arose at that time. The Hon. Member asked for the designations, the salaries and the employment dates for the persons. Is that information for the top six that was requested?

Bishop Edghill: I did not ask for the top six. I asked for designations of the eight additional contracted employees, their remuneration and the date when they were engaged.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can give you that. I will give you their names, their designations, their remunerations and when they were engaged. Those are: Mr. Frederick Mc Wilfred, Head of the Political Division, \$500,000; Professor Clive Thomas, Presidential Adviser on Sustainable Development, \$500,000; Mr. Edward Collins, Adviser on National Security, \$500,000; Mr. Aubrey Norton, Presidential Adviser on Youth Empowerment, \$500,000; Mr. Mark Archer, Presidential Liaison Officer, \$500,000; and Mr. Gary Best, Presidential Adviser on Environment, \$500,000. Those were the persons who were employed. He said he wanted eight.

Bishop Edghill: It is stated that there are eight additional employees.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: In fact, there are not eight; there are six, which I have pointed out, and there are others who would have been employed before.

Bishop Edghill: I thank the Hon. Member for the partial answer to the question. When he stood, he sought to put the framework that this is an eight-month period and some of the employment took place at the Office of the President during the People's Progressive Party/Civic's (PPP/C) term in Office. He did not answer a part of the question: when were they employed? I am putting a follow-up question. Apart from the salary, I would like to know what the entire remuneration package is - benefits and allowances.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: For fullness, I shall disclose all of the names and the packages. A. Bishop, Climate Change Lead Negotiator, \$1,035,000.

Ms. Teixeira: When did he cease working?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: He is still working. There is Mr. Joseph Singh, Adviser to the President, \$772,000.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I do not mean to interrupt the Hon. Member, but I do not think he is answering the question. We are asking the question about the eight new employees.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I gave you that and you said that you wanted all of the information.

Bishop Edghill: I asked for information on the eight new employees – when they were engaged and their entire remuneration package, including benefits.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: As I was saying, there is Mr. Chabilall Ramsarup, Director General, Civil Defence Commission (CDC), \$765,331; Gitanjali Chandarpal, Head, Office of Climate Change (OCC), \$700,000. These are the basic figures. S. Yusuf, Technical Officer, Office of Climate Change, \$550,000; and R.O. Gravesande, Project Manager, Project Management Office, \$517,500. The initial six names of the persons that I called were employed after 16th May, 2015. They were employed in June, 2015. The other benefits are standard benefits, that is to say, an entertainment allowance, a telephone allowance, a security...

Bishop Edghill: We would like to have the figures.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It is the standard amount that you received in your time.

Bishop Edghill: We do not know.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These are standard figures that are part of a Government contract and this is part of the Government's contract for advisers. There is nothing different. These are sums that I have inherited and nothing has been changed. It is the same sum that advisers on the other side received. I do not recall the figure, but the entertainment allowance is about \$25,000 and there is a duty allowance of \$10,000. That is the information for the Hon. Member.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, to be very helpful to this Committee, I would just like to ensure that we have the clarifications, but it appears to me that there is some reluctance.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed with the question.

Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs [Mr. Greenidge]: No speeches.

Bishop Edghill: We have equal rights in this Committee. The gentleman was giving a speech.

Line item 6281 - Security Services: could the Hon. Member indicate to us which security firms are engaged? I want, for the officers who were employed in June, the names of the security firms, the process for engaging those security firms and the contracted sum for each security firm.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I did indicate earlier that there were some standard procedures. In fact, the security companies that have been employed for the new officers, are the same security companies that had been used by the previous administration. There has been no change. I can give you the names of the security companies. There are Mekdeci Machinery & Construction (MMC) Inc., Brans Security Services, Roshan Khan (RK) Security Services and Kalibur Security Services.

Bishop Edghill: That is only part of the answer to the question. I asked about the contracted sums.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I could provide the answer for the contracted sum at a later stage, but what I can say to the Hon. Member is that the contracted sum is the same sum that had been contracted before. There is no new contract.

Bishop Edghill: So, we are to assume that even though the personnel have changed, the security firms have gone to new personnel without new contractual agreements, whilst some of these persons who have been named are former Chief of Staff, who already had security. I would like the question to be answered and addressed.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I thought you were seeking clarification. You are drawing conclusions to the Chairman. The Chairman cannot assist you with that. What the Chairman can suggest is that you frame your question to elicit the answer that you wish. That is all I can suggest to you.

2.15 p.m.

Bishop Edghill: I take your advice, Sir, and I will frame the question this way: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Committee the security firm that has been assigned to each individual and the contracted sum for those who have been engaged from June?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: What I can say is that, for all of the new names that the Hon. Member asked about, none of them have taken up any security service. They are operating on what was there before. One new person - Mr. Mc Wilfed - has a security company; it is the Brans Security Services. The terms and conditions are the standard rates that are charged by the security services.

Mr. Ali: In relation to the provision of security service, I heard the Hon. Member state that the contractual arrangement continues.

Mr. Chairman: Are you speaking under a head?

Mr. Ali: Yes. Line item 6281-Security Services. Could the Hon. Member state whether this was a multi-year contract and when that multi-year contract would come to an end?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I just said that of the persons who have been identified, only one has actually taken up security and that is Mr. Mc Wilfred. There are some other employees who had

security services and that continues. For example, the Permanent Secretary (PS) was there; he has a security service that is basically employed to take care of his security.

Mr. Ali: The question still stands. What was the method of contracting the security service? The Hon. Member said that there was no new contract awarded to any security service. So, if there was no new contract, then it had to have been a multi-year arrangement or a two-year contractual arrangement. If that is the case, when does that contract come to an end?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The provision of a security contract for an employee, in some cases, is quite personal. That employee advises on the matter. In the case here, there has been some advice on that matter. I can say to you that this is the practice. This is what has happened before. All of the employees in the Office of the President have actually had security services that they identified. Once those services were within the range charged for security services, then the Office took on those contracts. It is the same procedure; that is what I am saying. If the Hon. Member is asking now if there is a three quotation procedure for persons' security, then he could go ahead.

Mr. Ali: I was not asking for that. I am thankful that the Hon. Member has basically said that it is a continuation of a policy that had worked.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I never said that it worked. I said that it is the continuation of a policy.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: in the 2015 Budget, it is estimated that \$22.4 million would be utilised on the maintenance of buildings, as compared to \$10 million in 2014. Could the Hon. Member state what has caused this almost 110% increase in the allocation for maintenance of buildings and could he detail for us the works that would be done? I want to say that the question should address two periods: the first four months of the eight month period, which was the period of the previous Government, and the second four months, which is the period of the new Government.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The expenditure caters for the maintenance of the Ministry of the Presidency complex, Bidford House, Castellani House, and the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre Inc. The sums actually deal with the issues relating to flooding of the presidential complex, in the

first instance; it deals with work that had to be done because of the condition in which some of these buildings were kept and were left.

One of the buildings to be maintained is the building in the complex of the Ministry of the Presidency, which is a wooden and concrete building. As I said, it is prone to flooding. In fact, since we have been there, there have been two floods. There were several before. We have had to take steps to ensure that the complex represents the highest office in the land and the respect that we expect citizens to have for a place like that, a place where foreign dignitaries present their letters of credence ...

Mr. Hamilton: The man asked for the two sums; he does not want a speech.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Why do you not listen, Mr. Hamilton? This is the explanation for the sums that have been spent. There is some additional painting that has to be done as well. Generally, the sums had to be spent on the maintenance of the Ministry's complex and Bidford House.

Bishop Edghill: This is a follow-up question on line item 6242- Maintenance of Buildings: could the Hon. Minister tell us who the contractor engaged to do the job is, the method of procurement that was used for the engagement, and the sum for each contract that was established?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I could provide that information at a later stage.

Bishop Edghill: I heard the Hon. Member indicate that that information could be provided at the later stage. My question is: when? This is the Committee of Supply where there is supposed to be full disclosure.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am sure that you would want to give the Minister responsible for that the particular area some time to provide you with accurate answers.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I agree. But there is a reason why when Ministers come to the Committee of Supply, they come with their technical staff with all of their information. It is so that there could be full disclosure.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: He is making a speech.

Bishop Edghill: You were making a speech about how the President's house needed to be fixed to be at a certain standard. It means that you have the information; give it to us. Who is the contractor and how much was the contract sum?

Mr. Chairman: I must ask Members to let us try to deal with the Estimates. In the debate, we had a fulsome presentation in all manner and ways. Let us try to deal with the figures and the policy questions that we want answered. Some of those figures may not be readily available but it does not mean that Members would not get them if the Minister, who is answering the question, undertakes to do so.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, we had developed a tradition in this House, when we were in the Government and our friends on the other side where on the Opposition, that when information is asked for it would be provided as soon as possible. Many times, it was provided during the consideration of the Estimates because, in some cases, people did not come prepared. It has been the practice of this House that details of contracted officers and details of persons who have been hired to do services, *et cetera* have been willingly shared. Sometimes, it was shared with the individual Member and/or sometimes it was circulated in the House via the Clerk. This is not something unusual. This has become a good practice in this House.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: If I was given the opportunity to answer the Hon. Member, it is exactly what I would have said. By Wednesday morning, 26th August, 2015, he would have a document in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister Trotman, are you requesting the floor?

Minister of Governance [Mr. Trotman]: With respect, I was only going to support what Ms. Teixeira said. Except that many Members did not, even though they had given an undertaking, supply that information. Many did but many also did not.

Mr. Chairman: I have observed that, sometimes with the passage of time, the memories become dim. We should leave it that way.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: the Hon. Minister sought to justify the 110% increase in the amount allocated for the Maintenance of Buildings. In the answer, he outlined that additional works would be required in the presidential complex. I would like to ask

the Hon. Member whether it would not be better, having an understanding of the overall expenditure, for this item to be transferred to capital expenditure based on the value of work that is required and that is ongoing there.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These were a series of small works that had to be done in an emergency situation. So, it could not have been dealt with as a large sum in capital expenditure. There were small sums that had to do with emergency situations. That is why I mentioned flooding. I spoke about the condition of the building when we got into office. It had to be dealt with in that way.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I wish to be helpful to all Members. If you begin a question, and having gotten an answer you are still on your feet and then you consult, you might lead another Colleague to rise to catch the Chairman's eye. So, we must decide that if we are going to speak, we would stand and do so.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6242- Maintenance of Buildings. I would like the Hon. Member to say to us: how many contracts the works were divided into, the names of the contractors, and the method utilised for the selection of those contractors?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can provide that information by Wednesday morning.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6242-Maintenance of Buildings. The division of works into small contracts could be viewed as contract splitting, which is against the rules of the Procurement Act. Could the Hon. Member state whether he considers this practice an undesirable one?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: As a general rule, I do accept that that is undesirable. What I can say is that, in the circumstances that I pointed out here, it was not the case. I said that they were small contracts and they had to do with works of an emergency nature.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Seeraj: Line item 6281 – Security Services: a number of the contracted workers mentioned are retired senior Government officials. The question is: are the officers who are retired senior Government officials in receipt of their pension simultaneously with their new contracted engagement?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I fail to see the connection between the line item 6281 – Security Services and question that the Hon. Member is asking. I am not in a position to answer that.

Bishop Edghill: To assist my Colleague, I think the question is rightly placed under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. Could the Hon. Minister please answer the question under line item 6116?

Minister of Social Protection [Mrs. Lawrence]: What is the question?

Bishop Edghill: The question is the same question that was asked by my Colleague. Are the former Government officials, who are retired, in receipt of a pension...

[The Chairman hit the gavel.]

Mr. Chairman: I am trying to attract the attention of the speaker.

If the Hon. Member has the floor, perhaps there is room for some form of consultation or whispering, but you, Hon. Member, have had quite a number of supplementary questions. I wonder if you are the principal speaker. If so, then, of course. But if other Members also would wish to speak, perhaps, you could give them an opportunity to do so.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, I am the principal speaker. I was so advised. Line item 6116: a number of the new employees, who were engaged after 16th May, 2015, remuneration's packages have been outlined. The question is: are they in receipt of their pensions as well as these new salaries? Thank you.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: What I could do and what I undertook to do is provide the Hon. Member with the names of these employees, their positions and their salaries. I am not in a position to indicate whether they are in receipt of pensions and address those matters.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: could the Hon. Member list the organisations that have received subsidies and state whether the National Communications Network (NCN) or Government Information Agency (GINA) has received any subvention, contribution or subsidy from this line item? Thank you.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The subsidies and contributions to local organisations are listed at page 526 of the Estimates. Do you want me to read it?

Mr. Ali: I want the amounts for GINA and NCN.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The question is about GINA. Yes, there is a subvention for GINA in the sum of \$80,414,000; for the National Communications Network, there is the sum of \$69,507,000.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: the answer in relation to subsidy and contribution given to these two agencies is, indeed, interesting. In the 2014 Budget, GINA got a cut in budget by \$80 million and NCN got a cut in budget by \$69.5 million. Could I ask the Hon. Minister what has changed so drastically that the Government has now seen it fit to budget resources for these two agencies when one month before the very two agencies received no subvention?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sums that are listed had actually been budgeted by the previous administration. The other sums, under the Ministry of Presidency, we will deal with that.

Mr. Ali: I agree. That is the direction in which I wanted to go. Is the Hon. Minister saying that the expenditure was, therefore, rightfully placed and the expenditure has been implemented by the transferring of the contribution to the agencies?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These sums were actually placed there by the previous administration and spent by it. Whether we agreed with it not, the previous administration put it there and it spent it. So, we have to account for it. That is the answer.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you very much. I am happy for the answer that the Hon. Member gave. We will have a further discussion. Under the same line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, regarding presidential guard service, \$181,197,000 was spent in eight months out of a budgeted \$254,489,000. I would like the Hon. Member to explain what the reason for this expenditure is. If there has been an increase in the number of ranks at the Presidential Guard Service since 16th May, 2015, what is the number of the increase and what are the destinations of those that have been engaged?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: We are actually filling vacancies that existed in the service. I am prepared to go beyond that. I could provide the Hon. Member a document in writing, if he so chooses, but strengths of these organisations are usually not dealt with in that manner but I could, in fact, provide the Hon. Member with the document, in writing, before the end of the today.

Bishop Edghill: I am happy for the answer the Hon. Member has given. In the document that he would provide, I would be happy if he could indicate how many ranks were removed and how many were replaced.

Mr. Chairman, if you would indulge me, Sir, the questions that I am asking, while I am hearing that it is related to matters of national security, you could check the *Hansard*. When I answered for the Office of the President, some of the same questions were asked of me and it was not a national security matter then.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It is alright. I could answer you, sir. These ranks are Members of the Guyana Police force (GPF) and the Guyana Police Force's internal arrangements and mechanism allow for transfers from one unit to the other. This is not anything about dismissals. It is about transfers and I can provide you with that information.

Bishop Edghill: I am happy to hear that there were transfers. If there were transfers and a rank was moved from the Guyana Police Force to the Presidential Guard service or *vice versa*, it should not lead to this substantial increase. We want an explanation for the increase.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Did I not say, Hon. Member, that I will give you that information before the end of today?

Bishop Edghill: That is what I want an assurance on, sir.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: You have gotten it.

Mr. Chand: Line item – 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: the Hon. Minister made reference to the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre Inc. Could he state what sum was spent or is to be spent and the nature of work that is to be undertaken or was undertaken?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: What is the building you are asking about, Hon. Member?

Mr. Chand: Cde. Minister, you made reference to the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre Inc. Some of the money was spent on that building. That is my question.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I did indicate that I would provide the information on the works that were done, where they were done and the sums that were spent on those buildings. I could provide that to the Hon. Member by Wednesday morning.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. Regarding GINA, could the Hon. Member indicate to this Committee who the current head of GINA is and what the salary and package that goes along with that position is?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That is information which could be provided to the Hon. Member by Wednesday morning.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I would like to ask a question and seek clarification from the Hon. Minister. Under Government Information Agency, there is \$80.4 million for 2015 and \$69.5 million for NCN for 2015. This is, I believe, based on the notes in the Budget document, from January to August, 2015. Under the allocation for the Office of the Prime Minister, it is stated that GINA has been given \$70 million and NCN has been given \$27 million. Could I have a clarification? The moneys under Office of the President – Agency 01 for these two agencies are up to the month of August and allocation under the Office of the Prime Minister is for the last four months. GINA has been given \$70 million whereas NCN has only been given \$27 million. Is that correct? There has actually been a decline in the allocation. Am I clear in what I understand?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I do understand the Hon. Member's question. She is quite correct that the sums stated here are sums that were spent under the Office of the President previously. The Prime Minister will deal with those matters, which we are proposing now, from August to December, 2015. The Prime Minister will deal with those matters in detail. You are quite correct in your understanding in the way in which the matter is being dealt with.

Bishop Edghill: Line Item 6284 – Other: could the Hon. Minister indicate what the expenditure incurred under this line item is and could he provide a breakdown of the total?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The breakdown has to do with standard matters dealt with and I will list them. They are: gifts from His Excellency the President to Diplomats and members of the diplomatic community; refunds of expenses for the Cheddi Jagan Research Centre Inc.; printing of posters and pamphlets that had to do with \$8 million for the drought in Lethem; and another \$10 million to the Civil Defence Commission (CDC) which had to do with the last flooding. We had to pay the salaries and other expenses for the members of the Special Organised Crime Unit (SOCU) from under this line item. These are the issues that were dealt with under the line item. The Hon. Member wants a breakdown of how much was spent. I can, in fact, give him that, as well, on Wednesday morning. We have that information.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you. Line Item 6294 – Other: could you indicate to this House what the items catered for under this head are and give a similar breakdown?

2.45 p.m.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The substantial payment under this head had to do with payments for the Walter Rodney Commission of Inquiry. The bulk of this money is in the vicinity of \$79 million. Also under this head are the receptions hosted by His Excellency the President and gifts from His Excellency the President.

Ms. Teixeira: Under the heading which he has just answered, there is only \$7.2 million. Therefore, that is not the heading under which the Commission of Inquiry for Walter Rodney came. I am sure it is for receptions and other activities.

I think the Hon. Member, as a new kid on the block, may wish to look at another programme of the Office of the President to deal with that. Thank you.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: When the Minister answered Member of Parliament (MP) Ali, he indicated that the \$69 million and the \$80 million were spent by the previous Administration. When you answered MP Teixeira, you agreed with her that this sum was spent between January and August. Would the Minister agree with me that the answer to that question cannot be both answers? It is either the money to the Government Information Agency (GINA) and the National Communications Network (NCN)

was spent from January to April or it was spent from January to August. Kindly inform this House from what period to what period the sums budgeted and handed to GINA were spent.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: For clarity, the Hon. Member must have had some significant experience in the box in cross-examinations. What I did say - and I agree with the Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira - was that these sums of moneys were budgeted by the previous Administration and spent by the previous Administration. The period that we are covering is from January to August but these sums were spent before 16th May, 2015. That is the distinction I would like to make.

Mr. Hamilton: Follow-up: Are you saying that, between 16th May to August, no moneys were transferred from Government to GINA or NCN or spent by the Government?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: We continue to spend a monthly amount of money which is the operating expenses of the entity.

Mr. Ali: If you are spending on operating expenses, then it is a recurrent expenditure. I am asking under which head that money is provided for.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The GINA matters and NCN matters, as I did indicate earlier, will be dealt with fully by the Hon. Prime Minister when he deals with those two entities. I will respectfully ask that those questions be reserved and they will be answered at the appropriate time.

Mr. Ali: With complete respect for the Hon. Member, his previous answer was that all of the resources were expended between January and 16th May. The second period is from 16th May to August, where he said that there was recurrent expenditure.

The new arrangement commences from August to December; that is under the Office of the Prime Minister. The recurrent expenditure between 16th May and August still has to be accounted for. Where is this accounted for in the appropriation?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I did indicate that the Prime Minister will deal with that matter. I had asked the Member to defer it since I am not in the position to provide any further answers on this matter.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I draw your attention to the Schedule that each Member has to say to you that, with your cooperation, we will complete this in the time allotted for this Minister.

Mr. Hamilton: Even though we are dealing with two Governments, we are dealing with three periods and that was stated by the Hon. Minister. The Hon. Minister indicated earlier that the \$69 million and the \$80 million were spent by the previous Government.

Secondly, he has indicated that moneys were spent on GINA and NCN; he called them recurring expenditure. Earlier, he also indicated that the Prime Minister will deal with September or the end of August to December.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you are asking a question.

Mr. Hamilton: Could the Minister say what sum of moneys was expended by the Government – recurring expenditure - on GINA and NCN between the months of May and August?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I did indicate that the matter will be dealt with by the Prime Minister.

Bishop Edghill: I would like to follow-up on this.

Mr. Chairman: May I suggest that the Minister has indicated his inability, unwillingness, both or none of those that he will leave the questions you asked for consideration by the Prime Minister. It seems to me that when the Prime Minister takes the floor, that will be an appropriate time for this.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, under the budget of the Office of the Prime Minister, it will be the first time that GINA and NCN would fall under their. So, when the Prime Minister comes to answer based on this Budget, he will be limited to answer for only the four months. It will be unfair for the Hon. Member to mislead this House by saying that those matters will be answered by the Prime Minister when this expenditure occurred under the Office of the President.

Mr. Chairman: I think, Hon. Member, that we must try not to impute questionable motives.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, may I raise a procedural issue?

Mr. Chairman: I understood that the question that was asked in relation to the later period and the answer given was that it will be treated by the Prime Minister. But then the question is being asked again. Perhaps, that is the way it should be done but I do not know.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, we are in a bit of a dilemma. I appreciate that the Hon. Member is saying that we should leave this to the Prime Minister. The problem is that we are on the estimates of Agency: 01 Office of the President, Programme: 011 Administrative Services in which, normally, when we come to the end of all the questioning, there is a vote. Now, we are being asked to vote on something which the Minister is saying that we should wait until we come to the Office of the Prime Minister's budget where he will try to answer for what happened between May and August. If the Hon. Member wants to defer this issue for further discussion with the Prime Minister, then we can defer the vote on this and deal with Office of the Prime Minister and this issue and clarify it. Once we vote, why come back to it when we deal with Office of the Prime Minister? We cannot even come back.

I am saying that this is not an academic exercise. We are called upon to vote. We understand the dilemma the Hon. Member is in but we still have to say how we will address it. My suggestion is, if the Hon. Member feels so strongly, then the vote should be deferred until we deal with the Office of the Prime Minister.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: What I will undertake to do is to provide that information by Wednesday morning, in writing.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: I would be happy if the Hon. Minister could indicate to this House the size of the fleet, new additions and when they were added?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The size of the fleet is 138 vehicles, 102 of which are serviceable. There were two new additions and those were for His Excellency the President. What we have here is an increase in the level of serviceability. A number of vehicles that came in were serviced and were made operable. There was a large number of high-end vehicles that was purchased by the previous Administration; there were at least 20 such vehicles that the Administration now benefits from.

Programme: 011 - Administrative Services - \$858,621,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 011 - Administrative Services - \$588,414,000

Bishop Edghill: Project code 1212000 – Information Communication Technology: A sum of \$557,955,000 is asked to be approved. We would like to have a breakdown of this sum, exactly on what items it is to be spent.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These are sums of moneys to be paid by Huawei, a Chinese company which was contracted to do the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Project.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Project code 1200200 – Office and Residence of the President: there is an allocation of \$14,023,000 for provision for payment of electrical works. Could the Hon. Member say when this project was tendered, awarded, name of the contractor it was awarded to, when works commenced and when is the expected completion date of works?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, this is a rollover project. It was a contract awarded to Cummings Electrical in December, 2014. The work commenced in December, 2014 and it was basically continued. This is a contract that was done by the previous Administration and we are continuing the work that was done under it.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, project code 2500100 – Purchase of Equipment: Could the Hon. Member indicate to this House the full breakdown of this expenditure?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, this was for the purchase of stationery and office furniture for the complex of the Office of the President. I can provide the Hon. Member with the complete list, the unit cost and invoice numbers as well as everything as they are provided.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring to your attention that purchase of stationery is Current Expenditure and it cannot be listed as Capital Expenditure.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The Hon. Member is correct. It is, in fact, not stationery but one of the entities is Regal Stationery and Computer Centre, where some of these purchases were made - chairs, desks and other office furniture.

Programme: 011 – Administrative Services – \$588,414,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 012 – Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and Other Services) – \$551,031,000

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: We have noticed a reduction in 15 members and I would like the Hon. Minister to indicate to this House the designations and the names of those who were removed under this line item.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I could provide the Hon. Member with a list of names, designations, salaries, *et cetera*, before the end of this afternoon.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, while I accept that the Hon. Member will provide this, in writing, I see no reason that, if we can have the information available for those who were hired, we cannot have the information of those who were severed. I do not see why we cannot have that in this honourable House at this time, Sir. I think that, in the consideration of the Estimates, full disclosure is what is required and I am calling on the Hon. Member to make full disclosure of the 15 members who were severed under this particular agency.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I did indicate to the Hon. Member that I can provide him with that information. I have a list which I can give to him before the end of the day. I know the Hon. Member also has a copy of this list, since I have been receiving letters from the other side about persons who were terminated or resigned.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Member disclose to this House the security firms that are engaged and the contracted sums?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I did report, earlier, the names of those companies. The same companies are under this programme - Neal and Massy (NM) Security Solutions Inc.,

Brans Security Services, Mekdeci Machinery and Construction (MMC) Security Force Inc. and Caliber Security Service.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, line item 6291 - National and Other Events - \$7.2 million: Mr. Minister, could you apprise the House whether sums in this sum were spent for the inauguration of His Excellency the President?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can indicate to the Hon. Member that it was not and I can state the events that are covered under this line item. They have to do with the Phagwah celebration and the Enmore Martyrs Day and the Independence Day - which is the publication of booklets for that day.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up question: Could I be advised, Mr. Minister, which line item I could find the sum that was allocated for the inauguration of His Excellency the President?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I need the line item, Mr. Chairman. I can refer to a line item or I can answer a question. I do not have a point of reference.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence: A sum of \$4.8 million is allocated for the eight-month period as against budgeted \$5.2 million. Could the Hon. Member indicate to this House a breakdown of this expenditure?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, this has to do with the travelling of His Excellency the President, which was for both periods, the period of former President Donald Ramotar and present President David A. Granger. It is basically a sum spent by His Excellency when he travels in the country.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, under line items 6131 to 6135, under Overhead Expenses, there are Other Direct Labour Costs, Incentives, Benefits and Allowances, National Insurance, and Pensions, the money that is allocated is only \$177,000. Something seems to be wrong here. Maybe you can help me. The total employment cost under Programme: 012 is \$311,521,000 and yet the Overhead Expenses are only \$177,000. When we go back to Programme: 011, where you had a total of \$50,259,000 employment cost, wages and salaries, the Overhead Expenses were

\$4,141,000. So I am just trying to understand. How could you have a wage bill of \$311,521,000 and Overhead Expenses of only \$177,000?

Supposedly, the 177 people hired in 2015 are paying their National Insurance Scheme (NIS) and are getting their benefits and allowances. Could you explain? Something seems to be extraordinarily low or maybe something is omitted. It should not be going under another heading, in other words. This is where it should be.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I will be guided and helped here by the Hon. Minister of Finance.

Minister of Finance [Mr. Jordan]: Mr. Chairman, line items 6111 to 6115, under Total Wages and Salaries, happen to be employees who are employed through the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the Overhead Expenses will be in respect of those employees. Contracted and temporary employees' emoluments are included there - salaries, overheads, vacation allowances, *et cetera* are included as one under Contracted Employees, so as not to have it contaminated with the regular Public Service Commission employees.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the Minister's response but NIS is obligatory and, whilst you may have people who are under the PSC, their NIS deductions come out from their salaries and from the agency's budget as well, the employer's contribution. So, to me, if we just look at the NIS, you cannot have 177 people, whether employed by the PSC, contracted or any other, where the NIS contribution is so low.

Mr. Jordan: They pay their own NIS.

Ms. Teixeira: No, Sir. I worked at the Office of the President.

Mr. Jordan: You cannot tell me no. I am telling you that NIS is included as part of the Contracted Employees. We do not pay NIS for them.

Ms. Wade: It is a fresh approach.

Ms. Teixeira: It is not a fresh approach, my dear Friend. It is to do with the law. I have been a contracted employee of the Office of the President and the NIS is automatically deducted from my salary.

Mr. Jordan: It is against the rules of the Ministry of Finance's circulars. Your NIS is included as part of your contracted sum. We only pay NIS for line items 6111 - 6115, so you are against the regulations that are issued by the Ministry of Finance.

Ms. Teixeira: I am not.

Mr. Jordan: I am merely correcting you.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I think the Hon. Member is missing the point.

Mr. Jordan: I am not missing the point; I am telling you what it is.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I am just asking a very simple question.

Mr. Jordan: I have answered the question.

Ms. Teixeira: There are 122 employees whose NIS contribution is only \$71,000 for the whole of 2015. In Programme: 011 which we have just completed, there are less workers and more NIS and they both have sections which are PSC appointees and both have sections which are contracted employees. Therefore, I am saying that there is something wrong. The Minister seems to want to tell me that, if there are deductions, they are wrong.

3.15 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member...

Ms. Teixeira: I am just saying that the Minister does not want to weave and say that there is a problem. There is a problem; trust me.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you asked a question. The Minister proffered an answer. It may not be the one that you wanted or the one that you expected, but it was an answer given to your question.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: Under this line item, \$17,000,050 was budgeted in 2014 and \$13,678,000 was spent. But, for the eight-month period that we are considering, Sir, a total of \$16,541,000 has been spent. Under line item 6265, there is

a major jump to \$11,601,000. Could the Hon. Minister please give us a breakdown of what is responsible for this huge increase?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Does the Hon. Member want the actual figures?

Bishop Edghill: Yes, sir.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Eleven million, six hundred and one thousand dollars was budgeted from January to June. Of the sum, \$6.179 million was used during the period January to June, 2015. The sum budgeted for September to December would include outreaches and visits by the Ministry of Social Cohesion for outreach work which has to be done by that Ministry.

Ms. Teixeira: What happened to August?

Bishop Edghill: If I could be guided, Sir...

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Let me clarify this - up to August.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, that shows an additional sum of \$5 million, from the explanation that is offered by the distinguished Gentleman. He indicated that the travel of the President is taken care of under line item 6281 – Security Services, which is responsible for the \$4.8 million and he is now indicating that travel of other operatives in the Office of the President will be an extravagant sum - my word - of in excess of five months since June. He is giving us a figure that \$6 million was spent from January to June and the other \$5 million is to be spent between July and August. So, for two months, there is \$5 million for travel by operatives within the Office of the President. I would like to confirm.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can provide the Hon. Member with the details of those flights, but what I can say is that all of it - I am now advised by the technical people here - was spent by the previous Administration, by the previous President, for flights to the Hinterland.

Bishop Edghill: We have a difficulty here. The Hon. Member told this House that \$6 million was spent by the end of June and that is an established fact, and the information he got from his technical people. We are talking here about another \$5 million that is to be spent between July and August because, when we come to the Ministry of the Presidency, for the rest of the year, you will discover that there is also another sum that is allocated under this very same line item.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These are, as I said, sums that were spent by the previous Administration. They were not all paid up to the end of May; they are now being paid. There is not a cent under this that was spent by this Administration. We are paying bills that you left when you were in office.

Bishop Edghill: I would like to bring to this honourable House - and the Minister of Finance can bear me out on this - that the Government is not entitled to credit.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6294 – Other - \$115,618,000: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the activities that were performed under this line item? And could he do the disaggregation for me, the cost per every activity?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Does the Hon. Member want the actual items that were paid for under this head? Is that the question?

Mr. Hamilton: Yes, the category of items and the disaggregation as to the different costs.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can give you that on Wednesday morning, the actual disaggregated sums and the items that they were spent on.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I am back under line item 6265 because I do not think we have received the information that is required in this House. While we are not yet under the Ministry of Presidency, there is a sum of \$35 million that is budgeted to be spent in the last four months of this year; that is extravagant. It is a budget of 200% more than what was spent in 2014 and I am simply seeking to get the information as to what were the expenditure that was to be incurred in July and August that will warrant \$5 million. I am not going to accept the answer of credit because we all know in this House that the Government is not entitled to credit.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I did answer the question. If the Hon. Member is not happy with the answer, well, I do not know what else I can do. I gave the answers. These were bills that you created; we are paying for them now.

Bishop Edghill: We created \$35 million for the rest of the year.

Ms. Teixeira: Under line items 6271 – Telephone Charges, 6272 – Electricity Charges and 6273 – Water Charges - there is zero there; there is no allocation for any money. Therefore, I am very

confused by the Hon. Member saying that he has been paying for bills accumulated by former Members of the Government under Programme: 012. There is no money allocated. In fact, the allocation of electricity charges and telephone charges for Office of the President under Programme: 011, which we just passed, has a decline in the number of allocations for telephone and electricity charges. There is no provision here. Therefore, the point the Hon. Member is making is that paying for all these electricity and telephone bills in 2015 is not relevant to this Programme. And, if he is talking about the previous Programme, the amount of money for 2015 declined. Therefore, whatever bills he says the former Government costed, I do not know where the bills are reflecting. There is a decline in the numbers.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, will you please reclaim your seat?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes. I just need to correct that. The question I have is under line item 6116. *[The speaker hit the gavel.]*

Mr. Chairman: I am asking, Hon. Member, do you have a question to ask?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, I am coming with it.

Mr. Chairman: Then let us hear the question.

Ms. Teixeira: Yes, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could you tell me what the categories of workers under line item 6116 are? Thank you.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I will provide the answer for the question shortly. The answer I gave to the Hon. Member, Bishop Edghill, had to do with line item 6265 and nothing about telephone and electricity charges. I spoke on line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage. I dealt with the actual hiring of aircraft for the Hinterland.

Mr. Chairman, I can provide that information to the Hon. Member by the end of today.

Programme: 012 – Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and Other Services) – \$551,031,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 013 – Defence and National Security – \$34,744,000

Bishop Edghill: There is an addition of one staff under this Programme. I would like to get the designation, the name of the person filling the position and the full remuneration package.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is an employee who had been employed in the Guyana Defence Board and was transferred from one area to the other. It is Cleo Singh and her salary is \$56,000.

Bishop Edghill: I was proceeding in a particular direction because, if you look under line item 6116, for the eight-month period, in 2014, we spent \$8.9 million. It was budgeted \$8.9 million; it was revised to \$8.864 million, which meant we spent less than what was budgeted for. For the eight-month period - not the entire year - there is an increase of \$3 million plus. Certainly, a staff being employed at \$57,000 a month could not account for this increase. I would like to have what is accounting for this increase?

Mr. Chairman, I beg your protection. I believe, in this House, we have a right to ask the questions and it would seem that there is some amount of annoyance with the questions being asked. I would think that, in the Committee of Supply, it is the opportunity of the Opposition to scrutinise the Budget and that is exactly what we are doing.

3.30 p.m.

The A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) promised this nation accountability and transparency, so there should be no problem.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, and all Members, I would address this question. We need to get to the point where we want to get to. There are so many preambles to get to the point that we wonder whether we are dealing with the Estimates. We had preambles last week; we had many other things last week. Let us try to do this differently. If you are addressing a question to a Minister then address the question.

Bishop Edghill: I have asked the question, Sir. I will like to have an answer.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, is the Minister going to answer the question that I asked? What accounts for the \$3 million increase? That is the question I put.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I gave you, Hon. Member, the name of the employee. It was a transfer from one area to the other. There were some sums of money that were not paid in 2014 that have to be dealt with in 2015. It is right here. You left it. Cleo Singh is the name of the employee. You asked for it and I gave it to you, Hon. Member.

Mr. Ali: The difference in the sum budgeted under line item 6116 is \$2,906,000. The name of the additional contracted employee is given and the salary is \$56,000. Taking the vacation allowance and gratuity into consideration that comes up to an annual salary of \$830,000. There is still almost \$2 million that is not accounted for. Could the Hon. Minister account for that \$2 million?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I gave the details of the employee and all matters in relation to the employee. That is all I can provide at this point in time.

Mr. Ali: Could I ask the Hon Minister if he can give an undertaking to provide the additional details that will show where this expenditure is?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can do that but I can say it is connected with the same employee. I can provide the Member with that detail.

Mr. Ali: With full and complete respect for the Hon. Minister I want to say that this is a new employee who was employed in a new year. If I multiply a year, which is twelve months, by the salary and benefits of that employee it would not come up to that amount. If it is a new employee it cannot be arrears to that employee. I am saying to the Hon. Member, with full respect, that I agree with him that he would supply the information, but it cannot be connected to that new employee.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the Minister has undertaken to provide you with information on the question. I think the Hon. Member might wish to wait until he receives a reply from the Minister before he embarks on another round of questions.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6284, Other: I notice there is a decline in the allocation. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what this "Other" covers?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This sum deals with the warranty that was paid for specialised equipment. This has to do with the close circuit television (CCTV) cameras.

Mr. Rohee: Is this the specialised equipment that is to equip the command centre which we have been hearing so much about, or Castellani House?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with the National Intelligence Centre. The question as to where it is I do not believe arises, but it has to do with specialised equipment for that unit. I am sure the Hon. Member, in his past capacity as the Minister of Home Affairs, would have been aware of these matters since he attended the meetings in which these matters were being discussed.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister say, in respect of line item 6294, where there is another "Other", what the items are which are covered under this line item?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I will provide the answer for that question shortly.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown in respect to the utilisation of these resources?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This was training that was specific to the operations of the National Intelligence Centre. It was a small amount that dealt with the persons who are actually coming from abroad to help with the training of persons in that entity.

Mr. Ali: In relation to the expert from Trinidad, could the Hon. Member advise us on how that trainer was selected?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: What is the line item and what is the reference to Trinidad please, Hon. Member?

Mr. Ali: It is line item 6302. It is a follow-up from the Hon. Member Clement Rohee's question on the external expert being paid.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These are matters which have to do with international relations and expenses which are incurred by persons who come here to assist us with training. I never said

Trinidad. It was a trainer from United Kingdom (UK) who came to assist with the training of persons in this entity.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that we should utilise, as far as possible, local persons to provide such training? I would like the Hon. Minister to say whether, under line item 6302, any efforts were made to recruit the trainers locally.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is very specialised training and it is provided by these services abroad.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister tell us the size of the fleet and what is responsible for the...?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with the vehicles that are used by this agency. I think that is as much as I can provide to you. There are six vehicles that are being used by the agency. This is the NIC - National Intelligence Centre.

Programme: 013 – Defence and National Security – \$34,744,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 05 Ministry of the Presidency

Current Expenditure

Programme: 051 - Policy Development and Administration - \$721,392,000

Mrs. Chandarpal: Under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, I have a number of questions. I will start with three. My first question is: How many of the 122 persons are new employees? What are their job descriptions? Who are those employees?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It is the same list. I can provide that list to the Hon. Member that speaks to all of the employees, their designations, their salaries. It is the same list which showed those who were employed and those who were taken off of the list.

Mrs. Chandarpal: A follow-up Mr Chairman. Which section of the Ministry of the Presidency would they come under? Were these positions advertised? How many of those are filled by retirees? I still have more questions.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that this is a merger of administration and policy. What we have to do is look at the programme 1 and programme 2 and add them. It is the same list I will give you.

Mrs. Chandarpal: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up. Are there any overseas Guyanese among the new recruits and what is the salary for each employee?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I did say I have this list which has the salary of all the employees. There are no overseas based employees. It is a complete list of Guyanese who have been employed by the Ministry of the Presidency.

Bishop Edghill: I have a number of questions which I propose to ask the Hon. Minister but we are considering an agency that is not gazetted. We are considering an agency and we are asked to appropriate funds to an agency that is not legal in its existence.

Mr. Chairman: I must ask the Hon. Member to recall what was said here when I spoke to the chamber. Please proceed with your question, Sir.

3.45 p.m.

My understanding is that we are focusing on questions, not on speeches. Please proceed, Sir.

Bishop Edghill: I will be so guided, Mr. Chairman, but the difficulty that I am having is that we have been asked to vote and appropriate moneys and we need some guidance.

Mr. Chairman: I have given you guidance, Hon. Member. Please go ahead and ask your question and at the appropriate time I will propose the matter to the chamber.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6281, Security Services, the Ministry of the Presidency, programme 051, \$11,777,000: Supposing that this is a continuation of the arrangement that was explained by the Hon. Member, that these are the same security units that are being used, that were always in placed. For eight months we have budgeted \$7,499,000 and for four months we are budgeting

\$11,777,000. There is for eight months \$7 million and four months \$11 million. My question is: Could we have the names of all of the security firms, the date that the contracts were entered into, the size of the contract and the location that these security services are to be performed?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes. I can provide the Hon. Member with that information on Wednesday morning.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I know while you cautioned me about making speeches and I would like to take your guidance, if we continue as this, well then we are having a difficulty because for every question the information will be provided on Wednesday. We are voting on these issues now and I have a difficulty as of how to vote on these matters, Sir.

Second question Sir. Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: Twenty-five million dollars for four months, as compared to what took place eight months under the Office of the President. Under the eight months of the Office of the President, local travel and subsistence... Could we get a breakdown of how this \$25 million dollars is to be spent?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, are we talking about line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence?

Bishop Edghill: Yes Sir.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I am seeing, under line item 6261, \$4,567,000.

Bishop Edghill: Let me assist you. There are several lines items that fall under the heading "Transport, Travel and Postage".

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: You said line item 6261. I am answering you on line item 6261.

Bishop Edghill: Local Travel and Subsistence, \$4 million...

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes. That is the answer.

Bishop Edghill:... Other Transport, Travel and Postage - \$10,399,000, Vehicle Spares and Services - \$10,167,000, there is a total of \$25,553,000 under those headings, a significant increase. I am talking about line item 6261. I would like to have an explanation as to the

breakdown of the expenditure under this line item. While I am on the floor, line item 6265, I would like to have a breakdown of the expenditure of \$10,399,000?

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member...

Bishop Edghill: I am waiting on an answer, Sir. My question has not been answered, Sir.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sums that are identified under that line item... There is a sum of \$10 million which has to be spent between September and December. The sum of \$22,999,000 was actually spent last year between January and August; there is a sum of \$26,333,000 and for September to December, \$10,167,000 and it has to do with the maintenance of the fleet of vehicles. The total of serviceable vehicles which have to be dealt with and there also are a number of vehicles which are brought in by the Special Assets Recovery Unit, in which we are trying to ensure that those vehicles become serviceable so that we do not have to buy new vehicles.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I have asked two specific questions and for clarity...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will allow two additional questions on this item.

Bishop Edghill: ... Sir, I am asking, the Ministry of the Presidency, agency programme 051, line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence would be \$4.5 million for the four-month period; under line item 6265, Other Transport - \$10 million, under 6264, Vehicle Spares and Services - \$10,167,000. I am asking the Hon. Member, under all three of those line items, to bring to the attention of this House the breakdown of how this money is proposed to be spent in the four-month period.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: If the Hon. Member had asked the question in such a simple manner I could have provided him with the answer because he wants a breakdown. I could provide him with a breakdown. He can get that on Wednesday morning as well.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Hon. Member to look at Subsidies and Contribution to Local Organisations, under line item 6321, and, on page 526, Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC), and it is also on page 759 under statutory bodies, based on the discussions this morning, as a constitutional body needs to be hived off and put separately under

contributions to constitutional bodies. Therefore I am proposing that the local contributions, under line item 6321, be reduced by \$26,206,000, which is allocated for the August to December period under this line item. The ERC should be removed completely from this item.

Secondly, the Ministry of the Presidency, I would like to ask the Hon. Member, if he could please advise when and where the gazette or the order sign by the Hon. Member Mr. Jordan, creating the Ministry of the Presidency, was published in the *Official Gazette*. If it was not done, could he please say when? Preferably it should be done before we vote on the Appropriation Bill as the Ministry of the Presidency is being allocated funds and not legally created poses a serious problem.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There are two matters. One has to do with the Ethnic Relations Commission and I agree with the Hon. Member in that regard. The second question has to do with the gazette. I believe that the Chairman had actually ruled on that matter previously and, therefore, I would not seek to go beyond that ruling.

Mrs. Chandarpal: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I have notice that there is no allocation to the Ministry of Social Cohesion. Could you please advise, Minister, on how this Ministry will undertake all the initiatives that were told to us by the Minister? I have looked in vain. I have looked at volume 2, page 20, under programme 051, Policy Development and Administration, under activity, the Ministry of Social Cohesion is stated but there is no money allocated. Could you please advise us?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There is no Ministry called the Ministry of Social Cohesion. It is an activity under the Ministry of the Presidency. There is a Minister of Social Cohesion, but there is no Ministry called Social Cohesion. It is dealt within under the line item.

Mr. Ali: In relation to line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, and a follow-up to my colleague the Hon. Member Mrs. Indrane Chandarpal question, if there is no Ministry of Social Cohesion, would the Hon. Member agree that the designation as Minister of Social Cohesion poses some difficulty? It should be instead a Minister within the Ministry of the Presidency with responsibility for social cohesion.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That is the manner in which the *Official Gazette* has published it and that is the manner in which the Minister's responsibility was created. I would not respectfully wish to go beyond that. The Hon. Member, at some point in his future, if ever he comes on this side, he can do that.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, this is the last question before I put the question. Please proceed.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister advise us as to where is the budget to undertake the activities of that department catered for, the recurrent budget?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, the activities are covered under all of the various lines that are in the Ministry of the Presidency.

Mrs. Chandarpal: Line item 6294, Other: Could you please provide a breakdown of all the activities? For line 6291, National Other Event, it is the same. We would like to have a breakdown of all the activities and the sums allocated as well.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes. I can provide that to you Wednesday morning.

Programme: 051 - Policy Development and Administration - \$721,392,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Pages 48 and 49.

Mr. Ali: It is capital expenditure.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I did that in respect of the first item we looked at. It seems that there are competing views as to how we should proceed. I am quite prepared to proceed with capital expenditure next, and I will simply ask Members to bear in mind that I would like to complete this before we have our break. That is all and so we move to capital.

4.00 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration - \$2,311,633,000

Mr. Ali: Project 1214100, Office and Residence of the President, \$66,179,000, “Upgrading of electrical system and rehabilitation of building (Previously reflected under Agency 01, Project code 1200200): The Hon. Minister would recall that under the Office of the President there was a budgeted amount of \$14 million which he said was a rollover contract from 2014 to complete electrical work. Then how it is that in the next four months there is \$66 million allocated under the same head for the provision again of electrical works and systems.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: These items have to do with the electoral systems at the Office of the President and State House. You would recognise that there is a significant amount of work to be done in these two buildings, in fact, in these two clusters of buildings. It is not just as if it is one building. These sums are meant to cater to these items there.

Mr. Ali: With full and complete respect for the Hon. Minister, between December 2014 and August 2015, according to the profile, \$48,821, 000 was spent on the upgrading of electrical system, Office of the President. We have in the next four months, in profile, reference number 4, a further \$66,179 million, which takes us to \$117,179,000 for electrical works at the office and residence of the President, as it is described. Could the Hon. Member give us a full breakdown of the works when it was awarded, who it was awarded to and the form of tendering that was done?

If the works are not awarded as yet, could the Hon. Member give us a complete breakdown of what it is that this additional \$69 million is meant to do?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: These are works that are being done, as I said, at the Ministry of the Presidency, the compound, the Office of the President and the State House, that is the residence where the President lives. There are certain matters which require a certain level of understanding, where it has to do with the security of the President, where it has to do with emergency works. I do believe that these sums, which we are asking for here, are a very small amount when it has to do with the security of the President, with the security of the office itself of the President. These are matters that have to do with national security. Where I can provide information to the Hon. Member I will be very careful as to how much of that information will be shared, but I can share that information with the Hon. Member, tomorrow. I will caution that

these are matters of national security in nature and I respectfully ask that they be treated with the level of confidentiality that that type of information requires.

Mr. Ali: The safety of the President is all of our concerns. We are very concerned about the safety of the President. However, there must be a transparent process. What tendering process was utilised to have the procurement of this security system and what percentage of the \$69 million, which is classified as electrical here, is going toward the payment for security of the President?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: We are talking here about security systems; we are talking here about electrical work. As I said, these are works of a confidential nature. These are works that have to do with the security of the President. I can provide you with the information, Hon. Member, but I will not go beyond that. These are matters of a highly confidential nature and this is the manner in which we have dealt with sitting Presidents in the past.

Mr. Ali: Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that while the matter of security might be confidential, the matter of a tendering process is a public process. I am asking for the information now on the tendering process.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I think I have answered the question. It has to do with works that have to do with the security of the President. I am not prepared to go beyond that.

Mr. Ali: In the interest of transparency, would the Hon. Member be willing even to say whether it was sole sourcing or direct procurement?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: My understanding is that these were done under the Procurement Act. The Procurement Act requires and provides for with matters which have to do with a security nature, in particular, defence and security, that these items can be sole sourced. What I can do, as I said to you, is to provide the process which was followed and the award of the contract – who got it.

Mr. Ali: One follow-up question please. I will ask for a very simple document. Could the Hon. Minister undertake to give us the date on which the application to the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board was made to seek sole sourcing – the date that it was done?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can provide the information the Member requires, as it relates to this particular matter and the manner in which it was dealt with.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I go to a different project.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, this is the last question on this particular heading. Please proceed.

Bishop Edghill: Project 1701700, Minor Works, \$95 million is allocated for four months, Sir. Presidential minor works voted \$95 million for four months, when in times past \$95 million was allocated for the entire year and it was cut to \$1. Could the Hon. Member tell this House now, how we propose to spend \$95 million in the four months?

While I am on my feet, Sir, because I noted you said that is the last question, as it relates to the purchase of equipment, project 2507900, there is a sum of \$43,564,000. While we would have seen the substantial sum under the Office of the President, which was a question I had asked earlier, under this new programme, we are spending a sum of \$46 million in four months. When the Hon. Minister answered the question, as it relates to the fleet of the Office of the President, under the line item "Fuel and Lubricants" he said two vehicles were acquired. I have noticed, Sir, under Land Transport, project 24005200, there is an allocation of \$21,500,000 for vehicles. I would like to know how many vehicles it will be for and for the use by whom.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The two vehicles, which the Hon. Member spoke about, are the two vehicles that I indicated that were purchased for the President's use – those two vehicles.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Harmon...

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Are you going to wait until I am finished, please?

Bishop Edghill: No. I would like to interrupt, Sir, because Mr. Harmon is saying to this Assembly "vehicles purchased" and now coming to this Assembly for the appropriations, which means we have expended the moneys before it has been...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have asked a question. Allow the Minister to answer the question.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sum of \$95 million, under project 1701700, is a sum that is spent at the discretion of the President. That is what that sum is about. It has been there from time immemorial.

Bishop Edghill: Is it for four months?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sum that is there is for the discretion of the President.

Bishop Edghill: It is \$95 million discretion for four months.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That has always been there. What is the other question that the Hon. Member asked? He was asking so many questions, rattling off, and I could hardly remember them.

Bishop Edghill: It is project 2507900, "Purchase of Equipment". I am helping you since I am rattling.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, the bulk of this money was used in the first period of the year...

Bishop Edghill: This is the Ministry of the Presidency, a new programme that is now to be appropriated and the Minister is telling us that this money is already used. It is an illegality.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, would the Hon. Member, give me an opportunity? I am the Minister and he has an opportunity to question me. Why is he now trying to speak as if he is the Minister?

Bishop Edghill: If you are the Minister, tell the Assembly the truth.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I am giving the Assembly the truth, Mr. Chairman.

Bishop Edghill: You said that it was already spent.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I did indicate where these moneys are allocated and I do not believe that I have anything further to say on this matter.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I put the question, which is that the sum stated for Agency 05, Ministry of the Presidency...

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, could I ask that it be amended to exclude the ERC capital expenditure which is under Programme 51? When you put the motions to the House, under these items, could you please say as amended so that...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I have begun to put the proposal and when that process as begun, I think Members should let it continue.

Programme: 051 – Policy Development and Administration - \$2,311,633,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 053 – Public Service Management - \$350,746,000

4.15 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: the Estimates states that there are 42 employees, the same as it was in 2014, but the allocation, when added together, is less than what was allocated in 2014. Could the Hon. Minister explain?

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence. Programme 052 has not been addressed as yet under current estimates. We dealt with the current and capital expenditure for programme 051. Now, we have to deal with the current and capital expenditure for programme 052 before we deal with programme 053.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I crave your indulgence on this matter but programme 053 – Public Service Management is now being addressed.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to be rude to you in any way but we skipped programme 052. Under the Ministry of the Presidency, we did not deal with it. I am just bringing to your attention that we moved from considering the current expenditure under programme 051 to considering the current expenditure under programme 053. We also considered the capital expenditure under programme 051. We have skipped a programme. If you wish to proceed with

programme 053, it is understandable, but we would have to come back to consider programme 052 because that has not been passed in this Committee.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member. What I suggest that we do is consider all of the current expenditure and then consider all of the capital expenditure. That would certainly help us all around. I will put the question since the issues have all been ventilated.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 052 – Defence and National Security - \$72,211,000

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, may I?

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Rohee, how could I deny you? Please speak.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116.

Mr. Chairman: Are you going ahead of me?

Mr. Rohee: I give way to you then.

Mr. Chairman: Perhaps you should let this particular issue be settled and then we could proceed when we deal with programme 053.

Ms. Teixeira: We need to ask questions under programme 052.

Mr. Chairman: I thought the Hon. Member was going ahead.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: there are eight in number. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to provide the details with respect to these contracted employees? That is to say the names, the designations, when they were employed and the emoluments relevant to each employee.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: We could provide that information but these were persons who were employed under the watch of the Hon. Member, but I could provide him with that information. These are personnel from the National Intelligence Centre (NIC).

Ms. Teixeira: If it is that these persons were hired previously...This Budget is for August to December, 2015. This is stated as employment of new persons. That is unless the diagram at the bottom which states that there were zero persons in 2014 and eight in 2015 is wrong. You are saying that these are not new persons.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These are not new persons.

Ms. Teixeira: They were new persons employed in 2015 and not in 2014.

Bishop Edghill: Under Programme 052, line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants, there is a budgeted sum of \$5,133,000, as compared to the same programme when it was listed under the Office of the President \$1,367,000 was spent for eight months. Now, for four months, there is a budgeted sum of \$5,133,000. While I am on my feet, for line item 6284 – Other, there is a huge increase of \$33,568,000 and for line item 6294 – Other, there is a huge increase of \$31,793,000. We would like to have details on these.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Line item 6231 caters for increased activities by the Civil Defence Commission and the National Intelligence Centre for the rest of this year.

Bishop Edghill: Just for clarification, is the Hon. Member saying that the Civil Defence Commission will no longer benefit from a subvention under the head of ‘Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations’, as was the case before? I think that under the Ministry of the Presidency, there is an allocation for the Civil Defence Commission.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That is the answer I am giving the Hon. Member. The sum is to cater for the activities of the CDC and the NIC for the rest of the year.

Line item 6294 – Other: this increase is due to the expansion of the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) Project. More manpower would be needed, also, to monitor these cameras on a 24-hour basis. We did indicate that that was going to be an element of the crime fighting strategy and that intelligence becomes an important feature in that activity. This sum of money was allocated for that purpose.

Bishop Edghill: Is the Hon. Member indicating that this money would be to pay salaries for additional personnel? That should be listed under Staffing Details – how many people would be hired and under what capacity. They cannot be paid from line items 6284 and 6294.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with the CCTV Project. As I said, basically, it would have to be manned and monitored over a 24-hour period. It is about manning the equipment and things of that nature. You are quite right. It does not have to do with salaries.

Mr. Ali: Just for clarification, could I ask the Hon. Minister: if it is not for personnel, then what constitutes management?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I said “manning”.

Mr. Ali: What constitutes manning? If a CCTV system is being manned, I suppose that there should be people there to man the system, unless we have advanced to robots.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Please do not try to be smart.

Mr. Ali: I am not trying to be.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It does not necessarily have to do with paying the salaries of persons who would be dealing with these matters. There are other issues in relation to the manning of the equipment. I am not going to say anything more. It is a service that would be provided for the manning of the equipment on a 24-hour basis.

Mr. Ali: Just a clarification. Has this manning been outsourced?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These are matters of national security and national intelligence. I said, initially, that this is part of the National Intelligence Centre. I said that.

The other question, I believe, is in relation to line item 6284. I think we are looking at an increase of a sum of \$1,300,000. Is that the sum you are asking about, Hon. Member?

Bishop Edghill: No, sir. Defence and National Security - Programme 013: for the eight-month period, under line item 6284, \$2,517,000 expended was. Under line item 6284 –Defence and National Security – Ministry of the Presidency, \$33,585,000 is now budgeted and under line item 6294, \$31,783,000 is now budgeted.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I think the Hon. Member is crossing the lines.

Bishop Edghill: Let me speak slowly for you so that you could understand.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: You should get the correct line item.

Bishop Edghill: I am giving you the correct line item. It is line item 6284.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd.) Harmon: Is that okay, Hon. Member?

4.30 p.m.

Mr. Rohee: In respect of line item 6294 – Other, the Hon. Member informed us that the \$31.7 million has to do with the procurement of CCTV cameras for the expansion of the project. Would he be kind enough to say what the process with respect to the procurement of the cameras was?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is not money that has been spent as yet; this is money that has been identified to be spent. The process will follow the same process that is identified for matters of a highly classified security nature. The cameras were acquired and it would be following, basically, the same line. For them to be consistent there has to be equipment that could merge with each other. This is basically an expansion of what exists. So, this is the explanation in the line item. We are buying additional cameras as part of a system which exists.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up question on this same line item. If the Hon. Member is telling this Committee that this for the purchase of cameras in compatibility with what is already there, it cannot be considered a current expenditure. That is a capital expenditure.

Programme: 052 - Defence and National Security - \$72,211,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 053 Public Service Management - \$350,746,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6116- Contracted Employees: the Estimates reflects that there were 31 such employees at the beginning of the year, and it is showing now for the remainder of the year – from August – that there are 30 employees. Could the Hon. Minister state for us the name,

designation and salary of that employee? On that same line item, could the Hon. Minister share with us all changes that would have taken place in this category of employees from June, 2015?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The Hon. Member is asking about line item 6116 and the staffing details on page 51 indicate the same number. These are the numbers that I am dealing with.

Mr. G. Persaud: This Budget is for the remaining four months of this year. This Budget has to be compared with the budgeted provisions for the previous eight months of this year. The previous budget for the eight months of this year is showing 31 persons listed under line item 6116. This Budget is showing 30 persons. So, there is one missing. We are asking: what is that person's designation and salary? We are also asking for any other changes in this category of employees from June, 2015.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The change of the one person as of June, 2015 is Ms. Margaret Cummings, Chief Personnel Officer; the basic salary is \$398, 659.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants: in 2014, the budget for both entities was \$5,900,074. For the first eight months of this year, the average expenditure was \$508 per month. If \$508 is multiplied by 4, one would get in excess of what is budgeted under this line item for August to December. August to December is showing an amount of \$1,200,048 which is \$666,000 less than what was allocated to that agency in the year 2014. Could the Hon. Minister give us an explanation and state whether this allocation would be sufficient to see this Ministry through to 31st December, 2015?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Indeed, that sum is sufficient to see the department through the rest of the year. In fact, the decrease is because of the number of vehicles that are being utilised by them now. It was 14 at that time and now it has gone down to six. So, this is really what is responsible. In addition to that, the number of out of town trips has been significantly reduced.

Mr. G. Persaud: I turn my attention to line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings. There is an allocation of \$1,800,040. The budget for maintenance of buildings for 2014 was \$798,000. There is a 356% increase in this line item. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us: what works and on which buildings these works are intended to be effected or was effected?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This increase has to do with work that was done at the Public Service Ministry (PSM) building - additional painting, plumbing, and electrical work. Additionally, a Secretariat for the Commissions of Inquiry has been established at that building, so that Commissions of Inquiry which are held by the State would not be held at different places. There would be one place where these Commissions can be held and there would be a staff that could basically be rotated. There would be more than one Commissions actually going on at the same time, but the facilities that are going to be utilised would be the same facilities for several Commissions. In this way, the State would be saving significant sums of money on these activities.

Mr. G. Persaud: If we look at line item 6272 - Electricity Charges - we would recognise that there is a 25% increase in the allocation for electricity. Could the Hon. Minister give us an explanation? Has there been an increase in electricity cost?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: As I indicated earlier, for the Commissions of Inquiry, some restructuring work had to be done to the building. Also accommodated in this Ministry is a department of the Ministry of the Presidency which deals with citizenship and we have to provide facilities for that. A lot of the work that has been done there – the consumption of supply and the installation of additional air conditioning (AC) units and other electrical equipment – is for the PSM.

In fact, what we are also looking to do is to activate a central AC unit that has been in the building there for a long time and that would require some additional work. What we hope is that, once we activate that, there would be a significant saving on the smaller units that are utilised in individual offices. This is a huge generator that has been there for some time and we are working to have that activated.

Mr. G. Persaud: With the human traffic that would be in that building and the number of activities that would be held in that building, given the explanation by the Hon. Minister, there is a decrease in the allocation for line item 6271 - Telephone Charges. With all of these increased activities there is a decrease in the allocation for telephone charges. Is there a special system that would be put in to allow for inward and outward communication?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This reduction is based on the fact that there were significant prepayments made on telephone and telephone services by the previous administration and from which we will now benefit.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6302- Training (including Scholarships): could you explain the \$28,441,000 increase under this line item?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with the cost which we have to pay for students who are on scholarships. There are 286 students who are completing in 2015; there are 202 commencing students in 2015; and there are 483 continuing students. I can provide the Hon. Member with the breakdown of the institutions these students attend and the number of candidates in each category.

Mr. G. Persaud: I welcome the provision of that information, so I would not have to ask that question. Line item 6321- Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: over the years, this would have been an item with an allocation of zero under the Ministry. Could the Hon. Minister explain the \$2 million allocation, this time, under the line item?

4.45 p.m.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is for a subvention to the Critchlow Labour College (CLC) in that sum of \$2 million.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you, Hon. Minister. I think that something else is stated in the legend. When I look at the head 'Subsides and Contributions for Local Organisations', I am seeing listed the Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) listed instead of Critchlow Labour College. Could the Hon. Member confirm?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That is correct. It is the subvention to the Guyana Public Service Union.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you, Hon. Minister. Under line item 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to Intl. Organisations, the two organisations, the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) and the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration Management (CAPAM), generally, have fixed sums. The allocation, over the years, was

\$6,598,000. However, I noticed that the allocation, this year, has increased to \$8,931,000. Could the Hon. Minister advise us on the nature of the increase?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with contribution to two international organisations to which we subscribe, one being the Caribbean Centre For Development Administration (CARICAD) and the other being the Commonwealth Association For Public Administration Management (CAPAM). The CAPAM contribution is \$741,000 and that remains standard. For CARICAD there is an increase, which they have asked for. From the previous sum stated, they are now asking for the sum of \$8,190,000 and this is the reason for the increase for that subvention.

Mr. Persaud: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister.

Programme: 053 – Public Service Management - \$350,746,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would like, with your assistance, to complete consideration of the current expenditure. We have two other items on it and with your assistance we could complete these two items and then take our break.

Programme: 054 Natural Resource Management - \$354,187,000

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, with your leave, could I be given two minutes to prepare?

Mr. Chairman: You can have that time, sir.

Mr. Lumumba: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: the staffing details state that there are 38 contracted employees in the year 2015 and there is a budgetary allocation of \$40,250,000. Could the Hon. Minister provide the designations - about five or six – of the top employees and the emoluments of those contracted employees?

Mr. Trotman: The top six are: Permanent Secretary – \$587,610; Policy Coordinator – \$481,664; Compliance Managers – \$443,547; Technical Officer – \$291,900; and Environment Officer – \$103,267. These we inherited from the last administration.

Mr. Lumumba: I assume that the Commissioner is a part of the Natural Resources. I noticed that his emolument is not stated in the top six amounts.

Mr Trotman: That is not a subvention agency and the details can be found in Appendix T.

Mr. Lumumba: Mr. Minister, would any one of these contracted employees be responsible for the technical training of the small miners, particularly as it relates to the problems in the open pits – the many deaths and accidents?

Mr. Trotman: The Ministry provides policy guidance only. Training is done by the Commission under the guidance of the Board. Again, I repeat that a report was recently issued which we would be following up on in terms of recommendations, *vis-à-vis* mining accidents.

Mr. Lumumba: Are you saying that the Board of Directors is responsible for the training? I do not understand what you said. I may have missed what you said.

Mr. Trotman: I believe that the Hon. Member is being distracted by voices behind. I said that the Commission carries out the training under the supervision of the Board, but the Board is not involved in the day-to-day training.

Mr. Lumumba: My brother is an attorney and I am sure that he understands a basic question. I am asking if there is any contracted employee who is responsible for the training in this particular area.

Mr. Trotman: I answered that question minutes ago. I said that none of them are. The Ministry does not get involved in training. It guides policy but it does not get involved in the training of people. The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) does that; not the Ministry.

Mr. Lumumba: I am baffled. My understanding is that the Ministry is responsible for the GGMC. Even if the Ministry does not have the details, it seems to me that the Minister should be able to identify the person at GGMC who has the responsibility and the framework for doing this type of training.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you asking a question or are you making a speech? Please ask the question you want to ask of the Minister.

Mr. Lumumba: I asked the question, but it seems that I have to expand on the question.

Mr. Chairman: I did hear the Minister answer the question. If you wish to ask a supplementary, you are free to do so, sir.

Mr. Lumumba: My supplementary is: is the Minister aware or knows the person at the GGMC who is directly responsible for training for small miners in the particular area that I mentioned.

Mr. Trotman: We do not intend to be disruptive in any way. The Member asked which one of the contracted officers is responsible for training. Again, I answer that none of them in the Ministry is responsible for training. Training is done by the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission and, more particularly, through the Guyana Mining School and Training Centre, which was put into operation at the end of 2013. None of the contracted workers here is involved in training. I do not know how many times I could answer that question.

Mr. Lumumba: Line item 6116. I am trying to find out if anyone of these persons would be responsible for training or holding the hands of those small businessmen who may want to get involved in the mining industry.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am sure that you want to be helpful, but you seem to be repeating the same question.

Mr. Lumumba: This is a different question.

Mr. Chairman: It is to the same Minister, who has said no before.

Mr. Lumumba: One question was about the technical aspects of the pit operations. This other question is about those individuals who may want to get involved in small scale mining. This is from a business sense and not from a technical sense of operation. For those who may want to be involved in business, would any one of these high-powered contracted employees be responsible for training and organising the individual in that particular area?

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, do you require me to give the same answer that I have given about four times before? The answer is no. None of the persons listed is responsible.

Mr. Lumumba: Thank you. I just want to be clear on that. Line item 6133 – Benefits & Allowances: could the Hon. Minister indicate the number and category of persons who are expected to enjoy the benefits and allowance from this budgetary provision?

Mr. Trotman: There is only one employee at this point in time who comes under the Public Service Commission. All of the others are contracted employees.

Mr. Lumumba: Am I to understand that those other categories the Minister mentioned do not enjoy benefits and allowance like the others?

Mr. Trotman: Being contracted, their benefits and allowances are in their contracts as packages. This is what we inherited from the last administration. We wish it were not so, but this is what we are working with right now.

Mr. Lumumba: I just want to ensure that you did not change it.

Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: could the Hon. Minister provide us with the number of vehicles in the fleet and state how many vehicles would receive fuel and lubricants from the budgetary provision?

5.00 p.m.

Mr. Trotman: There is a total of six vehicles in the department, all receiving fuel and lubricants.

Mr. Lumumba: Could the Minister tell this honourable House, without calling names, of the six vehicles, what the designations are of the individuals who have access to fuel and lubricants for the vehicles?

Mr. Trotman: May I be allowed to provide that information tomorrow morning to the Hon. Member?

Mr. Lumumba: Of course; you can wait until tomorrow night.

Could the Minister inform this House as to whether any of the vehicles are new?

Mr. Trotman: The answer is no. We are using vehicles that were found and some that were able to be recovered. Thank you.

Mr. Lumumba: Is the Hon. Minister saying that some of the vehicles were lost?

Mr. Trotman: Yes, they were hidden and two were recovered.

Mr. Lumumba: Are we saying that the Minister had the individuals who stole and hid vehicles...

Mr. Trotman: I did not say that.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I will ask you to address a question to the Minister.

Mr. Lumumba: Minister, are you saying that vehicles were stolen or hidden and were recovered and the matter was not taken to the police?

Mr. Trotman: I did not use the word "stolen". I am saying that, when a call went out, there were two vehicles that, for some reason, did not find their way back home. I found them and I brought them home.

Mr. Lumumba: Line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly how many buildings are likely to be maintained in 2015, including the vacant and incomplete Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) building on High Street?

Mr. Trotman: Under this line item, only one building will be maintained and the works to be done are electrical works, changing of locks and minor repairs and maintenance. That is the building on Brickdam.

Mr. Lumumba: Under the same line item, could the Minister explain to this National Assembly and the nation why it is that none of the funding will be utilised to repair and rehabilitate the building on High Street?

Mr. Trotman: The building has been condemned as being unfit for human habitation and that is why GGMC officials are refusing to enter. They also say that the building is in such poor state that it must be pulled down in its entirety; they feel as if they were robbed.

Mr. Lumumba: I need clarification on this issue. Is the Minister saying that his position, at this point in time, is that the building be torn down and rebuilt?

Mr. Trotman: We are about to get the final assessment from a structural engineer before a decision is made. As presently advised, we cannot even tile it because the tiles will bring the floors down and the staff of GGMC said that they fear for their lives and limbs if they were to enter it.

Mr. Lumumba: What a caring Minister.

Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister say how much of the budgetary allocation will be spent on spares and for how many vehicles? Could the Minister also say how much will be spent for servicing of the vehicles?

Mr. Trotman: This figure takes care of six vehicles. There is no intention to acquire any other vehicles for this year. If I do, we will speak to Hon. Member Irfaan Ali.

Mr. Lumumba: Line item 6281 - Security Services...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you have many other questions to ask on this matter?

Mr. Lumumba: I said line item 6281 – Security Services - Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I asked whether you have many other questions to ask on this item. Can you answer?

Mr. Lumumba: Mr. Chairman, I came to work.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Lumumba, proceed.

Mr. Lumumba: I will be very quick. Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister provide the House with the name or names of the security company or companies and the locations where security officers will be assigned?

Mr. Trotman: There are two companies that provided services prior to the change of Administration – the Guyana Employment Bureau (GEB) Security Services Inc. and MMC Security Force Inc. and they are located at the Ministry. GEB provides electronic monitoring and a physical presence and MMC provides electronic monitoring.

Mr. Ali: Follow-up: line item 6281 – Security Services: Is this a continuation of an existing contract? If so, when was that contract awarded and for how long?

Mr. Trotman: The contract is a one-year contract and was awarded in February of this year and it was approved by the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB).

Mr. Lumumba: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: Could the Hon. Minister identify the equipment which have been identified for maintenance and further say how many pieces of equipment will be maintained and the estimated cost for each equipment?

Mr. Trotman: Under this line item come repairs of the photocopiers, printers and the servicing of equipment generally, in the department.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say to the House what method will be utilised in awarding these scholarships?

Mr. Trotman: I am advised that this is for internal training where the various agencies are brought in. There is no contracting out for this and no scholarships are granted.

Mr. Ali: With full respect to the Hon. Minister, the line item reads:

“Training (including Scholarships)”

So, there must be some inclusion of some scholarships there. If the description of the line item is Training (including Scholarships), then we cannot say that scholarships in some form or nature...unless the Hon. Minister is saying that it was an oversight.

Mr. Trotman: It is not an oversight. I must commend the Member. He seems to be sharper than my Shadow Minister. This is the designation that is repeated throughout the Estimates. This is how the line item is labelled, but, in this instance, there are no scholarships. If one were to go to another agency, one would see it repeated like that. In this instance, it is neither a misnomer nor a mistake; there are just no scholarships.

Mr. Lumumba: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make sure that you ensure that the Hon. Minister does not get personal with me because everyone in this Assembly knows that I am quite capable of protecting myself and getting personal.

Mr. Trotman: You are a bad man.

Mr. Lumumba: No. If you insult me and try to get personal, I will double it. I have been very peaceful and calm, so I am telling you to be careful. I am answering you professionally. If you get out of bounds, I will respond to you. Mr. Chairman, please ensure that the Hon. Minister does not get out of bounds.

Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the names of the goods and services to be procured utilising this budgetary provision?

Mr. Trotman: This line item refers to expenses when delegations are being visited and others who attend at the departments, for refreshment, sometimes gifts. We try to give gifts of local craft, books published by the Protected Areas Commission and other such gifts. That is why the figure is as it is - \$340,000 for the year.

Mr. Lumumba: Line item 6302 - Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister provide this National Assembly with the details relating to the nature of the training programme, the category and the number of persons who will benefit from such programme?

Mr. Trotman: Would I be given the indulgence of tomorrow morning, please, Mr. Chairman? There is no difficulty in providing that information?

Mr. Chairman: You have it, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Trotman: Thank you.

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - \$261,712,000. On page 526, there is the breakdown for Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission, National Parks Commission and Protected Area Commission, but, on page 528, there is the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment which has allocations for the same agencies for 2015. Because the Ministry of Natural Resources is not listed on the Schedule that we are looking at between now and Wednesday... Therefore, we are only looking at Programme: 054. Could I ask the Hon. Members, both Minister of Finance and Minister Trotman, whether the figures we are seeing on page 526 for local subvention organisations, which is \$261,712,000, as on page 53, gross for the entire year of

2015? If not - and I suspect that it is not because the figures are lower - how do we address the figures pertaining to January to August, 2015 under Agency 24 – Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment? It is not on the Schedule that we received. Therefore, how are we going to approve or discuss the allocations for the same agencies for the January to August period?

Or is it that the subventions to the natural resource management, as reflected in \$261,712,000, are annualised? I really do need clarification on that because there is a rather concerning reduction in the fees for 2015 if you say that it is annualised.

5.15 p.m.

The other issue is this - and I just need clarification - under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees - do these persons include the climate change employees? Where are they located now? Is it at the Office of the President (OP) or the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment? Where is the climate change unit now? That is a unit that deals with the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) as well as the Guyana-Norway Agreement, the targets and the reaching of the goals. Is it in Programme: 054 – National Resource Management - or is it somewhere else? Could you guide us so that we would be able to know where to look for them – not necessarily physically located but structurally?

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the last question on the Office of Climate Change, that has already been dealt with under Ministry Administration and so it would not fall here. Insofar as the apparent confusion regarding the two figures, we are to add them and come up with the sum total of eight and four months respectively and the details can be found in Appendix T.

Ms. Teixeira: I need guidance particularly from the Minister of Finance. I appreciate the point that you grossed and added the two – the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and your Natural Resource Management. But the problem is that there is no place in the Schedule for us to approve the grossing under Natural Resource Management. Therefore, all that we have here to approve is Natural Resource Management under OP, unless this is rectified. Do you understand what I am saying, Minister?

If you would allow me, Mr. Chairman, I would like to go again. Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - includes allocations for Natural Resource Management and subventions for Environmental Protection Agency, Guyana Lands & Surveys Commission, National Parks Commission and Protected Area Commission totalling of \$261,712,000. However, on page 526 of the Budget document, there is something called the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment which has the same agencies with a total of \$346,359,000. I am not disputing the figures, Minister. I am asking, how do we approve this when it is not on the Schedule? Programme: 054 is on the Schedule for today but there is no place for the Ministry of National Resources and Environment for us to cover from January to August under these same agencies. That is why my question was, have you grossed or annualised the figures under Programme: 054? If you have not done that, then what do we do with the figures or moneys that were for 2015 from January to August?

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, we much appreciate the Hon. Member's acumen in pointing this out. I believe that, when the Schedule was being prepared, there was an omission and we are grateful for that indication. It will therefore be added. I would like to say something since there was a snide remark. These schedules are prepared by the Parliament Office and not by any Ministry or agency, so there was no attempt to hide, hoodwink or avoid the scrutiny. Therefore, if there is an omission, then it is acknowledged and we will remedy it.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, we will have a further issue here and I think we will need to break to solve this one. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment: on page 528, the total for local organisations is \$346,359,000 and, if you go to the Programme details on page 162, which was the period from January to August, you will see the table which reflects January to August as \$267,983,000. There is a disparity there that would also affect the final appropriation under this subhead. It then goes further. If you have your programme details and the full amount for the agencies, whether EPA or whichever, it must balance because the agencies that are listed...

Mr. Trotman: With due respect, I am not sure what I should be answering. Nonetheless, if one were to go to page 154, one would see the figure \$267,983,000, \$78,376,000 and \$135,147,000. When added, those give \$481,506,000. So they are all accounted for and there is no discrepancy.

Mr. Ali: There is a big discrepancy.

Mr. Trotman: It is all there. The \$267,983,000 is for Environmental Management. Mr. Chairman, I would appreciate a question that I can answer, please.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, with full respect to the Hon. Minister of Finance and the Minister of Governance, you cannot just put the question. We have to resolve discrepancy wherever it exists. We are not here to stop the putting of the question. We just have to ensure that we get it right. Hon. Member, I would like to ask you a direct question under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. Under the Ministry of the Presidency, you have budgeted for the next four months \$261,712,000 and, under the Ministry which covers January to August, you have \$267,983,000, which gives you a grand annualised total of \$529,695,000.

The entire contribution in 2014 was \$425,091,000, which means that you have an increase in the allocation of \$104,604,000. What constitutes this increase?

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Minister of Finance, to whose wisdom I bow, advises me that the figures are correctly stated in the Estimates and I advise that we move on.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, I am not questioning figures anymore. I am putting to the Hon. Minister that there is an increase in the total subvention from 2014 of \$104,604,000. What constitutes this increase?

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, the increase can be accounted for by the works being done by the EPA to enhance its Compliance Division, which is a new Division that is coming on stream, and for the Protected Areas Commission for increased staffing and other works.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Hon. Minister if he would be kind enough to tell me what percentage goes to EPA and what percentage goes to the other agency because I am then going to calculate on 2014 and 2015 whether these two agencies actually had an increase since my figures were not showing me such a move?

Mr. Trotman: Could I ask to provide all those details in the morning, percentages and more?

Mr. Ali: Most definitely, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Trotman: Thank you.

Mr. Lumumba: Mr. Chairman, line item 6321: Could the Hon. Minister say how much of this budgetary allocation has been set aside, if any, for the drafting of a national policy to guide the works of the Commission?

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, the moneys budgeted for here are for the National Parks Commission and the EPA, not for the GGMC, which comes under a different head. I believe what the Hon. Member wishes to find out is whether or not we will be streamlining policy for GGMC and the answer is yes. There is a strategic policy document that is going to be put in place and I would like to share it with him as soon as possible.

Mr. Lumumba: Mr. Chairman, would the Minister, at some point in time, come back to this National Assembly for additional funds to assist with that?

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, the skill set within that department can take care of drafting that policy without having to contract it out.

Mr. Lumumba: Could the Hon. Minister provide an estimated breakdown of how much of the budgeted provision of \$112 million would be spent on the EPA?

Mr. Trotman: The details are in Appendix T, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Lumumba: Okay, thank you.

Programme: 054 – Natural Resource Management – \$354,187,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Service – \$241,463,000

Mr. Rohee: Line items 6111 to 6117, which deal with Total Wages and Salaries: I ask the Hon. Minister to provide me with the breakdown for each of these line items in terms of the staff, whether the entire staffing from line items 6111 to 6117 could be listed, what the specific posts are that they hold and what the emoluments are that go to each member of staff.

5.30 p.m.

Minister of Citizenship [Mr. Felix]: We will provide the Hon. Member with the needs he has requested tomorrow morning.

Mr. Rohee: I will hold him accountable.

Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency - where there is an amount of \$8.3 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what the items are that are covered in this line item?

Mr. Felix: There is nothing in that line item for me to answer.

Mr. Rohee: My apologies, Mr. Chairman. I am referring to Materials, Equipment and Supplies - \$8.365 million. Could the Hon. Minister provide me with the breakdown? Line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister say how this sum is going to be utilised?

Mr. Felix: Line item 6222 is \$70,000 which is enough for the Ministry of Citizenship to be run for the remainder of the year.

Mr. Ali: Just on a point of correction before I ask my question, it is not the Ministry of Citizenship.

Mr. Felix: The Department of Citizenship.

Mr. Ali: Thank you very much. Under the Ministry of the Presidency, Department of Citizenship and Immigration, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees - I would wish to ask the Hon. Minister whether these are 60 new staff in this new department within this new Ministry or whether these are staff reassigned or relocated to this new department in this new Ministry? If the latter is the case, from which department, from which agency or from which Ministry were they reassigned? If that is not the case and they were indeed new staff, when was the vacancy for these staff advertised? What process was utilised to evaluate and hire them? And, what are the contractual conditions of these staff in terms of years of service? Thank you.

Mr. Felix: The Department of Citizenship, though new, its functions had been existing. The 60 employees are those who have been removed from under the Ministry of Home Affairs and are now with the Department of Citizenship. It is just a shift, transferral from one Ministry to the Department.

Mr. Ali: Just to ensure I have the Hon. Member's statement correctly, are you saying, Hon. Minister, that all of the 60 staff are staff that were transferred?

Mr. Felix: That is absolutely correct.

Ms. Teixeira: Were they from the General Register Office (GRO).

Mr. Felix: GRO.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, under the same line item 6116, could there be some clarity as it relates to the specific numbers that are engaged as a result of the GRO and a specific number that will be engaged in immigration services?

Mr. Felix: That question has been answered already. The only addition is immigration, which would not be difficult to provide tomorrow morning also.

Mr. Ali: In relation to the 60 staff transferred, were they transferred under the same terms and conditions of service?

Mr. Felix: There are the same contractual arrangements.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: There is a provision to the tune of \$3.3 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what buildings we are referring to? And what is the rental per month?

Mr. Felix: From time immemorial, the GRO has been paying a rent in the Guyana Post Office Corporation (GPOC) building. That money reflects rental being paid for that building. Also, the Government has taken over another section for the computerisation.

Ms. Manickchand: Taken it over?

Mr. Felix: Yes, we have already, under contractual arrangements, and we are paying a rent for that. This \$3.3 million referred to by the Hon. Member, Mr. Nandlall, reflects payment for rent for the areas we are occupying.

Mr. Nandlall: Just a follow-up quickly: May I ask who is the landlord? Who owns the building?

Mr. Felix: The GPOC.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: An allocation of \$2.327 million is made here. Could the Minister say how he intends to utilise this \$2.327 million?

Mr. Felix: I can simply answer the Hon. Member by saying by travelling. That is the head it is under, but, for the work of the department, we have to move around to the various offices, which you know about, to handle our registration - Regions 2, 6, 7, 8, 9. The Department of Citizenship, in investigating applications for visas, would be required to move around also. So, this money will take care of the activities in both areas.

Mr. Rohee: I do not want to use the words of the Hon. Member, Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon, when referring to our Colleagues as trying to be smart. I know that this is money allocated for local travel. Could you list the locations you intend to travel to between now and December in order to cover those responsibilities?

Mr. Felix: It will be done, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Rohee: Thank you. In respect of line item 6284 – Other - \$183.450 million - could the Minister say what this sum is to be utilised for?

Mr. Felix: The Department of Citizenship is undertaking certain improvements, particularly at the GRO. With respect to the restoration of records and the computerisation of that particular section, it is intended that we will computerise the records from 1920 to 1986, and then, as the programme is going right now, we are engaged in 1987 to now. Hence, this matter will be tendered out, under the usual system of tendering, for the purposes of effective transparency in the process.

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6284, where in the Budget for this agency, other than 6284, do you have provision for the printing of passports and the printing of birth certificates? Usually, in the GRO budget, Ministry of Home Affairs, there is provision for the printing of birth certificates. Under the police, there is usually the capital budget or recurrent budget for the printing of the passports, but I do not see it in the capital and I do not see it in yours. So, I am asking, is that part of the \$183.450 million?

Mr. Felix: May I please enquire of the Hon. Member if she can address her attention to line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials. That line item caters for the printing of birth certificates. I have been advised that, under a previous arrangement, a certain foreign company had been advanced a certain set of money for passports and we are drawing down from that. I have

recently drawn down on that arrangement. So, there is no need to reflect an additional set of money for passports because that is already in place.

Ms. Teixeira: 2015.

Mr. Felix: Correct.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6284: I heard the Hon. Member, in his explanation, saying that this would be outsourced, putting our records in electronic form, dating back. Is this provision for a consultancy or would this be done by the staff of the GRO and are you acquiring the equipment for the staff to do it?

Mr. Felix: The outsourcing is on the consultancy.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Minister, are you saying that the \$183.450 million allocated here is to do specifically and only with the reorganisation and data capture and data development of the GRO? That is the first question.

The second question is: how were you able, without an assessment, to determine that this activity will cost \$183.450 million?

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, \$150 million is allocated for the computerisation aspect, \$10 million for the restoration of records and then the other sums are available for agency fees and registrar fees.

5.45 p.m.

Mr. Rohee: There is another small amount under “Other”, line item 6294. Could the Hon. Minister say what that small amount under “Other” to be used for?

Mr. Felix: That would cover the stipend for work study.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister say whether the department, which he now heads, has a clear indication as to what type of scholarships or what kind of training it is seeking to accomplish here? How many members of staff are you seeking to have trained, where and the subjects?

Mr. Felix: I think the Hon. Member is well aware that within the Registrar's office training is done annually for marriage officers as well as new persons coming on to perform such a function are also trained. This money takes care of the training of persons in the two categories that I just mentioned. There are outreaches and there is the training of Registrars.

Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services – \$241,463,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I did say we would attempt to complete at least the treatment of current expenditure under Ministry of the Presidency before we take a break. I would suggest that we take that break now and return at 6.15 p.m.

I would just simply remind Hon. Members that we have to complete the Ministry of the Public Service. We must consider the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Guyana Defence Force, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment and the Ministry of Legal Affairs. The Ministry of Housing and Water, Ministry of Communities and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development have been asked to standby also.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will now take the suspension.

Sitting suspended at 5.49 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 8.37 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we had a very long break. There is a statement I would like to read. I invite your indulgence.

This morning the Speaker received a letter from the Hon. Member Mohabir Nandlall for and on behalf of the Opposition in the National Assembly. That letter expressed concern regarding the present construct of the 2015 budgetary Estimates in light of the provisions of the Constitution (Amendment) Act 2015 and the Fiscal Management and Accountability (Amendment) Act 2015. That concern, which was raised in the letter, related to the treatment of all the constitutional agencies which were reflected in the Estimates. In light of the need for their financial autonomy

to be secured, meetings were facilitated by the Speaker between Government Members of the National Assembly and the Opposition. It was agreed to amend the Estimates as follows: constitutional bodies, which are currently found in various parts of the Estimates, will be relocated. All of the constitutional agencies will be placed on a single table in which their allocations will be reflected as a lump sum allocation for both current and capital expenditures.

The agencies in question are the Chambers of the Director of Public Prosecution, the Judicial Service Commission, the Public Service Commission, the Police Service Commission, the Teaching Service Commission, the Public Service Appellate Tribunal, the Public Procurement Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Guyana Elections Commission, the Supreme Court of Judicature, the Parliament Office, the Rights Commissions and the Ethnic Relations Commission. The table formerly titled “Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations” will now be disaggregated into “Local Organisations” only and “Subventions to Constitutional Agencies.”

It has also been agreed to modify the schedule of the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act which lists the budget agencies. That modification involves adding the new Ministries. These are the Ministry of the Presidency, Ministry of Communities, Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Business. An Order to this effect will be issued by the Minister of Finance and shall be gazetted to take effect from 22nd August, 2015. This agreement notwithstanding the schedule, which has been agreed by the Business Sub-Committee of the Committee of Supply, will continue to form the basis for the consideration of the Estimates over the next two days.

Hon. Members, these agreements and understandings were reached after some considerable effort. We believe that this takes us quite a far way forward and we hope we can build on it in the manner in which we treat matters here, this evening and beyond.

The effect of the agreement is that the constitutional agencies, which were put aside, can now form part of our consideration. As I indicated, when we had adjourned, it is the hope that we can complete all that is slated for today, today. I am sure we can, with the assistance of Hon. Members.

We will now return to consideration of the Estimates with the Ministry of the Presidency.

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will now look at Agency 05, Ministry of the Presidency, Capital Expenditure, page 545, Programme 051, Policy Development and Administration. I will now put the question.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I believe we have already considered this item.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member for his observation.

8.47 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 052 – Defence and National Security - \$70,000,000

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, just a bit of clarification here for the Hon. Minister. Under project 1214300, Infrastructural Works, there is the provision for fence and perimeter lighting, in the profile. It is a question which has been raised in previous years.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you are speaking on...

Mr. Ali: It is project 1214300, Programme 052, Defence and National Security. It does not state where.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Mr. Harmon: This is the perimeter lights and fence at the National Intelligence Centre in Georgetown.

Programme: 052 - Defence and National Security - \$70,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 053 - Public Service Management - \$21,000,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Project 1214400, Buildings: An allocation of \$19 million, could the Hon. Minister say to us what this work entails and where will this work be done?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: What is the project again, please? You cited a project that seems a bit strange.

Mr. G. Persaud: The project code is 1214400, Buildings.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It is \$19 million and it is to be spent on the training division at Vlissengen Road and D'Urban Street, in Georgetown. The work entails extension of the library, extension and construction of additional offices, a server room, electrical upgrade, purchase of equipment and rehabilitation of the roof.

Mr. G. Persaud: Project 2508100, Office Furniture and Equipment, \$2 million: Could the Hon. Minister say to us what would be the items that would be procured under this head?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The items to be purchased includes filing cabinets, fire alarms, water dispensers and air conditioning (AC) units.

Mr. G. Persaud: Could we then assume that having reduced this allocation from \$8,832,000 that this \$2 million will now adequately cater for the needs of that Ministry to be fully equipped, so to speak?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It will.

Programme: 053 - Public Service Management - \$21,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 054 - Natural Resource Management - \$67,500,000

Mr. Lumumba: Project 3301100, Lands and Survey: Could the Hon. Minister identify the names of the places which have been considered for land regularisation?

Mr. Trotman: The two areas stated for land regularisation are Light Town and Good Hope in Essequibo.

Mr. Lumumba: Could the Hon. Minister provide a detail breakdown as to how the budgetary provision will be spent on each area identified for the land regularisation exercise?

Mr. Trotman: I undertake to do so within a reasonable time. I cannot promise tomorrow morning. Before the Estimates are completed I will have that breakdown.

Mr. Lumumba: It is the same project 3301100, Lands and Surveys: Could the Hon. Minister identify the location and cost attached to each area? I assume that he will do the same.

Mr. Trotman: I so undertake.

Mr. Lumumba: Let me amend that, in particular the areas that should be open for agricultural purposes.

Mr. Trotman: I will do so. I will lay them out.

Mr. Lumumba: Could the Hon. Minister tell the nation how much lands will be open for agricultural purposes and what will be the criteria for acquisition of such land?

Mr. Trotman: The information available is 100 tracts in Tabatinga, which would be in Region 9, of 10 to 20 acres each, in Port Kaituma it is 200 tracts, at 10 to 15 acres each. It would just be those two areas, Tabatinga and Port Kaituma, a 100 and 200 tracts, respectively.

Mr. Lumumba: Continuation of the question. Could the Hon. Minister say what distribution methodology will be employed in making the lands available to interested persons?

Mr. Trotman: It is an open process and the Hon. Member is invited to examine and to even apply. It is an open and transparent process.

Mr. Lumumba: I think the Minister is funny but it is okay. Would the Hon. Minister say what mechanism will be instituted to inform the public of the availability of the lands for distribution?

Mr. Trotman: It will be available by public notice in the various media, print and electronic.

Mr. Lumumba: Project 3401500, Environmental Protection Agency: Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of the estimated budgetary provision for each item, outlining the project profile, reference 18.

Mr. Trotman: It is just pieces of equipment - a HAZ-DUST 1 Real-time particulate monitor, a global positioning system (GPS), Canon camera, a Larson Davis sound expert monitor, hand-held weather station, photocopy machine and multifunctional duplex printers, two of those.

Mr. Lumumba: Project 3401600, Forest Carbon Partnership Project: Could the Hon. Minister inform this Assembly of how much money will be spent on institutional strengthening and consultation for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+) readiness?

Mr. Trotman: The overall process for the year is \$25 million, but we are now in the process of working out how that is going to be specifically allocated.

Mr. Lumumba: Would the Hon. Minister give some idea or timeline as to when that process will be completed and when the Assembly will get a copy?

Mr. Trotman: The work plan is currently with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and waiting its approval before we can proceed. We are hoping that it will be within the next six to eight weeks.

Mr. Lumumba: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the institutions which have been identified to utilising the budgetary allocation, if any?

Mr. Trotman: This is done by the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) in conjunction with the Office of Climate Change (OCC). Once it is approved those two entities will determine which will be the benefactor. We have not yet completed that.

Mr. Lumumba: Could the Hon. Minister say what was spent on the monitoring and evaluation of readiness to activities? Could the Hon. Minister say what the monitoring and evaluation will encompass?

Mr. Trotman: Would you like a supplemental before I answer?

Mr. Ali: Project 3401600, Forest Carbon Partnership Project: In the profile, the total project cost is GY\$790,400,000. This is a foreign funded project financed by the IDB. Could I ask the Hon. Minister whether the Amaila Falls Hydroelectricity Project is anywhere associated with this programme? If so, having an understanding of the new policy position of this Government, what alternative proposals are made in relation to the utilisation of these funds?

Mr. Trotman: I will take Mr. Lumumba's question first. The first question pertains to us being able to do monitoring and verifying. It is an ongoing process. With respect to the second issue of the \$790 million, it does not pertain to the Amaila Falls Hydroelectricity Project but it is meant to raise awareness in communities and to be spread across green projects. It is not considered in this bracket.

Mr. Ali: It is just a supplementary. Project 3401600, there is an existing programme in relation to the \$790,400,000. Has that programme been adjusted in any way, and if so, what are the changes?

Mr. Trotman: Could the Hon. Member be a bit more specific about the programme that he is speaking of because the programme I know of is the one of raising awareness. If the Hon. Member knows of another programme I would like to be enlightened.

9.02 p.m.

Mr. Ali: The description in the profile speaks about institutional strengthening, monitoring and evaluation, in terms of our readiness, REDD+ strategy and implementation framework. It states nothing about community projects or any such activities. I am just verifying with the Minister what he may have meant by community initiatives.

Mr. Trotman: Although it does not specifically state communities, we are doing institutional strengthening and consultations for REDD+ readiness. That is being done within communities. We are doing REDD+ strategy and implementation framework, designing that. That is done, having reference, to communities because it cannot be done in an abstract manner. Thirdly, we are doing monitoring and evaluation of readiness activities. Again, it is being done alongside communities.

Mr. Ali: In relation to the same head, project 3401600, are there any consultants identified to undertake the task outlined and those the Minister would have described a few moments ago? If so, who are the consultants and when were they engaged?

Mr. Trotman: At present, all work is being done by the REDD+ secretariat and there is no outside consultancy, or none is contemplated at this time.

Mr. Lumumba: I do not think I had a proper answer from the Minister.

Mr. Trotman: Which one is that for?

Mr. Lumumba: What I am asking the Minister: How is he going to monitor and evaluate? Instead of telling me that it is ongoing, what are some of the things that will be done, in terms of monitoring and evaluation? Give me one or two examples.

Mr. Trotman: This is done by measuring deforestation, by looking at degradation caused by mining and using the benefit of satellite imagery to determine whether what we believe is happening on the ground is in fact taking place. This is how we are doing the monitoring.

Mr. Lumumba: Project 3401700 National Parks Commission: Could the Hon. Minister provide a detailed breakdown of how the budgetary provision will be allocated in relation to the project identified in the project profile, reference 20?

Mr. Trotman: The first is that we intend to replace the *koker* at the National Park. The park is flooding and the *koker*, it has been discovered, is in need of total rehabilitation or replacement. That is going to cause \$3 million; a pump is going to be bought at a cost of \$1 million. The cougar exhibit at the zoological park is going to cost us \$4.5 million and a freezer is being bought for \$150,000 and brush cutters to the value of \$350,000, giving us a total of \$9 million. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, it would be helpful if the questions you ask are limited to the ones that you must get answers for.

Mr. Lumumba: Mr. Chairman, thank you, but I dwell on relevancy. I would only ask questions that require answers.

Project 3401800, Protected Areas Commission: Could the Hon. Minister say how much money was spent to purchase the boat? What is the type and size of the boat?

Mr. Trotman: The boat for the sum of \$500,000 has not yet been acquired. When it is that we do get it the intended cost will be \$500,000.

Mr. Lumumba: Final question Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Member provide to the Assembly with the number of satellite phones that will be purchased and the cost associated with the purchase of those cell phones?

Mr. Trotman: The cost of a satellite phone, a good one, will be for \$300,000 and we will just get one.

Mr. Lumumba: How many are being bought?

Mr. Trotman: One satellite phone is being purchased.

Programme: 054 – Natural Resource Management - \$67,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, may I crave your indulgence. On page 4 of the schedule there is a matter, I believe, that Hon. Member Ms. Teixeira was drawing our attention to and that is Agency 24, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, which is somewhat repeating itself. I was wondering whether we are to get to that or we are to treat it as completed. Mr. Chairman, we crave your indulgence for you to consider whether we should finish this...

Mr. Chairman: Is it that the Hon. Member is proposing that we look at Agency 24, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, at this time?

Mr. Trotman: Yes please, Sir, with the leave of the Member.

Mr. Chairman: Members, you have heard the request and I am inclined to grant it. Please proceed Minister.

Mr. Trotman: I am grateful.

Mr. Chairman: We will now look at Agency 24.

Agency: 24 Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Current Expenditure

Programme: 241- Ministry Administration - \$135,147,000

Mr. Lumumba: Line item 6133, Benefits and Allowances: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the number and category of persons who are expected to enjoy benefits and allowances from this budgetary provision?

Mr. Trotman: This is for one person - the Principal Accounting Secretary for Finance.

Mr. Lumumba: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister, through you, Sir, provide us with the number of vehicles in the fleet and say how many vehicles receive fuel and lubricants for budgetary provisions of \$5,200,000?

Mr. Trotman: When we were considering the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, it was then seven vehicles. It has since been reduced to six. The fuel and lubricants was for seven but at this stage it is for six. One has been sent to the Ministry of the Presidency or the Office of the President.

Mr. Lumumba: May I ask the Hon. Minister, since the Office of the President has over 100 vehicles, if there is a particular reason why that one vehicle was sent to the Office of the President?

Mr. Trotman: We did it because it was a loan. We did what was the rightful thing, and that is, to have it returned to its proper place of origin.

Mr. Lumumba: That is acceptable.

Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say how much of the budgetary allocation will be spent on spares and for how many vehicles? How much will be spent for servicing of vehicles? How many vehicles will benefit from servicing and utilising this budgetary provision?

Mr. Trotman: Line item 6242 is "Maintenance of Buildings".

Mr. Lumumba: I am sorry.

Mr. Trotman: The Member is tired.

Mr. Lumumba: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly how many buildings are likely to be maintained in 2015 utilising this budgetary provision?

Mr. Trotman: Over the period January to August \$126,000 was spent on locks and fixing some windows and other parts that needed servicing and that were broken?

Mr. Lumumba: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with a list of goods and services that would be procured utilising this budgetary provision.

Mr. Trotman: Which one is it?

Mr. Lumumba: It is line item 6284. It is if the Minister can also give us some idea of what process will be used to procure the goods and services.

Mr. Trotman: This figure covers gifts and small items bought and acquired from January to August by the Ministry. I can provide specific breakdown with the particulars on Wednesday.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, that figure is moving from \$53,115,000 to \$103,281,000, 17 employees moving to 38. Could the Minister inform us as to the 21 new contracted employees?

Mr. Trotman: What happened here was that a number of Cuban doctors and other forestry specialists were absorbed by the Ministry. They were required to do training and the Ministry absorbed them and that is responsible for the spike in employment cost.

Mr. Hamilton: Were they Cuban doctors, as in being medical doctors?

Mr. Trotman: They were medical genuine doctors.

Mr. Hamilton: Could the Hon. Minister indicate, of the 21 persons added, how many were medical doctors and how many were other professionals?

Mr. Trotman: There were one Meteorological Engineer, ten Forest Rangers and the others were medical doctors.

Programme: 241 – Ministry Administration - \$135,147,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.17 p.m.

Programme: 242 – Natural Resource Management - \$78,376,000

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: could the Hon. Minister inform us why there is a decrease to the sum of \$78 million from \$119 million that was budgeted in 2014? Could he advise us as to what is responsible for this decrease?

Mr. Trotman: I am advised that this reflects the operating cost for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Programme: 242 – Natural Resource Management - \$78,376,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme: 243 – Environmental Management - \$267,983,000

Mr. Hamilton: If we look at line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, that sum has decreased from \$423 million to \$267 million. Could the Minister advise? The answer that the Minister gave just now could not have been for the Environmental Protection Agency. We are now looking at the sum for Environmental Management.

Mr. Trotman: I wish correct my last statement by saying that the previous sum was for the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission (GL&SC). These sums are for the Protected Areas Commission, the EPA and the three Parks.

Mr. Hamilton: The other question is: why the decrease from \$423 million to \$267 million?

Mr. Trotman: This is because the agencies did not receive the expected sums for the capital expenditure and so they were operating on a lower budget. I am referring to the 1/12 of what was permitted.

Ms. Teixeira: We dealt with Agency 05, Natural Resources Management, which I think was Programme 054, a while ago in which the total for the EPA, Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission, National Parks Commission and Protected Areas Commission was \$261,712,000.

So, for the Ministry of Natural Resources, the figure is only, as I understood when you spoke earlier, for January to August, 2015. The Ministry that we are dealing with now, including these subventions, is for January to August, 2015. If we amalgamate the figures, then we have to add them to the figures from earlier. That would bring to over \$500 million the amount for these agencies for 2015. Am I correct?

Mr. Trotman: Hon. Member Teixeira, we will provide a complete breakdown with all of the particulars for January to December, 2015 in the morning.

Programme: 243 – Environmental Management - \$267,983,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Capital Expenditure

Agency: 05 Ministry of the Presidency

Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services- \$20,700,000

Mr. Rohee: Project code 1701800 - Citizenship and Immigration Services - General Registrar's Office: there is an amount of \$11 million for the provision of electrical system, network infrastructure, and furniture and equipment. I would like to have some more information about this electrical system and the network infrastructure. What is meant, in great detail, by electrical system and network infrastructure?

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, you would recall that, in my explanation given under the consideration of Current Expenditure, I said that there is a proposal to computerise the Registrar's Office to preserve records and to computerise the area. The amount stated here is to purchase the equipment to do both sets of jobs, that is, the computers and the peripherals, desks and chairs to accommodate the staff that would be involved in digitalising the records. Obviously, there would be some degree of electrical installation with the equipment such as power surge equipment, stabilisers, *et cetera*.

Mr. Rohee: I regret to say that I am not convinced. I need some more information on this particular matter. Is the network infrastructure going to be connected to the e-Governance backbone and is there going to be some element of the fibre optic cable associated with this network infrastructure?

Mr. Felix: The network system will, in the first instance, be installed in relation to the computers in the Local Area Network (LAN). What my Hon. Friend is talking about will come into reality when we have been able to resuscitate the e-Governance system and deal with all of those cables all over the place which should have been connected to enable us to do just that at this time.

Mr. Rohee: I am not further impressed. I need some more clarification. The Hon. Minister mentioned cables being all over the place. I wonder what is meant by that, but let me go directly to the question.

Mr. Felix: If you need an explanation...

Mr. Rohee: I am not finished. In fact, I have not even posted the question as yet, but I appreciate the exuberance of the Minister. Regarding the hardware and the software for this network infrastructure, could the Hon. Minister tell us more about the connectivity of this network and to where the connectivity is likely to lead? In addition, could the Hon. Minister be more expansive in respect of the standards that will be applied to this?

Mr. Felix: There is a network system in existence. What is being allocated is to expand that network system. The Hon. Gentleman asked about the fibre optic cables. We know that there is a problem with the fibre optic cables. They were laid up to a certain point and have not yet reached Georgetown, but that would not interfere with the network system. That would more interfere with the ability of outside persons to access what is happening on the inside. The fibre optic cable would enable the e-Governance aspect to come in, where departments could be connected. That is not yet on the cards because e-Governance is not here as yet. The networking is here and will be expanded within the department.

Mr. Ali: A follow-up question. Could the Hon. Member explain to us how the fibre optic cable would enable the e-Governance project?

Mr. Felix: I am not the computer expert on this matter and I have not been involved in it sufficiently to give that sort of answer.

Bishop Edghill: Just before the Hon. Member takes his seat, I did hear the distinguished gentleman indicate to us the things that ought to happen under project code 1701800.

9.32 p.m.

We were told a little earlier that the electronic documentation of records would be outsourced. That is under the current expenditure in the amount of \$183 million. I am very happy that this is happening for the GRO. Now, we are being advised that it is expanding its internal capacity in

terms of its capability to do many things. My question is: How are these two things going to benefit the people of Guyana and how are they related?

Mr. Felix: The two things will benefit the people of Guyana in that (1) records would be preserved and (2) would be available online. They would be digitised, preserved, and, eventually, while they would be shared within the department, we would be able to provide information online when the e-Governance project comes on stream.

Mr. Rohee: The Hon. Minister had made a public statement - I think it was in this honourable House – and he had spoken about the Citizenship and Immigration Services, at some point in time, generating a single document with the birth record, driver's license information, and all of the other details in respect to an individual. I would like to know whether this sum of money and this project would eventually lead us in that direction and, if so, when?

Mr. Felix: That was a long-term projection. It is not included here.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Member inform this honourable Committee whether this project, that is to say the electrical system and the network infrastructure, would be open to public bidding procurement arrangements and whether there is an accommodation for the hiring of consultants in order to implement this project?

Mr. Felix: The answer is in the affirmative.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will allow one more question on this project code.

Mr. Hamilton: Could the Minister disaggregate the \$11 million? There are three activities noted there. Could he indicate the cost of each activity?

Mr. Felix: That information is not available now but it could be made available at a later date.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, were you allowing me one more question or to the issue?

Mr. Chairman: It was naturally to you, Hon. Member.

Mr. Rohee: Thank you very much.

In respect to the network infrastructure, I would like to know whether it would be in keeping with the international standards. Secondly, in terms of connectivity, would the network be connected to servers and how many? Regarding the internet, what kind of bandwidth does the Minister envisage being used?

Mr. Felix: There are two servers. There would be connectivity, but, again, not being the technical person, I cannot talk competently about bandwidth.

Programme: 055 – Citizenship and Immigration Services - \$20,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, if I may crave your indulgence. Regarding the purchase of equipment under Citizenship and Immigration Services, Ministry of the Presidency, have you gone past that?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we have just completed it.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, with regards to the expediency with which you are moving, could I crave your indulgence for...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, it is both speed and expediency. I am afraid that I cannot entertain that now.

Agency: 14 Public Service Ministry

Current Expenditure

Programme: 141 Public Service Management - \$715,043,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6281- Security Services: could the Hon. Minister give us the name of the security company, the number of locations, the number of guards, when this service was contracted, and the length of period for which this service was contracted?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The security company is the same company that has been there from January onto now. This is not a new service. What I can do for the Hon. Member is provide the additional details which he requires. It is not a new service that we have contracted. It is the same company.

Mr. G. Persaud: When will that contract come to an end and what method would be used to procure continued service?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I cannot say exactly when it will come to an end but what I can assure the Hon. Member is that, when that contract comes to an end, we will have an open tender process. We will follow all of the tender procedure. It would be advertised and persons who are interested in it can submit their bids.

Programme: 141- Public Service Management - \$715,043,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 53 Guyana Defence Force

Current Expenditure

Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support - \$8,609,057,000

Bishop Edghill: We will uphold the tradition of this House when it comes to the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) and there would be very limited questions from this side on this particular agency. We welcome the increased allocation, in excess of \$1.2 billion, towards this agency. Just allow me to enquire into three simple matters. Under line item 6241- Rentals of Buildings, we would like to know the locations of these buildings and what the purpose for the rental is.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: These are for the rentals of two building – one in New Amsterdam and one in Georgetown.

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6264 -Vehicles Spares and Service, there is \$100 million increase. Could the Minister explain to us the reason for such a significant increase?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with the election period. The Army had to bring its fleet up to a certain level of readiness and this is what that increase was all about.

Bishop Edghill: I do not want to assume. Under line item 6292 – dietary, there is another \$100 million there. Is it related to that or is there another explanation?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The army was in-lying over that period and this was for meals for over 500 additional ranks.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6284 - Other: could the Hon. Member provide us with greater details in respect of this allocation?

9.47 p.m.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with the rental of tents and chairs and matters of that nature. For example, when there is a passing out parade or when there is a tactical exercise without troops, they are required to do these exercises under tents.

Mr. Rohee: If that is the case with respect to line item 6284 – Other, could the Hon. Member give us greater detail with respect to line item 6294 – Other?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This line item is for the purchase of uniform materials, the payment for special surgery which the Army ranks would have to undergo. Primarily, it has to do with the purchase of uniform materials.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6281 – Security Services: we know that the Army has the capacity for security, but since it is contracting security services, could the Hon. Minister indicate which company is being secured and which location the company is securing?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with the provision of security. There is a procedure within the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) that when former chiefs of staff retire, they are entitled to security services at their residences and this is what this line item caters for. The companies that are involved are MMC Security Service and Kalibur Security Service.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister advise under which head and which line item arms and ammunition are purchased by the Guyana Defence Force?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That line item is 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies.

Mr. Rohee: Thank you. Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): could the Hon. Member tell us whether this line item refers, principally, to training in Guyana or overseas? If overseas, in which countries do the training take place?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would allow one other question on this line item.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The training is done both locally and overseas. In some cases, there is training for pilots and there is other training for senior officers.

Mr. Rohee: I did not get the last part of my question answered. I want to know which countries the Army has a preference for in terms of training. I think the Minister of Foreign Affairs would be interested in this too.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It has nothing to do with preference. I can say that training is done in Brazil, China, the United States of America (USA), among other countries, but, primarily, those are the three countries.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, if you may crave my indulgence with a last question. Could the Hon. Member state whether training under Exercise Tradewinds is still pursued by the military?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Yes. That is still pursued. I am happy that the Hon. Member has a deep interest in these matters. That is very important. Thank you.

Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support – \$8,609,057,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital expenditure

Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support - \$536,400,000

Mr. Rohee: Project code 1200300 – Marine Development: could the Hon. Minister state whether the provision that is stated here allows for the building of another floating base by the Guyana Defence Force?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: It does not cater for the building of another floating base.

Programme: 531 – Defence and Security Support – \$536,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 07 Parliament Office

Current Expenditure

Programme: 071 – National Assembly - \$1,361,158,000

Ms. Teixeira: Under these items that are listed on page 2, are all of the agencies that belong in the section that is being created for subventions or contributions to constitutional bodies and we said that we would have deferred these, particularly the Parliament Office, which as presently constructed includes the Parliament Office, the Audit Office of Guyana (AOG), and the Office of the Leader of the Opposition. It needs to be disaggregated so that the Audit Office of Guyana could be completely on its own and no longer under the Parliament Office. We had agreed this morning – you could correct me – that these agencies that are constitutional bodies should be deferred until we get the proper reconstruct of them so that we could look at them. I am just asking if that is still relevant. I have seen your announcement; I have heard it; I have read it but it does not comprise that issue of us dealing with all of these agencies as one body as contribution to constitutional bodies when it is corrected.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Thank you. In the afternoon when representatives of both the Opposition and the Government met, all matters which may have sought to detain us were cleared away. It is my clear understanding that we are to proceed without making a distinction between the various heads; that the concerns which were expressed this morning and the attendant discussions, I would want to say, were overtaken by the agreement which was hammered out this afternoon in my Chamber, the intention being that we will proceed in the normal way with all of the items. That is the understanding that I have and I suspect that all of the Members who were present on your side, as those who were present on the Government side, would have the same understanding.

Mr. Greenidge: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether I might just offer a word of assistance here. In the note that you read, there is a final sentence that I would just like to draw to our Colleague's attention. Perhaps, I might add that the point that she raised concerning the need to ensure that these agencies are properly treated before we approve them is quite correct. What we agreed in the end, she may not have been there at the time, but her Colleagues were, was that we would take the questions on all of them and we would approve them at the end. This is in order to avoid having the technicians who are here go home and then come back tomorrow for reconsideration of the same item. You are right, Mr. Chairman. I agree with you, but I just want to offer that clarification to Mdm. Teixeira so she might be clear as to what informed that decision. In other

words, we would take the questions now and subsequently agree on the totals, recognising, of course....

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry to intervene, but the technical persons who were here, save and except those from the Parliament Office, left because they were advised that they might not be required today. We have the representatives of the Parliament Office and GECOM here.

Mr. Chairman: We will proceed with those two. I thank the Hon. Members for their intervention. We will proceed with those agencies which are represented at this time.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, are you dealing with Parliament Office – National Assembly which is stated on pages 78 and 79? If that is so, could we understand that, at this point, it is difficult to deal with the Audit Office of Guyana since currently it is under this head? Therefore, that makes it problematical for dealing with this because it should have been segregated.

Anyway, let me ask my questions. The Parliament is obviously critical and important to us all as Members here but I have noted that there are not two budgets. Whatever is stated on pages 78 and 79 is for the period January to December, 2015. There is no budget, like in the other Ministries, from January to August, 2015 and from August to December, 2015. This is the whole budgeted amount, as far as I understand it. There has been an increase in the current expenditure and in the capital expenditure. But when we look at the Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, for example, there is a slight increase in the budgeted amount for the AOG. This is one of the agencies that have been termed a constitutional body but it has been budgeted for under Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations which is on page 527.

10.02 p.m.

The amount for the Office of Leader of the Opposition is there as well. There seems to be an omission when it comes to the Parliament Office, which is also listed as a statutory body on page 774. The Parliament Office is catered for in the budget line, it has got an allocation under Subsidies and Contribution to Local Organisations and then it is listed as a statutory body on page 774.

Now, on page 774, there is the entire budget of the Parliament Office, so one could actually look at the numbers. When one does that, there seems to be an omission. An amount of \$11,678,000 is stated for the Parliament Office on page 553 under the details of Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations. For the Parliament Office, on page 553, there is an amount for contribution to international organisations of \$11,678,000. Then, of course, there is the breakdown under Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations totalling \$509,264,000 for the Parliament Office, \$601,797,000 for the Audit Office of Guyana, and \$15,731,000 for the Office for the Leader of the Opposition. Somewhere along the line, there is an omission.

My concern with the Parliament Office is not a big one, but I am just saying that, in the calculations, the figures are not reconciled among what is stated in the budget section, what is stated in the statutory section for Parliament Office and what is stated under Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations. I think that the Ministry of Finance's staff need to examine and correct that.

When we come to the Parliament Office, for which there is a budgeted amount of \$509,264,000, we have concerns about what appears to be a decline in the numbers. I said that it is difficult to disaggregate the amount for the Parliament Office under Agency 07 because the amount includes moneys for the Office of the Leader of the Opposition as well as the Audit Office of Guyana. Whilst the total amount has gone up to \$1.3 billion, when one looks at the staffing details, there is a decline in the number for clerical and office support, a decline in the number for semi-skilled under line items 6114 – Clerical and Office Support, 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled, and 6116 – Contracted Employees. One is not sure where is the decline in the staff is because the three bodies are treated together.

It is the same thing when we look at line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to Agency. My observation is really to tell the Ministry of Finance staff that when the bodies are disaggregated, as we had decided, some attention should be paid to some of these issues. On pages 78 and 79, almost all of the figures for these agencies, for 2015, have been reduced. And, as I said, there is an omission in the total that leaves out \$11,678,000 in the budget agency approach to Parliament Office but it is excluded under statutory bodies. I am just stating that for caution.

I want to ask a question in relation to one of the items. I am not sure where it is, so I will appreciate if whoever is going to answer... I have been looking for it and it may be under either line items 6284 – Other or 6294 – Other. In the Parliament Office’s budget, where are the funds to deal with the continuous operating of the Parliament Website – the uploading of the archival material – allocated? Information is now being uploaded for 2008. Maybe, I am asking the wrong question. Is there money under one of the line items for financial support for the maintenance, management and constant upgrading of the Parliamentary website, which is such a key website for the public to access information? Those are some of the observations, Sir. You said that we will be dealing with these but because it includes three agencies, it is difficult to disaggregate it for consideration in the debate.

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Line item 6284 – Other - is the line item under which the programme for digitising the Parliament Office’s records is budgeted for. There is \$16 million allocated there. There is a \$6 million allocated, also, for the consultancy services in that regard.

Mr. Chairman: I will now put the question.

Ms. Teixeira: As I was corrected earlier, with the shift in the decision that we made earlier this morning, I understand that we would discuss these items but we would hold the vote until the schedule of the new constitutional bodies and the new Ministries is dealt with. That is my understanding. Am I correct?

Lt. Col. (Ret’d) Harmon: Yes.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: The intention, as I now understand it, is to withhold the vote until... You have the floor, sir.

Mr. Greenidge: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Just to confirm that Mdm. Teixeira’s understanding is correct, to the extent that the staff are here, we will go through these items, allow all of the questions that need to be put and we will come back to them, subsequently, any time after tomorrow, when the schedule has been corrected.

[The question was not put]

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 071 - National Assembly - \$98,511,000

[The question was not put]

Agency: 11 Guyana Elections Commission

Current Expenditure

Programme: 111 – Elections Commission - \$3,165,756,000

Mr. G. Persaud: I will ask these questions in one request but they are for each independent line item. Line items 6111 –Administrative, 6112 – Senior Clerical, 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled, 6114 – Clerical and Office Staff, 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operative and Unskilled, 6116 – Contracted Employees and 6117 – Temporary Employees: the request is for the Hon. Minister to provide the names, designations, dates of appointment and salaries for each of the persons listed under each of the line items stated.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can provide that information. I will have to provide the names later. Under line item 6111 – Administrative, there is an increase due to an increase in salary for the Administrative Assistant; line item 6112 - Senior Clerical has to do with increases due to the hiring of one Services Supervisor; line item 6113 - Other Technical and Craft Skilled: the increase is due to the increase in salaries for the Assistant Accountant and Technician; line item 6114 - Clerical and Office Staff: the increase is due to the hiring of eight Registration Clerks and three Registration Clerks in Region 3 to fill vacancies that were existing; the hiring of three Stores Attendants and Operators, one Accounts Clerk, one Typist Clerk and one Help Desk Support Officer; also, it is for the increase in salaries for the accounts staff. The actual names of those persons I can provide to the Hon. Member at a later stage.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister, for your commitment. I would like to repeat the request. It is for names, designations, dates of appointment and salaries of all persons listed under the respective line items for the year 2015.

10.17 p.m.

Also, when the first eight months, as presented under line item 6115 - Semi-Skilled Operative and Unskilled are looked at, we recognise that remaining from that eight months period is 9.8% of the allocation. When we look at the remainder from all of the other line items, we see varying percentage below 25% remaining. I am, therefore, wondering if the sum allocated in line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations would be adequate to take the Guyana Elections Commission through to the end of the year. That lump sum, I think, is intended for the remaining four months of the year.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I am advised by the Guyana Elections Commission that that sum is adequate.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: we note that there was an increase of 11 staff, but when we look at the moneys allocated, it is reduced by \$50 million. Could the Minister advise?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The amount for 2014 is for a 12-month period and the amount for 2015 is for an eight-month period.

Mr. Mustapha: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what is responsible for the increase of approximately \$17 million in budgetary provision for line item 6223 – Office Materials and Supplies?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This has to do with the purchase of 7000 reams of watermarked paper and ink for the production of two preliminary Official List of Electors (OLE), 10,000 sheets of Teslin and 20,000 sheets of laminate for the production of identification (ID) cards.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: could the Hon. Minister state whether he considers the budgetary provision of approximately \$6 million to be adequate for fuel and lubricant, based on the A Partnership for National Unity's (APNU) pronouncement in relation to Local Government Elections later on this year?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sum under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants – caters for January to July, 2015. The amount for the rest of the year is captured under the \$2.1 billion subsidy to GECOM.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: the \$2,115,940,000 represents the lump sum that would be transferred directly to GECOM, as is stated on page 527. Could the Hon. Minister state, first of all, what percentage of this transfer is related to Local Government Elections?

Secondly, what percentage of this transfer is related to operational expenditure?

Thirdly, what percentage of this transfer is related to training and hiring of staff?

Fourthly, what percentage of this transfer is for secretariat expenses?

Finally, if there would be any acquisition of equipment, furnishing or furniture, what method of procurement would be utilised?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sums identified for Local Government Elections is \$1.483 billion and for Secretarial Services it is \$632 million.

Mr. Ali: What about the others? Is anything budgeted for furnishing?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That is catered for under Capital Expenditure.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6284 – Other: could the Hon. Minister explain to us what this \$49 million would be spent on?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is for payments for cleaners, provision of legal services, consultant for International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) certification consultant, and consultancy for the supervision of buildings under construction, *et cetera*.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could the Hon. Minister explain to us the difference? In 2015, the year for Local Government Elections, only \$49 million is budgeted as against \$167 million. Are you preparing for local government elections?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There is a sum of \$253,489,000 allocated for 2015 for Local Government Elections.

Mr. Mustapha: How much of those funds would be allocated for sensitisation and public relations to sensitise the Guyanese population about the new system of Local Government Elections?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I shall allow two additional questions.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There is an allocation of \$250 million for the preparation for local government elections and this includes the purchase of 585 billboards as well as components of an education strategy. There is an allocation for voter education in this sum.

Mr. Ali: The Hon. Minister did not answer the question on how much money is for training. When is there going to be the advertisement for the staff who would be employed under this \$2.2 billion allocation to work for local government elections? When would the training specifically for those staff that would be employed for Local Government Elections commence?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There is an allocation of \$27,878,000 for training. The Commission has already spent \$10.4 million on staff training for 2015 and it intends to retrain a pool of trainers and the core staff in the electoral pool for Local Government Elections preparation which commenced in July of 2015. Senior staff would also be sent on training courses on electoral best practices.

Mr. Ali: I can understand the sum being allocated but the \$2.1 billion caters for preparation and holding of local government elections. That requires staff. I have not seen any advertisement for staff specifically for Local Government Elections nor training. How is it that staff are being selected for training in preparation of Local Government Elections, especially given the undertaken by the Hon. Minister of Communities that Local Government Elections will be held before the end of December?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I am advised by the Elections Commission as follows: there is a reservoir of trained persons totalling almost 12,000 who were trained for the General and Regional Elections and the Commission would extract from this pool the persons it requires for the Local Government Elections.

Mr. G. Persaud: A follow-up question on training. It is unfortunate the explanation that was given by the Hon. Minister just now with regards to that question. Whether there is reserve or

not, this nation needs to be informed. I cannot recall reading any public statement made by the Guyana Elections Commission that it has identified potential staff and are training those staff for the local government elections. That is a little bit disturbing.

[The Question was not put.]

Current Expenditure

Programme: 112 – Elections Administration – \$2,346,704,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, there is, as you can see on page 92, an allocation for 2014 and under 'Revised' there is zero amount. Would the Hon. Minister explain to us what happened during 2014? Is the budget sum the revised sum or is there an omission and zero amount in the 'Revised' column for 2014 in this budgetary schedule? I think he may need help from the Minister of Finance

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I am advised by the Elections Commission that there were no elections in 2014 and, therefore, there was no allocation under this head. In 2015, for the General Elections, some \$1,975,702,000 was budgeted and the sum spent so far is \$1.8 billion. The preparations for local government elections, in 2015, commenced with \$371,000,002. That is the answer.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Ali: Hon. Minister, I think you have some mix up with the numbers.

10.32 p.m.

The budgeted provision for 2015 is \$2,346,704,000. That is the total appropriation. What you gave us just now was the actual expenditure and the remainder that has now been passed on to commence work, maybe, on local government elections. If that is the case, then for line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships), there is an allocation of \$89,502,000. What percentage of that allocation was utilised for training for the National and Regional Elections and what is the remaining balance in the Commission, in relation to training, from the January to August, 2015 provision?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sum of \$64,502,000 was allocated for training in 2015; the sum of \$25 million is available for Local Government Elections.

Mr. Ali: In addition to the lump sum transfer, are you saying that, under this head, there is a further \$27 million available for training in relation to Local Government Elections?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: That is correct, Hon. Member.

Mr. Ali: Could you then give us the total for training for the local government elections?

Mr. Chairman: I am allowing one more question.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Hon. Member, the sum is about \$53 million; there is a \$25 million and another \$27-odd million.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6284 – Other and line item 6294 – Other: could the Hon. Minister provide us with the details in respect of what is covered under line item 6284 and what is covered under line item 6294?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The line item 6284 caters for the cost of extensive voter education programme – it includes the printing of banners, jerseys, stickers, brochures, billboards, *et cetera*; the rental of backup power supply; the rental of tents and lighting for the rainy season; power supply to provide lighting to containers storing ballot boxes; and, also, the publication of orders and relevant notices, which are critical and expensive.

Line item 6294 deals with both general and local government elections, and it caters for payment for the 12,000 staff who has been employed by GECOM for these elections.

Bishop Edghill: Significant sums are being expended. I would like the Hon. Minister to tell this Committee if GECOM has a procurement policy, and if it could furnish us with a copy of that procurement policy. It comes under line items 6284 and 6294 under which goods and services are being procured.

Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: there is a budgeted sum of \$35,396,000. Could we be furnished with a list and the amounts associated with each location that was rented?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings had to do with the rental of buildings for the General and Regional Elections. There were at least 220 private buildings that were rented for that purpose, as well as the command centres that were rented for the elections. That is what accounts for that sum that is allocated there.

Bishop Edghill: Do you have the list?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Do you want the list? We could not get the list because the list was published before the elections.

Bishop Edghill: Could we get the sum associated with each location?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: You want the sum associated with that list. Hon. Member, you can have that information.

Bishop Edghill: What about the procurement policy?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The procurement by the Elections Commission follows the normal procedure. The tender board procedures are followed, specifically, by the Elections Commission. It is not sole sourcing; it is tender board procedure. That is how these items are purchased. Regarding the buildings, do you want to see the contract as well?

Bishop Edghill: Not necessarily. I am just seeking to ensure that I have clarification. Is the distinguished gentleman indicating to us that they are following tender board procedures? When he spoke about the procurement of jerseys, tents and all the various things, is restrictive, open or sole sourcing going to be used? These are significant sums that are being expended.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6281 – Security Services, \$77, 269,000: could the Hon. Minister state what actions, if any, were taken against the security service that could not have prevented fake Statement of Polls (SOPs) from entering GECOM? Secondly, what measures have been put in place to ensure that there is a competent security arrangement to avoid such occurrences in the future?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Line item 6281 has nothing to do with the security services that had to do with any Statement of Poll. Line item 6281 has to do with the survey that was conducted for security services leading up to the conduct of the poll, and during the poll for offices on the

coast and in Georgetown. I am not aware of any action to be taken against the companies. What I can say is that the companies that provided that service there was public tendering for them and they were awarded contracts under a public tender.

[The Question was not put]

Capital Expenditure:

Programme: 111 – Elections Commission – \$80, 830,000

Mr. Rohee: Could I ask the Hon. Member whether the resources under Capital and Current Expenditure is sufficient for GECOM to take this country to a Local Government Elections and whether there is a guarantee that the Government would not come back for a supplementary?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: As presently advised, this sum is sufficient but, in the event of the Elections Commission making a determination after claims and objection is completed that it requires additional sums, then that will be done. But, as presently advised, this sum would be adequate for them to do the work.

[The Question was not put]

Programme: 112 – Elections Administration – \$297,079,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 2501000 – Elections Commission: there is \$80 million budgeted for the provisions of buildings, bonds, fence, washrooms, and other facilities. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the money would come from this project code to ensure that we do not get fake SOPs at this Local Government Election. Mr. Lowenfield alluded to fake SOPs.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I would not venture an answer to that question; it is speculative.

Mr. Rohee: I am looking at the project profile in respect of purchase of vehicles, furniture and equipment, purchase of containers, *et cetera*. I would like to ask the Hon. Member, in respect to the purchase of vehicles, what the process that is envisaged to be followed is. Could the representatives of GECOM tell this honourable Committee how many vehicles it has in its possession, and on what basis the calculation was made to determine that new vehicles are

needed and the type of vehicles? Also, there is the question of compatibility of vehicles with other vehicles in order to ensure that services as well as parts and so forth could be procured.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This sum caters for the purchase of two 15-seater minibuses and these were purchased for the General and Regional Elections. There is a fleet of 46 vehicles. Yes, there is compatibility in the type of these vehicles that are purchased by the Elections Commission.

Mr. Rohee: Are these vehicles new or second hand vehicles?

Mr. Chairman: Hon Member, this is the last question that I would permit.

Mr. Rohee: Are these new vehicles or are they reconditioned vehicles?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: They are new vehicles, Hon. Member.

Mr. Rohee: I understand that the President had raised the question about used vehicles.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: They are new vehicles.

[The Question was not put]

10.47 p.m.

Agency: 57 Office of the Ombudsman

Current Expenditure

Programme: 571 – Ombudsman – \$27,799,000

[The question was not put]

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 571 – Ombudsman – \$500,000

[The question was not put]

Agency: 58 Public Service Appellate Tribunal

Current Expenditure

Programme: 581 – Public Service Appellate Tribunal - \$15,470,000

Mr. G. Persaud: According to the profile of the staffing details, there is one staff at this entity. We have noted an increase in the allocation. Could the Hon. Minister explain what is intended by the allocation at line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This is basically the salary for one staff member at \$66,736 a month, along with National Insurance Scheme (NIS) contributions and vacation allowance. This sum is allocated for that purpose, one staff only.

Mr. G. Persaud: The total expenditure for 2014 was \$2,287,000. If is the same one staff, then it is difficult for me to comprehend that the salary would have increased dramatically to pay that staff \$15,470,000 for the period 1st January to 31st December, 2015.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Hon. Member, if you look at the grand total for Budget 2014 you will see the sum of \$15,728,000 and the budget for 2015 \$15,470,000. There is actually a reduction there.

Mr. G. Persaud: I am seeing revised expenditure 2014 in my document. I am seeing it as \$2,287,000, meaning that is eight months of expenditure. Under line item 6321, I am seeing \$14,631,000. My question, therefore, is: What expenditure not catered for in the January to July period will be taken on board from 1st August to 31st December period?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: The sum of \$14,631,000, I indicated, was basically salary for the entire year for one staff. I am not getting the question that the Hon. Member is seeking to get an answer to.

Mr. G. Persaud: Under line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support, I am seeing \$467,000 in which I think salaries are paid.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I am advised that from this figure of \$14,631,000 everything comes from there.

Ms. Teixeira: Again, I want to go back to line item 6321, \$14.6 million. Again the problem is that what is in the statutory section is \$14,631,000 as a local contribution, but the total is not \$15,470 as it is on page 381. I am asking, again, that the Ministry of Finance please check the arithmetic for this constitutional body because there are different figures. A total of \$15,470,000 and in the statutory bodies for local contributions there is \$14,631,000.

To go back to the answer that the Hon. Member gave, that this is the salary for one person for the entire year. According to the staffing details, there is one person who is at the clerical and office support level for both 2014 and 2015. Is this person earning about \$1 million a month at a clerical level? I am just asking because normally at line item 6114 that level of salary would not be found. Is it a mistake or could it be clarified? Fourteen million dollars cannot be the salary of one person at the clerical level.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I will seek some clarity and provide that information to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Ramson: As the Minister will be providing a bit more information, I am hoping that under the line item 6321 which, as it can be seen, states “Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations”, he can give a breakdown of the contributions to the local organisations when he will be providing the information that he mentioned a moment ago.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can provide that.

[The question was not put]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, just to be clear that no representative of certain commissions, which we must consider, is here, I will just simply call the names of those commissions. If someone is here as a representative we will consider that commission. Public and Police Service Commission; Teaching Service Commission...

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Representatives from the Public and Police Service Commission are here.

Mr. Chairman: We will proceed with them.

Agency: 09 Public and Police Service Commission

Current Expenditure

Programme: 091 – Public and Police Service Commission – \$60,647,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6223, Office Materials and Supplies: The total request under this line item is \$980,000 for the eight-month period. Could the Hon. Minister explain the drop in expenditure under this line item?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This decrease is due to one photocopying machine that became unserviceable as such less ink is being purchased.

11.02 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: We noted that there has been a 64.2% reduction with regards to what was allocated in 2014 and what was spent up to the end of eight months. Could it be said that the building is now properly and adequately maintained, so there is no need for the kinds of maintenance cost?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There is a sum spent over the eight months which is \$1,073,000 and this is for the rest of the year.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Services: Could the Hon. Minister give us the model type of each vehicle and the year in which the vehicles were purchased?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: There are two vehicles. One is a Toyota RAV4 purchased in 2012 and the other is a Fielder wagon that was purchased in December of 2014.

Mr. G. Persaud: My final question, under line item 6281, Security Services: Would the Hon. Minister say to us the name of the security provider, the date of engagement and when will this contract mature?

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: This security services is RK security service. The contract was from the 1st January, 2015 and it comes to an end on the 31st of December, 2015.

[The question was not put]

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 091 - Public and Police Service Commission - \$1,000,000

Mr. G. Persaud: I recognised that there is a reduction of the allocation this agency as from \$2.5 million in 2014 to a \$1,000,000 in 2015 and that no allocation was made under building. Could it be assumed that there is no need for repair? Also the allocation for the purchase of furniture and equipment is now \$1,000,000, so it means, therefore, that the reduction by \$1.5 million is also signalling that the commission is adequately furnished and equipped.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: I can provide the details for what the \$1,000,000 will do. I think that in these allocations... Usually you do not get everything that you ask for and in this case I think that the commission felt comfortable with what it has or what it was provided with. This will purchase three air conditioning units, one refrigerator, four filing cabinets, five executive chairs and those are basically for use in the office of the Chairman of the commission. The cabinets are in the section of the Accounts Department and the executive chairs are for use in the Personnel Department.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you very much Hon. Minister for the details provided and thank you Mr. Chairman.

[The question was not put]

Agency: 02 Office of the Prime Minister

Current Expenditure

Programme: 021 - Prime Minister's Secretariat - \$267,980,000

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, there is a sum allocated for \$10 million dollars. Could the Hon. Minister indicate which building and the scope of the work that needs to be done?

First Vice-President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]: This allocation is for the inclusion of secondary buildings at the Prime Minister's official residence. This amount caters for the refurbishing of cubicles, and of the Office of the Prime Minister, renovating washrooms and repainting of the office, also rehabilitating pool house, security barracks and storage house at the residence. It is a continuation of a programme that has been seen of last year with repairs to

roof and renovation of waiting area at the older Office of the Prime Minister. This allocation here is for both works at the official residence and at the Office of the Prime Minister. It is a continuation of the estimates.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: There is an additional six members who have joined the staff as contracted employees. Could the Hon. Prime Minister please indicate to this House, name, designation, and remuneration package for each of the six members?

Mr. Nagamootoo: The six contracted employees have been employees contracted by the former Prime Minister. I can give their names. Urmilla George, she is employed at the residence; personal attendant Quane Peters, retained by the former Prime Minister; he is an electrician and handyman. I was told he has taken off to the Prime Minister personal residence now. Supply Expediter Lakhan Roopchand, he is on the job; Office Assistant Anastasia Abrams has been retained at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, formerly Ministry of Public Works. Officer Assistant Vernon Vickerie... Assistant Confidential Secretary Shanta Bansavatar was previously on the permanent establishment. She had reached retirement and has now being retained on a contract. She has been for many years the Prime Minister's confidential secretary and still retains her position. None of these persons have been fresh employment. These are pull over employees.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Services: We would have seen an increase of almost a million dollars. Could the Hon. Prime Minister indicate to us what is responsible for this increase?

Mr. Nagamootoo: All previous vehicles in the fleet of the Prime Minister were serviced by the Office of the President. These vehicles would now be maintained by the Office of the Prime Minister. There have been, I understand, four additional vehicles there. As it is known there has been a hunt for vehicles that belongs to the Prime Minister's fleet.

Bishop Edghill: I did not know that, Sir.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Yes. We are discovering them. We will bring them home, all of them, but there are four additional vehicles that we have brought in.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, could you tell this House, under the same line item, what is the total size of the fleet of the Prime Minister's vehicles and how many are assigned to the Prime Minister particularly?

Mr. Nagamootoo: There are nine vehicles that have been inherited from the Office of the Prime Minister. I can give you their designation, if you like, and there has been no change in relation to the use of those vehicles. Four have been assigned to the Prime Minister, one for the Prime Minister and they are security vehicles. There is PPP 10; that is the Prime Minister's VIP car that was inherited; PPP 7, that is a backup car that was inherited from the former Prime Minister; PPP 9150, another backup; PKK 81...Do you need the whole list?

Bishop Edghill: You are answering.

Mr. Nagamootoo: These are vehicles that were used by Prime Minister Sam Hinds. There is PMM 1417, it is an escort car; PMM 9775 is a Toyota Double Cab pickup; PNN 8763 is a Toyota Double Cab pickup; PSS 3034 is a Toyota Picnic. Those are 2015 list of vehicles. PNN 8763, Toyota Double Cab pickup; PSS 3034, a Toyota Picnic used by the Permanent Secretary, Mr Omar Shariff, PMM 1417; Toyota Land Cruiser used by a Mr. Hall. I think that was a PPP activist in Linden. PMM 9775 a Toyota Double Cab pickup that was used by the Prime Minister for hinterland travels.

11.17 p.m.

PPP 10 is a Camry motor car; it is an escort; PPP12 is a Nissan Titan, it is a VIP car; PSS 6, Toyota Mark II, escort vehicle, PRR 8646, Toyota Land Cruiser and PPP 3303, Mark II, stationed by the Prime Minister's residence.

While this is the listing, we have identified those. Of those, some have been apparently returned to the Office of the President; some of them were apparently on loan. Three, I have been told, have since returned to the Office of the President. The former Prime Minister had a large array of vehicles, some of which are now being used by this Prime Minister.

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, which was a matter that was raised earlier, that was awaiting the arrival of the Prime Minister to answer, we are advised that Government Information Agency (GINA) received the subvention of

\$80,000,414, under the Office of the President. Under the Office of the Prime Minister, it will now receive a subvention of \$63,000,939. The question was put a bit earlier. Could the Hon. Prime Minister please tell this House who the head of GINA is, the date of engagement and the remuneration package of that person?

Mr. Nagamootoo: I will start with the last question first. The Director of GINA is Ms. Beverly Alert, a professional journalist who I first met in 1992 at the Ministry of Information. She works for \$367,500, the same as was earned by the former Director who has resigned.

Bishop Edghill: Hon. Prime Minister, I am happy for the information that is being provided because this was a vacuum in the public because we did not know who the head of GINA was, but we are happy to know now. It is just to remind you, Sir, that you did indicate publicly that you would not allow GINA to be politicised. As far as I am aware, the person who has been appointed as the head of GINA was a member on the APNU/AFC list at the last elections.

Mr. Nagamootoo: That does not make a person who is a member of the AFC a politician, politicised a professional person. A doctor, who is a member of a political party, does not make that doctor less professional. The point is: it is a person who has the qualification of a professional and who is competent and not a party political hack.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item 6321, I would just like to remind the Hon. Prime Minister that the previous head of GINA was also a professional. When the budget of GINA was cut to \$1 and the Prime Minister made a commitment that it must be depoliticised. The Prime Minister is telling this honourable House that the head of GINA, a candidate at the last elections, is not a political appointee. I have a serious difficulty with that, Sir.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I do not know if I should answer the question but I think it draws a retort. I have besides me, on my right, Mr. Omar Shariff, who has been a candidate of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) in the last elections. He holds the position of Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister; he was the Chairman of the Progress Youth Organisation (PYO); he was a Central Committee Member of the PPP. I do not understand this issue that if someone is holding a position whether the person should be disqualified because the person has a political view. I have the new director of the National Communications Network (NCN).

Bishop rose to his feet.

I am on my feet, Sir.

Bishop Edghill: I have asked a particular question, Sir.

Mr. Nagamootoo: The new Director of GINA is professional public relations, communications person with many years of experience in the field of communications.

Bishop Edghill: I am happy for the Prime Minister's explanation. It is just to say to this honourable House that I have no difficulty with someone who is qualified and a professional being engaged by the Government. I believe that every person has a right to work. It was no lesser a person than the Prime Minister, himself, who committed to this nation that he would not put a political person to head GINA. It was the Prime Minister, himself, and he has not kept his word.

Mr. Nagamootoo: The Hon. Member is a stranger to the truth. I said that this Prime Minister will not put political activist to be heads of the boards of the state media. If the Hon. Member wants to prove it, produce the record where I talked about GINA. I have said that about the boards. As far as I am concerned, a professional is heading this entity and is fully qualified to do so.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, let us try to refrain from throwing epithets such as "lie" and other words such as that. While I am at that, I should say to Members that the Committee is not an auto pilot, so that request should be made to the Chair to obtain the floor.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I have noticed, Sir, that NCN, under the Office of the President would have received the subvention of \$69,507,000 and under the Office of the Prime Minister, it is said to receive an additional subvention of \$27,254,000. Could the Hon. Prime Minister tell this House how this money will be expended and the items as it relates to the expenditure?

Mr. Nagamootoo: The NCN had been receiving a monthly subvention from the state of \$6.8 million from January until July. In spite, last year no subvention had been approved. NCN has been using this money as budgetary support for its staff because it has been one of those state

entities that had been badly managed, badly ran, and badly operated. There had been accumulated receivable debts owing to NCN commercial business of over \$600 million. There is about \$220 million in current receivable, of which the PPP owes \$13 million.

The subvention, as it is known, this is a Government television, is used to maintain the staff. I can say this: that soon there will be rationalisation to ensure that the staff complement perform optimally and also that the entity seizes what it used to do, the party propaganda work for the PPP and reverts to what it originally ought to have been, a government state information agency.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, it is just a follow-up. It will be my final question, Sir.

Mr. Ali: One second. Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Prime Minister, spoke about rationalisation. Rationalisation is a wide concept - what the new staff complement is that it will be targeting; how many staff will be displaced; how many staff will be replaced and how many staff will be retrenched in the rationalisation process.

My second question is: What method, in keeping with the thrust of transparency, was utilised in the hiring of the head of GINA? I have never seen a public advertisement. I have never heard of an evaluation of different candidates. If this was not the case, then that process was far from transparent. If there is a process that is far from transparent, selecting the head of the Government news information agency, then there is are serious problems.

In the process, which was employed in hiring that person, I want the issue of rationalisation, Hon. Prime Minister. In relation to the Maintenance of Building, line item 6242, \$10 million specifically, I would like to know what was spent on the residence of the Prime Minister, the period it was spent and the method of selecting the contractor or contractors who would have done these works. Under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, Hon. Minister Harmon said to us that the Hon. Prime Minister will provide the details of expenditure to GINA and NCN, between the period 16th May and the end of August, 2015. We would like to have the full details of all transfers and expenditures to NCN and GINA, during that period.

Mr. Nagamootoo: It is a very simply question made in a hundred parts. It is that not a cent has been spent on the residence of the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister lives in his own humble

abode, where he had lived since 1985. The official residence, a tender has been out for a while and I am not sure if there has been any work done. The allocation is here to do both, the internal work of the heritage site, in accordance with recommendations from the heritage committee. No one has been offered, as far as I know, a contract and I am advised that the process is very transparent, and it has been advertised in the media. That amount of money is there for that work to be done.

In regard to the rationalisation at NCN, we recall that there was one Mr. Kellawan Lall, who was a former Minister and Ambassador, central committee and executive member of the PPP, who held down a position at NCN for \$500,000 per month and allowances, money ties in excess of \$1 million.

11.32 p.m.

Mr. Lall has since been rationalised. Left remaining are 163 employees of this State television/radio entity. In order to bring economies of scale to have value for money, we have decided that those people who were employed there during the Regional and General Elections to do party propaganda for the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) would be properly deployed. There would be another PPP - a proper placement plan - for those who were there answering telephones and using Facebook to attack political opponents. That is the extent of the rationalisation.

Mr. Ali: I would not be deterred by arrogance. I want to say that the Hon. Prime Minister used the words "we will rationalise and decide on a proper placement plan". It means that the Hon. Prime Minister is inserting himself in an administrative capacity in a statutory board. This is dangerous and it is political interference in the affairs of GINA and NCN.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if you are addressing a question, could you do that and spare us the others? Is there a question that you want to ask? You do not.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Prime Minister did not answer the question on how much resources was expended between 16th May and August, 2015, as the Hon. Minister, Joseph Harmon, said he would have done when it was his time to speak.

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence to mention that we have gone beyond the appointed time of 11.00 p.m. and ask whether the Committee wishes to have a motion moved for us to continue until we reach an identifiable agency.

Mr. Chairman: I thank you, Hon. Member. We wish to complete those items which we have selected for today's attention before we rise.

Mr. Trotman: With your leave, I move a motion that the House continues beyond the time of 11.00 p.m. until the business that has been set aside for today is completed.

Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member.

Mr. Nagamootoo: For the months of May, June and July, the NCN received a subvention of \$6,813,313 every month. If I understood the question correctly, the Member was trying to ascertain how much was given to NCN in subvention for a specific period. I said that for May, June and July, it was \$6.8 million each month. It was the same amount that was given for January - \$6.8 million, February - \$6.8 million, and March - \$6.8 million. It is part of the \$5.8 billion that Minister Ashni Singh could not account for because these sums were never voted on by the Parliament, but had been given in subvention for the months January to May at \$6.8 million each. Because of the operating losses of NCN, we are maintaining this subvention and that is why the rest of the \$27 million was needed.

Mr. Ali: A follow-up. The Hon. Member said that there is a somewhat an even distribution by the last Government and this Government. It is consistently \$6.8 million every month. Would the Hon. Member then agree with me that his claim that the last Government politicalised NCN and GINA during that period by putting political resources into it is a wrong claim because this Government is continuing with the same level of resources that we had allocated on a month-to-month basis?

Mr. Nagamootoo: All I can say is that we totally condemn the politicisation of the NCN by the PPP/C regime to do the PPP/C propaganda using State resources - taxpayers' money. We have introduced professional standards – and it is a work-in-progress – to change the NCN radio and

television from being PPP propaganda arms into professional State Government media. You all could see that it has been so.

Mr. Nandlall: Line Item 6284 – Other: for the Budget of 2015, there is an increase from \$3.3 million, last year, to \$15.7 million this year. Could the Hon. Member explain this almost 500% increase in the allocation in the budgetary line, and could he state what ‘Other’ signifies?

Mr. Nagamootoo: The increase, from the amount in 2014, to \$15 million represents a sum of \$5 million for the work of the Steering Committee on Constitutional Reform; \$4.1 million for the Department of Public Information, which is new; and \$5.7 million for repairs to furniture and household items for the Prime Minister’s official residence.

Mr. Nandlall: A follow-up question. Five million dollars, I am told, have been budgeted to constitute a Steering Committee on Constitutional Reform, strangely under the Office of the Prime Minister as opposed to the Ministry of Legal Affairs, but that is a different matter. Could the Hon. Prime Minister tell us, in the interest of transparency and public accountability, what process was embarked upon to recruit any possible persons who may have been recruited to sit on this Steering Committee? I will ask another question after the answer to that is given.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I ask a follow-up question to that? Is the \$5 million for the Steering Committee on Constitutional Reform payments for attendance at meetings, for travel, or for snacks? What is it being used for? Has a Coordinator been hired? The \$5 million has to be for some service.

Mr. Nagamootoo: The Prime Minister has constitutional reform under his remit and that has been gazetted. In the process, the Prime Minister constituted a small, professional, highly qualified group of advisors to work out the module and the framework for the constitutional reform process that will come after the module has been presented to the Prime Minister. This process is envisaged to last from 1st September to 31st December, 2015.

There are five eminent persons, including Mr. Nigel Hughes - Attorney-at-Law, Professor Harold Lutchman, Sir Haslyn Parris, Ms. Geeta Chandan-Edmond and Mr. Gino Persaud, four of whom are attorneys-at-law, who would be conducting this work and reporting back to the Prime Minister. They would be given a stipend of \$100,000 each month for this period. There would be

an administrative staff. There would be a vehicle with a driver deployed for the use by the Members of the Committee, and there would be a Researcher. We are now in the process of finalising arrangements for an office that could be used. The process has been that the Prime Minister solicited the assistance of these highly qualified and professional persons to help in the process of setting up the parameters for constitutional reform.

Mr. Nandlall: The Prime Minister has given a lot of information to us but has deliberately side-stepped the issue. I asked simply: did the Prime Minister solely and exclusively - which he may have the power to do - handpick these persons or did he embark upon a consultative exercise, for example the solicitation of the views of the Guyana Bar Association, the Guyana Women Lawyers Association (GAWL) and the Berbice Bar Association? That is the kind of information I want the Hon. Prime Minister to give us. I am not questioning the qualifications, the skill and the suitability of the selectees. I am concerned about the selection process that was employed. Were they handpicked at the discretion of the Prime Minister exclusively or did he embark upon a process of consultation that led him to select those persons? That is the thrust of my question.

Mr. Nagamootoo: The persons were brought together after a process of consultation among Members of a Cabinet Sub-Committee, comprising the Attorney General, the Vice-President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Governance and the Minister of Social Cohesion. The Sub-Committee of the Cabinet on Parliamentary and Constitutional Affairs was constituted and there was consultation, resulting in these advisors being selected. It was totally transparent and democratic.

11.47 p.m.

Mr. Nandlall: I have one last question. So, the Prime Minister consulted with his Cabinet Colleagues. He did not consult with the Guyana Bar Association. He did not consult with the Guyana Women Lawyers Association. He did not consult with the Berbice Bar Association. He did not consult with any other civil organisation in this country. He just consulted with himself and Cabinet. I just want to get that clear.

Mr. Nagamootoo: When the constitutional reform commission is established, after the Prime Minister would have been duly advised, there would be widespread consultation, including with the PPP, now that it has taken up its seats in the Parliament, and all of the stakeholders, including

all of the organisations that have been mentioned by the former Attorney General, now a Member of the Opposition.

Programme: 021- Prime Minister's Secretariat – \$267,980,000 agreed to and ordered to stand of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister's Secretariat - \$107,079,000

Mr. Ali: Project code 2404000 - Land Transport: could the Hon. Prime Minister tell us what vehicle would be bought duty-free at the cost of \$22 million?

Mr. Nagamootoo: In 2014, a sum of \$23 million was voted to purchase one Toyota Land Cruiser for the Prime Minister. The \$23 million was placed in the Office of the Prime Minister's budget but it was utilised by the Ministry of Finance. The \$23 million has now been reduced to \$22 million to purchase one Land Cruiser for the Prime Minister so that the Prime Minister could reach out to the people who voted for the Prime Minister and the coalition and reach out to all other Guyanese in the hinterland areas. This would go out to tender. It is not the Prime Minister's personal vehicle. The Prime Minister does not depend on duty-free concessions to purchase three vehicles. If I do that, I would pay my \$40 million to the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA).

Mr. Ali: I would not seek to get personal because if I seek to do so, I would ask for a refund of the money on behalf of the people of Berbice in the case of the Berbice River Bridge. Project code 2404000 - Land Transport: some \$22 million has been budgeted. The Hon. Prime Minister earlier told us, under consideration of current expenditure, that he inherited the fleet of vehicle of the previous Prime Minister. So, in addition to the 22 vehicles that he inherited, he is now adding a new land cruiser.

Project code 1701000 - Minor Works: some \$10 million is budgeted. Could the Hon. Prime Minister tell us how he would utilise this \$10 million in the next four months? There is no programme. There is no detailed list of activities to be undertaken by the Prime Minister on how he would be utilising almost \$2.5 million per month on minor works.

Mr. Nagamootoo: The last vehicle that was bought...

Mr. Ali: With full respect to the Prime Minister, I am not asking about vehicles. My question is on project code 1701000.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I understand your question, sir.

Mr. Ali: Answer my question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I did remark that the Committee is not on autopilot. You will direct your questions to the Chair. I do not think that courtesy has left because it is late. I think you must still observe that. Please proceed, Prime Minister.

Mr. Nagamootoo: The last time that a second-hand vehicle was bought for the Prime Minister's Office was in 2001. It was a 4x4 vehicle that was purchased second-hand. That is in relation to queries about the need for a new 4x4.

The \$10 million to be utilised for minor works, compared to \$7.5 million spent last year, follows the pattern of assistance to projects by the Guyana Public Service Union, the Guyana Relief Council (GRA), the Salvation Army, Dioceses of Guyana, Small Business Development Finance Trust (SBDFT), Starr Computer, and small works of New Era Entertainment, sponsoring football tournament, training, Christmas lunch for the elderly and physically-challenged members, assistance to the less fortunate individuals and disabled persons, assistance a host of non-profit making organisations, minor assistance for people in real need to help build a fence, assistance for a blind person, assistance to construct part of a street, assistance build a ramp for someone who is aged. Mr. Samuel Hinds, former Prime Minister, also had a pet project in beekeeping in which unemployed youths were periodically introduced to the science of beekeeping. I intend to also keep the bees alive. That is the rubric under which the paltry sum of \$10 million for minor works would be utilised.

Mr. Ali: I wish to compliment the Hon. Prime Minister for all the good works listed under 'Minor Works'. I would like to ask whether the \$22 million budgeted to purchase the vehicle would not be better spend under 'Minor Works' and the \$10 million budgeted for 'Minor Works' used to purchase the vehicle since that would benefit the people more.

Project code 2509600 - Furniture and Equipment: I see that \$10 million is budgeted for the purchase of furniture and equipment. Earlier, the Hon. Prime Minister stated that furniture would

be repaired in the amount of \$4.5 million. Furniture and equipment worth \$10 million is now to be purchased under this project code. Could I ask the Hon. Prime Minister where the \$10 million worth of furniture would be located? To which offices, residences or other places close to the heart of the Prime Minister would it be located?

Mr. Nagamootoo: The appalling condition of the official Office of the Prime Minister in Wights Lane has forced the Prime Minister to relocate. We had to relocate to the compound of the Ministry of the Presidency and the money has been used to buy a private branch exchange (PBX) phone system, desktop computers, air conditioned (AC) units, uninterruptible power supply (UPS) backup – we did not find any of the stabilisers and UPS backup at the place in Kingston – laptop computers, executive chair, a stove, a refrigerator, and a freezer. There are some items that are missing - a washing machine with a dryer at the official residence of the Prime Minister, multichannel bug detector, two-way radio and executive desk. Some of these are for security use and some of the allocation of that paltry sum is to provide some type of comfortable living accommodation at the PM's residence, but most of it is for the relocation of the Prime Minister, for the time being, to another comfortable office. Had I had the US\$58 million that had been squandered on the Marriott Hotel Guyana, I would have gladly been able to spend it on disabled and poor people under 'Minor Works'.

Ms. Manickchand: Hon. Prime Minister, project code 2404000- Land Transport, I am curious as to whether you are aware that \$9 million for the repairs to the Oxford Primary School was slashed from the budget. I am wondering if you think that this money would be better used for that purpose. I am referring to the \$22 million projected to be allocated under project code 2404000 for the purchase of your luxury vehicle.

Programme: 021- Prime Minister's Secretariat - \$ 107,079,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

12.02 a.m.

Agency: 04 Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy – \$1,263,869,000

Ms. Teixeira: Under this Programme, I see that there has been an increase in the allocation for Current Expenditure. I notice that there has not been a significant increase in the employment cost. When I look at the others though, I have a concern.

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Williams]: What is the line item?

Ms. Teixeira: I am giving a preamble, Mr. Williams.

Mr. Williams: You are deviating.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, could you protect me from Mr. Williams, please? Thank you, Sir.

If one looks at the employment cost, which has not been significantly increased, and one looks at the other charges, then one would start having some concerns. Let me give some examples. I will go through them one at a time. It is for the Minister to respond. Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: the allocation has gone up by \$57 million, which I find rather unusual because most Ministers at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs do not have a large local budget. I would appreciate, sir, if you could enlighten me as to how this budgeted amount went from \$20.8 million, in 2014, to \$97.595 million in 2015. I would appreciate your response.

Mr. Greenidge: I am happy to venture an explanation as to why this amount has increased by what the Member correctly identified as a significant amount. It is due to increases in two categories. First of all, this constitutes posting and reposting. It also caters for out of pocket expenses, airfares and accommodation.

Ms. Teixeira: Is that for local travel?

Mr. Greenidge: Posting and reposting are not local. The amount also involves an element that deals with administration and the monitoring of activities in the missions. When accountants or administrative staff are sent out to do oversight, the payment comes from this line item.

The posting and reposting, clearly, are going to be numerous because we have found - and I think it is well known that we have said that it is unsatisfactory - ourselves in a situation where a large number of heads of missions have been on missions for such extended periods. There is a time when that becomes dysfunctional. I think we are well beyond that. So, posting and reposting will show a big jump in this year in order to put us back in a situation where a significant number

of persons who have been abroad for 13, 15, 17 and 23 years are replaced by other members of staff. That is the explanation behind this large jump.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Hon. Minister, for your explanation. Is this the same budget that is used to bring back a number of ambassadors who has been recalled, including the ambassador for Venezuela? And, how soon would a new ambassador for Venezuela going to be assigned as this is a rather sensitive post to leave empty at this point?

Mr. Greenidge: The answer is yes, to the first part; to the second part, as soon as possible – within the next three or four weeks.

Mr. Teixeira: I would be pleased to talk with the Hon. Member about the difficulties of getting agreements in some of these countries and how long it takes. It is not going to be a *flash in the pan*, my dear Minister, but we have to be careful about leaving a post such Venezuela empty for so long.

Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: the amount has increased from \$18.8 million to \$53.4 million. Could you explain this major increase of \$30-odd million?

Mr. Greenidge: Once more I agree, but I tried to answer the specific question put to me. I was not asked the question as to when the ambassador would be in place. Ms. Teixeira asked when we would appoint the person. We will do it but we cannot guarantee that the Venezuelans or the British will respond immediately.

The issue that was raised by our Colleague is attributable to container the cost. In other words, the staff rules require that, for the staff posted abroad, we provide transport for their personal belongings to be returned. We do that normally by way of containers. They give us the tenders and we are obliged to make financial provision for their return home and so forth.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6281 – Security Services: there has been a slight increase from \$11.3 million to \$15.2 million. Could you explain what the reason for the increase is?

Mr. Greenidge: The Ministry, currently, is challenged by the lack of parking space. If you pass outside of the Ministry on South Road, you will currently find that is in a rather parlous state. Staff are unable to park and when one is lucky enough to get into a car park, one may find it

difficult to exit because the road is blocked. We have provision for the preparation of a car park on Charlotte Street and provision for security arrangements to make that cars are properly secured.

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6284 – Other, the allocation has increased from \$30.5 million to \$116.166 million. That is an enormous increase for ‘Other’. Could you enlighten us as to what line item 6284 – Other would cover? This is unless the Hon. Member would be having a lot of receptions and so on and, in that case, I hope he would invite all his friends and colleagues on all sides of the House. This is enormous. It is five times what the budget was in 2014.

Mr. Greenidge: I thank my Colleague for reminding me that all of my friends should be invited to the receptions when we have them. Unfortunately, this is not the head under which they would be wined and dined.

Mr. Chairman, as you would be aware, we anticipate that, in the course of the coming months, we would be required to meet a number of requirements in terms of information, analysis and dealing with challenges pertaining, for example, to border issues and some of the new areas we are looking at in terms of emerging issues. Therefore, these line items make provision for consultancy services, most especially on border issues, and it also includes bank charges and the like. In that line item, there is also provision for storage fees for containers, which is not an area that we would normally be able to avoid.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, are these area that you included under line item 6284 – Other, areas like translations or teleconferencing? This is because we are working with the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), MERCOSUR and CARICOM. Would any goods and services be purchased in this regard? Does this mean, therefore, that the increase will improve and enhance our bilateral and multilateral work with UNASUR, MERCOSUR, Organization of American States (OAS), *et cetera*?

Mr. Greenidge: The answer is yes. It does include that item. Just to, perhaps, provide a little bit of added comfort to our Colleague, we are required, of course, now, perhaps more than in recent times, to translate into the other languages some of the documents that will be produced. For some of them, we have had large stocks but they have been used and, therefore, new as well as

old documents would have to be translated. There is a range of services that we anticipate under this.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Member, line item 6294 – Other: again, the budget has moved from \$49.18 million to \$84.140 million. Could you state what the increase covers?

Mr. Greenidge: The items that this increase would fund include some of the meetings that are, perhaps, unusual for this year. There is a Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) Meeting. In addition to COTED, there would be a meeting of the Guyana-Brazil Joint Commission and a meeting of the Strategic Committee on Immigration, Frontier and Asylum (SCIFA). There would also be an additional special meeting. These are a number of unusual meetings that would take place before the end of the year.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Minister. Under line item 6322 – Subsidies and Contributions to Intl. Organisations, there is an increase in the subvention by \$22 million. When one turns to the Details of Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisation, which is on page 534, Hon. Member, I notice that most of the rates remain the same.

12.17 a.m.

However, Guyana has stopped contributing, according to this list, to the financial assistance of the United Nations **Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)**. Guyana had contributed \$5.2 million in 2014. It is zero in 2015. I do not know if it is a one-off situation, but there are a number of organisations to which Guyana has given humanitarian assistance - Beneteau, West Africa, Herzegovina and Bosnia. It was humanitarian and, in some cases crisis situations. It is in regards to other obligations that we have at the UN and other bodies. Could you enlighten me as to why we have stopped funding the UNRWA? I see that \$10 million for West Africa has also been removed. The others may have been one-off but the United Nations **Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees** is a body that Guyana would normally contribute to and I notice that the sum is zero now.

Mr. Greenidge: As regards the increases, the Caribbean Knowledge Learning Network (CKLN) is a Network that Guyana established with the rest of the Caribbean. As you may know, that

network was supposed to provide facilities for all of the Caribbean countries and, within that context, there was supposed to be a learning network amongst them.

We seem not to have been happy with the initial arrangements and so the contributions were not paid. It is quite some significant arrears of contribution that now has to be paid and the region has set about trying to sort it out. There have been some problems associated with the operation of the entity itself, but we are still obliged to pay our contribution. There is, of course, the CARICOM Competition Commission. We are also obliged to pay our contribution.

As regards those that you mentioned, such as the United Nations **Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees**, as far as I understand – and you all on the other side might be better able to assist us on this – the contributions have not been deliberately left unpaid in the sense that no policy decision had been taken in the past not to pay. It is part of the process of managing cash by non-payment from time to time. In one case, we do not believe that we have been given the invoice for the current contribution, but there has not been a deliberate policy decision not to pay these. As you know, from time to time, one falls behind for all sorts of reasons. The meetings might not have been attended.

Mr. Rohee: I appreciate the answer given by the distinguished Minister of Foreign Affairs with respect to line item 6322. But this is a significant chunk of your budget that would be going to subsidies and contributions to international organisations. Has the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made an assessment of the returns that the Government and the people of Guyana will get from this large sum of money being paid to international organisations? It is not that I am against it. Has the Ministry done an analysis of the returns and the benefits that have come to the country as a result of this major contribution to international organisations?

Mr. Greenidge: The question put by our Colleague as regards the assessment is an extremely important one. The simple answer to it is that, as of now, this new Administration has not carried out that study exhaustively and it has also, unfortunately, not been able to find evidence that any other study had been done prior to our coming to the office by our predecessors. If you have such information available to you, I would be happy to receive it.

The question is an important one because the amounts, indeed, are large and sometimes one commits oneself at a regional level and one actually has to be party to an arrangement that may

not give immediate benefits but it may be just to safeguard one's interest. I understand the point that is being raised. It is a tricky one but that is the reality that we have to deal with. We will, in the course of the coming year, take a look at many of these.

Mr. Rohee: A follow-up question: the sum of money that is budgeted, I repeat, is significant. Our membership in these international organisations, Mr. Minister, places a heavy burden on us in terms of duties and obligations. Is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs burdened, institutionally and otherwise, as a result of its responsibility to fulfil its obligations and duties to these organisations in terms of its capacity to do so?

Mr. Greenidge: I would not say that the Ministry is burdened. What I would say is that there are two issues. Firstly, since the existing commitments placed such a heavy financial burden on the country as a whole, it is imperative that the country ensures that it has the capacity to be able to make the best of it. If that amount of taxpayers' money has to be forked out, then the Ministry must be revisited to ensure that the manpower, the level of skills, and the quality of organisation are the maximum that they could be. We have placed the highest priority on that. That is where we started. As a matter of fact, I have hardly spent much attention on anything other than that and the Venezuela problem. That is the first answer to the question that my Colleague has posed.

Secondly, the ability to get away from some of these costs is not very easy but one has to strike a balance in terms of weighting whether some organisations should be joined at all. One has to review whether our membership should be maintained. Insofar as we have maintained the membership, if it is maintained for a certain period of time, then the maximum effort in terms of attendance and being focussed in terms of one's priorities and what one want to get out of it. It is not clear that we always do that. If Guyana is going to be a member of a particular group, even something like the CARICOM Competition Commission, Guyana must try to make sure that it is used to its maximum.

Mr. Rohee: Or the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Mr. Greenidge: Yes, including that.

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy - \$1,263,869,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion - \$2,611,628,000

Ms. Teixeira: I should have said at the beginning that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been given a very healthy and large budget of \$4 billion. We look forward to very positive work being done on behalf of Guyana at the international level.

Regarding Programme 041, when we looked at the employment cost of line items 6116 to 6117, we saw the figure for some of those categories decline. It is the opposite in this Programme. If one looks at line items 6113 to 6117, the employment costs have gone up, including those for contracted employees. Could the Minister advise us whether this amount includes the contracted employees? Is this where moneys for the ambassadors are located in terms of their employment cost? If not, what is contributing to this sizeable increase in staff under Foreign Policy Promotion?

Mr. Greenidge: As regards staffing details, I crave your indulgence and to ask you to have a look at the table on page 73, the column for 2015, rows five and six where there seems to be an increase from 37 to 48 and 19 to 22. These are two errors. In fact, the increase is from 37 to 40 and from 17 to 19. That is not where the number of ambassadors would be found. I will come back to that in a minute.

There is, in the first row, an increase which has to do with promotions. The increase in quantum would be disproportionately large – it is increasing from 17 to 19 – but it is also by way of promotion. That is one point that I want to draw to your attention.

If we were to go a bit further down, the penultimate row is showing an increase from three to four. This has to do with support staff rather than ambassadors, since you asked about that one. The ambassadors are catered for in the row at 6116 - Contracted Employees – which is the one column that shows movement from 17 to 19.

As regards the other elements of the figures pertaining to line items 6113 to 6117, the three sets of missions received automatic annual increments ranging from \$23 to \$25 per week for the entire year. This is built in to the system. If nothing else happens, there will be significant increases in those categories because they are automatically built in and that is a political inheritance.

12.32 a.m.

Mr. Rohee: The Hon. Minister has spoken quite extensively in the public domain on the question of economic diplomacy. I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could guide the honourable Committee as to the appropriate line item where economic diplomacy activities are scheduled and the specific nature of those activities that the Ministry plans to pursue.

Mr. Greenidge: I would say that the activities, including economic diplomacy of the Ministry, would be reflected in three broad areas. Of course, there is the question of staffing and the quality of staffing. In the replacement of senior and support staff, one would be looking to appoint persons with background and experience in a broad range of economic areas and especially in areas that would include trade, international development, and international or economic issues. That is one area - quality and the range of staff.

It also means – and I am sure that my Colleague would be happy to hear this – that there is the need for training of those who are already within the Ministry and those who may come in with a set of skills that are not specifically in the area of economic diplomacy, but whose skills the Ministry might like to enrich.

In that regard, the Foreign Service Institute, which I believe the former Minister Rohee had a hand in establishing and which has since not really been utilised to the extent that he might have in mind... I think that he would be happy to know that one of our priorities is to take that shell that is an institute and to make it an effective body for enhancing the capacity of staff in the Ministry to carry out a range of functions, which would include economic diplomacy.

I am speaking not about providing them with any academic training. I am speaking of bringing them, especially if they do not have long experience in the diplomatic service – they might have technical skills, to bridge that gap between what they may know in terms of academics or in terms of the years of expertise with the realities and requirements of diplomatic practice. It is so that those who would have worked in the areas for the many years can share with them some of the key experiences in handling the process of negotiating, organising and managing economic diplomacy. At the level of training, that is also meant to strengthen the economic diplomacy capacity of the missions.

Also, by way of the posting, we are looking to put officers in key areas within the region. For example, one would want to look to try to get more done in relation to both Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean, and, also, in terms of Latin America. There would be an officer, steeped in those areas, whose specific responsibility will be to operate out of Trinidad and Tobago with a capacity to work with a view to try to develop deeper economic relations with Trinidad and Tobago. We are also looking for a similar arrangement for North America. An officer, whether he or she is based in Toronto or in Washington, would be working specifically on that area in addition to the normal business that the other diplomats in the system will be carrying out. So, by way of the capacity of the individuals and also by the posting and, perhaps, additional priorities, we would be able to do it. There is Latin America and the Caribbean, and UNASUR is also another area we need to work on.

As you may know, in recent times, the interest of our own businessmen in Latin America has increased quite a lot. Persons were able, in the time before we took office, to see what a simple air link with Panama did. It has become very popular. There have been a lot of activities there. In our first meeting with the Panamanian President, he immediately engaged President Granger and me intensively in an attempt to see what we could do in relation to cooperation in the area of rice.

In Latin America as a whole, Chile and Mexico have shown an interest in doing something with us and we will want to take full advantage of what appears to be a promise there. Thank you very much.

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion - \$2,611,628,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$39,816,000

Ms. Teixeira: If we look at line item 6116 - Contracted Employees, the budgeted allocation has declined, as it did for wages in this particular Programme. However, when one looks at the table with the staffing details, there is also a decline in the number of staff under this Programme from 12 to nine. Could you explain if that is desirable? If we are supposed to be promoting our foreign trade policy and foreign relations as well as some of the things the Hon. Member Rohee spoke

about, such as economic diplomacy, should staffing be reduced in this area or should there be improvement in the quality of our capacity to promote trade?

Mr. Greenidge: The figures mask a different trend. It is not simply a question of declining numbers. What has happened, in fact, is that some officers have been promoted to Foreign Service Officers from Foreign Trade Officers. People have moved across within the Ministry and we will, in the course of the year, be trying to restore some of the numbers. That is the only reason why the declines have taken place. Persons have been promoted to other parts of the Ministry.

Mr. Rohee: I do not know exactly under which line item this issue falls but I am prepared to be guided by the Minister. With respect to the trade policy review, when was the last one done under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs? What are the implications of such a review for the economic and trade policy of our country?

Mr. Greenidge: I stand to be corrected but I do not think that the trade policy review is really reflected in the Estimates as a specific line item. It would be part of the ongoing task of the officers in the section. The last review was done a few weeks ago in Geneva. There was a review, which was attended by staff, out of Brussels. I cannot tell you offhand but I can provide you that information. What I want to say is that this is an ongoing activity of the Ministry. There was a recent report prepared on the performance in this regard and we did attend a meeting in Geneva. And, as you know, I think that there were also regional meetings that took place at which representatives of at least two of the other Ministries participated.

The implications for the country are these, I think, basically: we have international obligations as regards participating in the process of living within the rules set up for trade liberalisation, issues to do with non-discrimination and so forth, and it is very important that we ensure that, when they review our performance and, perhaps, point out where rules or laws need to be amended, we keep abreast of these and do the necessary. At the same time, we need, also, to be smart enough to be able to live within the rules without handicapping ourselves. It becomes very important, especially because everybody is looking for an advantage of an opportunity relation to trade. Whether it is trade promotion or other dimensions, it is important that a country tries and ensures that it has smart policies.

Mr. Rohee: One last question in relation to the last question that I asked. Having regard to the fact that Guyana is making a significant financial contribution to the institutions of CARICOM, Guyana has a major trade problem in the region, *vis-à-vis* COTED. Could the Hon. Minister state whether our country is benefitting as it ought to from its relationship with other CARICOM Member States as it relates to COTED?

Mr. Greenidge: I will give a very brief answer. Perhaps, in the course of the rest of the year, there would be an opportunity to explore with the Minister. Basically, I would say that while we do benefit from the Caribbean Forum (CARIFORUM) arrangement, we certainly have failed to get as much advantage as we can from it, not merely because of Guyana, but because of the arrangement, the capacity of COTED itself, and its utility as a policymaking forum, which has actually become very weak. That is all I would say for the moment. Clearly, there is scope to do a lot more with it than we have done so far.

Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$39,816,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

12.47 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy - \$17,000,000

Ms. Teixeira: Under Capital Expenditure, the amount of money has increased slightly. Project code 2400300 – Land Transport: the figure has gone up to \$39 million for the purchase of vehicles. Could we have an indication of whether the vehicles are being purchased for use in Guyana? If they are being purchased to be used overseas, which embassies and which level of staff are they being purchased for?

Mr. Greenidge: This line item pertains to the purchase of three vehicles under Programme two and they are for vehicles to be used in Nickerie, Brussels and Cuba.

Programme: 041 – Development of Foreign Policy - \$17,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion - \$68,150,000

Programme: 042 – Foreign Policy Promotion - \$68,150,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$984,000,000

Programme: 043 – Development of Foreign Trade Policy - \$984,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs and the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs to attend to. I would suggest that we at least complete the Ministry of Agriculture tonight.

Agency: 21 Ministry of Agriculture

Current Expenditure

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration - \$15,956,100

Mr. Seeraj: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I have noticed a huge increase under this particular line item, both in terms of the amount of money and the number of contracted workers. Could the Hon. Minister of Agriculture kindly give some explanation?

Minister of Agriculture [Mr. Holder]: There has been an increase in the number of contracted employees from 200 to 232, largely due to 36 new recruits being employed by the Ministry.

Mr. Seeraj: Could the Hon. Minister of Agriculture provide us with the list of names of these employees, their designations, their remuneration, and their other emoluments?

Mr. Holder: We could supply that. Many of these people are from the Public Service Ministry (PSM). They are graduates who were trained in agriculture under the Public Service Ministry and have now been assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture. So, that is how they were placed. We could give you the exact names and so on. We will get it from the Public Service Ministry and give it to you.

Mr. Seeraj: Thank you, Hon. Minister. I take that answer to mean that we will be supplied with the information later on, which I am readily able to accept.

Line item 6284 – Other: I have noticed an increase from just about \$5 million to \$57.3 million. This is a huge increase. Could the Hon. Minister of Agriculture please provide us with some explanation?

Mr. Holder: This increase, largely, is to facilitate payment of \$3.4 million to the National Cane Farmers Association to offset additional expenses for advertisements of contracts. The increase is for the establishment of the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) Commission of Inquiry (COI) to the tune of \$52 million.

Mr. Seeraj: There is another line item 6294 – Other and there is another significant increase. It is almost double the revised amount for 2014. Could the Minister of Agriculture provide us with some explanation?

Mr. Holder: I can give you a breakdown of that. Rice assessment - \$4.7 million; the Jagdeo Initiative - \$3.3 million; Food and Efficiency Strategy - \$4.5 million; Hinterland Development - \$4.5 million; Agriculture Disaster Risk Management - \$3 million; and Monitoring and Evaluation - \$2.4 million; that is a total of \$22.4 million.

Mr. Seeraj: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I have noticed a hefty amount of about \$15 billion. Could the Hon. Minister of Agriculture state whether some of this money is for rice farmers? Is it part of that hefty \$23 billion that we were told would be made available to pay rice farmers?

Mr. Holder: The rice farmers are not involved in this.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6284 – Other: The Hon. Minister just informed this Committee that the GuySuCo Commission of Inquiry will cost \$52 million. I would like the Hon. Minister to provide us with a breakdown of this expenditure.

Mr. Holder: I could certainly do that, Mr. Chairman, and I promise to let him have it as soon as possible. The information is available but I do not have it right now.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister tell me whether the pump at Manarabisi will be repaired through this line item? The farmers at No. 52 and No. 74 Villages are crying out for water right now and they do not

want to lose the crop. If not in this line item, where can I find the moneys that would go towards repairing this pump at Manarabisi?

Mr. Holder: It is in this line item.

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration - \$15,956,100 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 213 – Fisheries - \$127,376,000

Programme: 213 – Fisheries - \$127,376,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services - \$469,547,000

Mr. Seeraj: Under Programme 214, line Item 6116 – Contracted Employees, could the Hon. Minister of Agriculture provide us with the list of the new contracted workers and their emoluments?

Mr. Holder: I will. I do not have it here right now, Mr. Chairman, but we will supply him with the information as soon as possible – within the next day or two.

Mr. Seeraj: Line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: I have noticed a significant reduction against the backdrop of climate change and unpredictability of weather. Could the Minister of Agriculture state whether he is comfortable with this allocation for this particular line item, which provides for some equipment and supplies for this department?

Mr. Holder: Unfortunately, we did not get what we had applied for in our budget. We received a reduction, but we are making do with what has been assigned to us.

Mr. Ali: In relation to the reduction in the budget, are you satisfied that what you have received could address the priorities for the Ministry?

Mr. Holder: There is a time element here. We have only a few months left. The Budget is late. We can make do with what we have for the rest of this year. Hopefully, next year, we can get back...

Mr. Ali: Does what has been budgeted address the priority areas?

Mr. Holder: Yes.

Mr. Seeraj: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Mustapha: Thank you, Sir.

1.02 a.m.

Mr. Seeraj: ...Hon. Minister of Agriculture...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, the Member has been trying for some time.

Mr. Seeraj: Sorry Sir.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Building, I have two questions. Could the Hon. Minister identify the building which has been considered for maintenance utilising the budgetary provision?

Could the Hon. Minister provide this Assembly with the list of buildings that were billed to be maintained in 2015?

Mr. Holder: In keeping with National Civil Aviation Authority's rules and regulations repairs will become necessary at the Doppler Weather Radar Station, Hyde Park, Timehri, the hydrometeorological office at 18 Brickdam, Georgetown and additional major repairs to the Kaiteur Observers House is scheduled.

Mr. Seeraj: I note the Minister of Agriculture's response and I say that other Ministries have had significant increases notwithstanding the four months. I have noted with concern too that there has been some reduction in several areas of the Ministry of Agriculture. However, in line item 6272, Electricity Charges, I have noticed a significant increase. Is the Minister anticipating an increase in the rates for electricity in the coming months?

Mr. Holder: The hydrometeorological service expanded its office at Timehri in 2014. We also expanded our station network. Due to these expansions utility charges had increased. Note that the National Weather Watch Centre (NWWC) is a 24-hour office, hence the high cost in utilities.

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services – \$469,547,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration - \$2,670,133,000

Mr. Ali: Project 1301600, National Drainage and Irrigation Authority: There is a provision of \$2,051,335,000. Could the Minister say what percentage of this has already been awarded, what percentage is ongoing and when would the remaining projects be tendered and awarded?

Mr. Holder: I am not sure that I quite understand the question. Could you repeat it please?

Mr. Ali: Project 1301600, National Drainage and Irrigation Authority: There is a budgeted provision of \$2,051,335,000. What percentage of this allocation work would have already started? What percentage has already been tendered and what percentage remains to be tendered for implementation?

Mr. Holder: We can give you that but we do not have it here now. I have a list of all the projects but what you want is how much has been tendered and that kind of detail. We will be able to supply it in the shortest possible time.

Mr. Ali: Thank you very much Hon. Minister. May I ask for just one component, then, which the technical officers might surely be able to help with? What percentage of it has already been awarded and would have commenced?

Mr. Holder: We do not have the exact percentage here. I cannot tell you what the percentage of the construction of the sluice at Mahaica Mahaicony Abary (MMA) area.

Mr. Ali: May I make it a bit simpler? Is there any project under this head that has commenced?

Mr. Holder: There has been rollover projects from 2014 and some of them would have been completed.

Mr. Ali: Is there any new project?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members I must ask you to address the Chairman.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, it same project 1301600. Could the Hon. Minister say whether any new, not multi-year or rollover, project would have started?

Mr. Holder: We could not have any new projects because we had no budget. Now we have a budget and it is now that we can have new projects.

Mr. Ali: Thank you very much Minister. You are on the ball.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Minister, project 2405400, Land Transport, the paltry sum compared with the sum allocated for the Prime Minister's vehicle of \$10 million has been budgeted to purchase vehicles. Could you explain to us how many vehicles and which department will have the benefit of those vehicles?

Mr. Holder: Could the Hon. Member please repeat the question?

Mr. Nandlall: I was saying that I see that \$10 million is budgeted to buy several vehicles, unlike the Prime Minister who has \$22 million to buy one. Could the Minister tell us what number of vehicles he intends to buy and what departments will benefit from the use of those vehicles?

Mr. Holder: It would help if the Hon. Member gave me a project code.

Mr. Nandlall: The project is 2405400, Land Transport. It is the penultimate line item on the page.

Mr. Holder: Could you give us one second please, Mr. Chairman? We have it down by agency but we are going to find it.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Nandlall perhaps you might like to look at the project to which you refer to and the head of the agency under which it falls. I think the Minister of Agriculture might find some difficult in locating that.

Mr. Nandlall: I withdraw the question, Sir.

Mr. Holder: I believe it is the wrong agency, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, 1301700, Drainage and Irrigation...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Irfaan Ali, I am addressing Hon. Member Mr. Anil Nandlall who put the question. I pointed out to him that he was looking under the wrong head and he has corrected himself.

Mr. Nandlall: Yes. I withdrew the question, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister did not hear you withdraw the question.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Minister, did you not hear me?

Mr. Holder: I did not hear you.

Mr. Nandlall: I am sorry. I withdraw the question.

Mr. Ali: Project 1301700, Drainage and Irrigation, \$310,732,000: Hon. Minister, how critical would you consider this project and do you think that utilisation of the PetroCaribe for this project is spending in the best interest of Guyana?

Mr. Holder: I think it is very critical. The construction of alternative drainage outlet at Hope, Dochfour would improve the discharge capacity and control performance of East Demerara Water Conservancy (EDWC). It will ensure discharge directly to the Atlantic rather than through Lama and Maduni sluices. This will consequently reduce the risk of flooding along the Mahaica Creek and other vulnerable areas in Region 4. This is a rollover project.

Mr. Ali: I am very happy this important issue has been clarified because there are some who are making the point that this was the wrong use of the PetroCaribe fund. I am happy you have clarified that. I am happy that you are all awake.

Project 2100700, Flood Risk Management Project, \$75,000,000, “provision for embankment, structures, pump stations and equipment”: Could the Hon. Minister say which areas and locations would benefit from this expenditure and how confident is he that in four months the Ministry will be able to tender, award, and complete these works because the financial year closes at the end of December?

Mr. Holder: This is a foreign funded project and we have just started the consultancy services for emergency preparedness.

Mr. Ali: Hon. Minister, the provision here is for the consultancy services.

Mr. Holder: Preparatory work because, remember, this is a foreign funded project that will roll over into the next year as well.

Mr. Ali: Hon. Minister, I am following you but the description here is provision for embankments, structures, pump stations and equipment. Equipment cannot be preparatory work; pump stations cannot be preparatory work, and embankment cannot be that. I just want to point this out to the Hon. Minister that maybe there might be some clarification that is required here.

Mr. Holder: The consultancy services are going on right now. We have started the procurement process for the equipment.

Dr. Mahadeo: Project 1301600, National Drainage and Irrigation Authority: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if, under this project, the access dam for the rice farmers in Region 6 is catered for.

Mr. Holder: This is all for the East Demerara Water Conservancy and not for rice farmers as such.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could the Hon. Minister tell me whether there is any catering for the access dams for the rice farmers to bring out their rice in Region 6?

Mr. Holder: I believe access dams for rice farmers normally falls under the regional administration.

1.17 p.m.

Mr. Mustapha: Under project code 2100500, East Demerara Water Conservancy, I have a three-part question for the Hon. Minister. Could the Minister, provide the budgetary breakdown of how the money will be spent to rehabilitate intake structures at Ann's Grove, Hope, Annandale and Nancy. That is first part.

The second part: Could the Hon. Minister state how much money will be spent to relieve sluices at Maduni and Sarah Johanna?

The third part: Could the Hon. Minister state how much money has been budgeted for the provision of technical assistant and management and who are the contractors?

Mr. Holder: The Japanese grant aid agreement will see the rehabilitation of the East Demerara Water Conservancy at an estimated cost of \$1.493 billion. Component one of this project has seen the procurement of two pontoons and eight long reach excavators. Component two entails the rehabilitation of intake structures at Ann's Grove, Hope, Annandale, Nancy and includes sluices at Maduni and Sarah Johanna. These works have been awarded and are presently ongoing.

Mr. Chairman: This is the last speaker on this item.

Mr. Seeraj: Sir, under project 1209700, Agricultural Export Diversification Project, I noticed in 2014 there was an amount of \$590 million but for 2015 the Aurora project, which was supposed to be a part of the agricultural diversification programme, there is no allocation under this project. My question to the Minister is if this project is completed and if the Ministry of Agriculture does not have any other allocation for agricultural diversification or any need for agricultural diversification.

Mr. Holder: The first part of the agricultural diversification programme has come to an end but we are following up with Rural Enterprise and Agricultural Development (READ) and that will include the Aurora project that you were asking about.

Mr. Seeraj: A follow-up, Mr. Chairman. Am I to understand that the Aurora project is put on hold now? Secondly, project 1300600, Civil Works - MMA, there was an allocation of \$180 million in 2014, it has been reduced to \$75 million.

Mr. Chairman: I wish to determine how we conduct ourselves in the chamber, including the use of electronic equipment, cellphones and such paraphernalia. I do not believe the Speaker should remind Members of that. Please proceed Mr. Seeraj.

Mr. Seeraj: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I thought the remarks were being directed at me and so I got a bit scared there.

Mr. Chairman: Never be afraid of the Speaker.

Mr. Seeraj: I am just afraid of breaking the rule, Sir. Project 1300600, as I was saying, \$180 million was allocated in 2014. It also had to do with studies of the continuation of the MMA. There is an amount of \$75 million. Hon. Minister of Agriculture, could you say if that part of the agriculture has been put on hold or it has been put away and for the \$75 million some explanation on the works envisage for this amount?

Mr. Holder: Seventy-five million dollars has been allocated for this year largely because the budget is coming in late. We would like to complete the rehabilitation of roads, drainage and irrigation systems in the MMA this year. With the short time frame, in which we have, we certainly would not have been able to do it to the extent of \$180 million. We can do \$75 million and that is what we are doing.

Mr. Chairman: Are you through, Mr. Seeraj?

Mr. Seeraj: Sir, I am going over to the next page, it is the same agency. Sorry, this is the same agency code but it is on the other page that we are going over to.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Seeraj, you are not breaking the rules, again. Do not be afraid that you are breaking the rules.

Mr. Seeraj: No Sir. I had started on Programme 212 but I think that you are going to put Programme 211.

Mr. Chairman: I see. Thank you.

Programme: 211 - Ministry Administration - \$2,670,133,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 212 - Crops and Livestock Support Services - \$1,645,418,000

Mr. Holder: I believe that they have already gone over to Programme 212. Questions were asked on that already.

Mr. Chairman: Questions were asked but I do not believe that we have considered Programme 212. Certainly, I did not present it for consideration.

Mr. Seeraj: Under Programme 212, project 1701600, National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute: Hon. Minister, in 2014 it was \$355 million and in 2015 I noticed \$27 million. This, Sir, is a dramatic reduction on the allocation for this important entity. Again, agricultural diversification, especially export oriented, is important for our sector with rice going through some of the problems. Sir, could you say if you are comfortable with this drastic reduction for this particular agency?

Mr. Holder: Many of the large sums, which we saw before, were part of the agricultural diversification project that came to an end last year. This year we will use, in the short period that we have, that for the provision of tanks, vehicles, boats, outboard engines and equipment that we think we can complete before the end of this year.

Mr. Ali: Project 3300800, New Guyana Marketing Corporation: Could the Hon. Minister state how important this entity in the Ministry of Agriculture and in the operation of it?

Mr. Holder: It is important, but in terms of capital works for this year, bearing in mind the time frame of the budget, we opted not to make capital allocations now. Certainly in 2016, we will see a substantial increase in terms of the New Guyana Marketing Corporation (GMC) capital requirements.

Bishop Edghill: Project 2801400, Rural Enterprise and Agricultural Development, the READ programme: It had been one of our very successful programmes conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture. The question to the Minister for the sums provided here: Is the final amount for the closing of READ or is this money for a continuation of READ?

Mr. Holder: This is the final amount for the closure of READ.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up, Sir. Would there be a follow-on READ programme?

Mr. Holder: We hope so and we have applied for it. We have every reason to believe that our application will be successful.

Programme: 212 - Crops and Livestock Support Services - \$1,645,418,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 213 – Fisheries - \$2,000,000

Mr. Seeraj: Project 120110, Aquaculture Development: In 2014, there was a sum of \$14 million allocated, and I have noticed that in 2015 there is a small amount being allocated for aquaculture development. Again, Sir, in keeping with our agriculture export diversification programme, this amount seems to be very small, in keeping with the overall policy direction of the Ministry. Could the Hon. Minister of Agriculture say if he is comfortable with these allocations and if anything more could have been done to promote agriculture especially in rural communities?

Mr. Holder: I am forced to be comfortable with it, bearing in mind the budget is only now coming out and we only have three months to complete the year. We think we can manage to complete expenditure of this before the year comes to an end.

Programme: 213 - Fisheries - \$2,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 214 - Hydrometeorological Services - \$24,000,000

Mr. Seeraj: Project 2100100, Provision for Buildings, Furniture and Equipment: Could the Minister give us an idea of where these buildings are and what type of furniture and equipment which will be purchasing?

Mr. Holder: Briefly, construction of staff quarters and offices at Mabaruma, that is \$10,000,000; there is a phase three extension of the National Weather Watch Centre at Timehri; there is the purchasing of double beds for Kamarang, Kaieteur and Lethem. There are some office chairs for the Agromet and Climate Section; purchase of a dining set for Kamarang, Kaieteur and Lethem; filing cabinets and some server computers which will be generally used.

1.32 a.m.

Mr. Seeraj: Mr. Chairman, I crave your indulgence. I did not hear clearly the allocation for the Mabaruma location. It is if the Minister can kindly repeat for me.

Mr. Holder: It is \$10 million.

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services - \$24,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have done quite well. I believe that we will want to just go that bit more, so that we can complete today's allocation and work. Even after we have done that we will have to return tomorrow to consider those items on which we have not voted, though discussions have already taken place.

Agency: 16 Ministry of Amerindian Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 161 – Amerindian Development -\$359,368,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Could the Hon. Minister explain to this House, on line item 6111, Administrative, the reason for the reduction of the category and administrative staff for 2015 by one?

Vice-President and Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs [Mr. Allicock]: Line item 6111, Administrative, caters for one welfare officer transferred to line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, incorrectly placed on 2014. There are six persons employed under line item 6111, one Accountant, Administrative Accountant, Chief Accountant, Personnel Officer (II), Principal Assistant Secretary and Procurement Officer. All these are public servant employees.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I noticed that in the staffing details there was a reduction from 79 to 72, with respect to the number of staff. Could the Hon. Minister advise this Assembly whether the reduction was voluntary, either due to retirement, resignation or was it dismissal by the incoming new administration?

Mr. Allicock: Thank you very much Hon. Member for that question. There were the resignation of three Community Development Officers (CDOs), one person passed away, one household service worker and one kitchen assistant also sent in their resignations. There were two persons who were relieved from work.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6291, National and Other Events: The sum allocated here is 100% increase, over what was budgeted for 2014 and same pattern as compared to 2013. I would like the Hon. Minister to explain what is covered in this expenditure and the reason for the 100% increase to \$67,320,000, bearing in mind, Sir, that this expenditure, under the Ministry of

Amerindian Affairs, as I understand it, is only for eight months. In eight months we are spending twice as much on national events as compared to what we would have spent for 12 months in the previous year.

Mr. Allicock: For the first time there was the National Toshaos' Conference under this line item, which has caused us to come up with this cost.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Could the Hon. Minister explain to this Assembly, line item 6291, National and Other Events, the actual increase in the amount of allocations spent on the National Toshaos' Conference.

Mr. Allicock: Sixty million dollars was the amount spent on the National Toshaos' Conference.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I asked what the reason is for the increase. Could the Minister give me the details of the increase in the various categories?

Mr. Allicock: It was for transportation, accommodations and meals over the six days. I am quite certain the Hon. Member would know how costly it is to hold those conferences.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I wanted to go back to line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, even though my colleague went ahead and asked. Could the Hon. Minister provide to this Assembly or advise it on what amount of moneys was spent from 17th May to present, with respect to fuel and lubricant?

Mr. Allicock: Five million dollars was the amount and the previous administration spent \$9 million.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It was \$5 million in less than two months.

Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister tell me whether this money has been expended because, if my memory serves me right, this allocation is usually allocated to the National Toshaos' Council (NTC), \$7,765,000?

Mr. Allicock: The newly formed NTC will now development a programme to have this funding here spent.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I believe the answer is not accurate because if we turn to the Agency 17, Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, at line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, there is an additional \$10,931,000.

Mr. Allicock: Six million dollars has already been spent by the previous administration. We have a balance of \$1.7 million to be spent by this new NTC.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It may have been spent under the previous administration, but not by the administration. I again ask the question whether the \$6 million was spent by the Ministry or by the NTC.

Mr. Allicock: It was spent by the previous NTC.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6291, National and Other Events: Could the Minister explain the sum of \$67,320,000, how was it spent and on what national event?

1.47 a.m.

Mr. Allicock: That question was already answered.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: A follow-up question. Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown?

Mr. Allicock: This breakdown could be given by Wednesday, 26th August, 2015.

Programme 161 - Amerindian Development - \$359,368,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Current Expenditure

Agency: 17 Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs

Programme: 171 – Policy Development and Administration - \$308,892,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Line Item 6116 – Contracted Employees: could the Hon. Minister explain to this House whether the \$43,122,000 caters for the team of advisors that, I understand, has joined the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs? If that is so, could we have their names, their designations and their salaries?

Mr. Allicock: These persons were not catered for when the Budget was prepared.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Could the Hon. Minister advise this Committee under what line item their salaries is catered for? I am of the knowledge that the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs was given three weeks to review their budget proposal – to review the one submitted and to make changes with respect to their submission.

Mr. Allicock: It is one advisor and two other persons. It is in process. We have not been able to have them on the payroll as yet but that will happen subsequently.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants, for the last quarter, could the Minister provide to this Committee a list of the proposed activities for travel that would require spending \$7.52 million?

Mr. Allicock: This caters for outreaches and visits to villages by the new Administration. In addition, it caters for travel by the officers of Projects Division of the Ministry to monitor projects. It also caters for presidential grants. It also caters for the purchase of fuel for the Ministry's vehicles. We have two generators and we have to purchase cooking gas for the Amerindian residents and students' dormitory.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee what buildings are being rented, for what purposes, and for whom?

Mr. Allicock: The rental of property is to accommodate the Projects Division. We are now in the process of locating such a building. Nothing has been paid for and no money has been spent on this as yet.

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of other Infrastructure: could the Hon. Minister delineate the budgetary allocation as it relates to this line item?

Mr. Allicock: There is to be maintenance of bridges, rails and guard huts at the Amerindian Hostel. We also have broken windows which have to be fixed at the office. There is to be resurfacing of the driveway of the compound, repairs to broken concrete plots, repairs to garage shed, installation of gutters, repairs to fence at the dormitory, repairs to the Green House, and maintenance of the trestle for the water tanks.

Mr. Charlie: A follow-up question. The Hon. Minister outlined a number of projects to be undertaken under this line item to the value of \$2.675 million. Could the Hon. Minister give us the cost for the guard huts, the bridge, *et cetera*?

Mr. Allicock: I would ask that this given to you on Wednesday, 26th August, 2015.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I want to go back to my follow-up question on line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, this is the last opportunity for you.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: This is my first follow-up question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: This is the last opportunity for you to speak. Please proceed.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Hon. Minister, I understand that four members of staff have been disengaged and that four new members of staff have been engaged. Could you explain to me what the reason is?

Minister of Social Cohesion [Ms. Ally]: What is the line item?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I called the line item.

Ms. Ally: I did not hear.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Well, the Hon. Minister heard. Could the Hon. Minister state why there is such a space problem in the Ministry that the Projects Division has to be moved out of the Ministry?

Mr. Allicock: I am quite certain that the Member is aware that there was always a struggle for office space in that Ministry and that is why.

Mrs. Pearson-Fredericks: Under Line item 6301 – Education Subvention and Grants, could the Minister tell who the beneficiaries under this line item are? Under line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships), could the Minister also give us that information?

Mr. Allicock: This caters for the school uniform programme and approximately 33,000 students.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: could the Hon. Minister, firstly, identify the designations of all employees who have been employed from May to now, if there has been? Secondly, could he list the ten highest paid contracted employees under this category?

Mr. Allcock: We have not employed any new persons to date but we have a list of the top earners and I could submit this later.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, could I interrupt you just for a second? This is one of the agencies under which the Indigenous Peoples Commission (IPC) is listed. We said that the IPC would have to move to the section on constitutional bodies. Therefore, the aggregate total of \$308 million would have to be reduced by the \$6.6 plus million that is designated for IPC. I am asking that, based on what we have been talking about with the other agencies, we hold the vote on this until it is corrected, like we have done with GECOM and the other constitutional bodies. This is one of the places where the Ministry has an allocation that includes an amount for a constitutional body. Secondly, this is also a Ministry for which we are waiting for the new Ministry to be published in the Gazette. As agreed, we went through it but at the same time we should hold the actual vote, as we did with the other.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member. The question would not be put now. It will await the changes which are slated to take place.

[The Question was not put]

2.02 a.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 171- Policy Development and Administration- \$315,900,000

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Project code 1214500 – Buildings: could the Hon. Minister explain the expenditure associated with \$10 million for 2015? I notice in the project document it is stated that these works were effected to the Sophia Exhibition Centre. Could I seek some clarification? In addition, I would like to know who the contractor for the works which was done, and whether the procedures for awarding such a contract were followed.

Mr. Allicock: This is in relation to the Heritage Village. Eighty per cent has already been completed and the tenders were sent out for acquiring the contractor.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, in other circumstances I would put the question, but we would hold this until tomorrow when other similar items would be treated for voting purposes. I say that so we understand that we have had our say on the items and would not begin the discussion all over again tomorrow when we meet to vote on the items.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, please indulge my question. Are you saying that, tomorrow when this comes up again, we would not have a chance to debate it? Or, are we going to debate it then? I would just like a clarification.

Mr. Chairman: I would answer that question, Hon. Member, this way: It was agreed that the discussions on certain items in the Estimates would take place today, but the vote on those items would await the arrival of tomorrow because certain events are expected to occur before that time. Now, the only thing, if I can use that unfortunate word, which remains to be done with those items which we have so far considered, is to vote on them. We are withholding the voting point until tomorrow. Are you asking if Hon. Members would have the opportunity to speak again tomorrow or to have another debate tomorrow? I would say that the Speaker would have difficulty allowing it, but certainly I have given you the answer that I could give you now.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am only seeking the clarification because the Capital Expenditure for Agencies 16 and 17 have to be considered, and I do have questions. We have just completed the current expenditure.

Mr. Chairman: The Capital Expenditure for Agencies 16 and 17 Agency would be treated, where the voting is concerned, tomorrow. For Agency 16, according to the document that I have here, there is current expenditure only; for Agency 17, according to the document that I have here, there is both current expenditure and capital expenditure. Those are to be voted on tomorrow.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I would then proceed to ask the question on Agency 16, Programme 161- Amerindian Development.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we have moved to Agency 52.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, you did not put the question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the question was not put because we will vote tomorrow and the question would be put tomorrow. That is why it is not being put tonight.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, we did not consider the items under Agency 16.

Mr. Chairman: We did consider Agency 16, Hon. Member.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I do need a consideration on Agency 17.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, could I ask that the Hon. Member be allowed to raise her questions under Agency 17? We may have gone a little bit too fast.

Mr. Chairman: Hon Member, you have one question. Please go ahead.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Project code 1403700- Amerindian Development Fund: could the Hon. Minister provide details with respect to the \$287,400,000 provided here in the capital expenditure?

Mr. Allicock: It is stated in the document, which is quite a number of pages, and which could be submitted on Wednesday, 26th August, 2015.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: I am not satisfied with the response from the Hon. Minister because I expected that, with all the technical officers around him, he would be able to quickly respond to such a question.

I also wish to register in this Committee that we are considering the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs and its current proposed budget. It is disheartening that the time limit does not permit us to as ask questions on the other project codes.

I have heard others saying that we have wasted time. The budget for the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs has been put at the tail end of the night for consideration. I have not wasted a single minute with respect to raising questions on the proposed budget. The hours that were wasted earlier were no fault of mine, so I would ask the Chairman to indulge the questions.

We have questions under project code 2405300 – Water Transport and project code 2405400 - Land Transport. We were told in the debate that transportation for school children will be provided. We were told that communication equipment would be provided and all manner of improvements will take place. When I look at the budget, my question with respect to project code 2405300 – Water Transport is: how many water transportation could be bought out of \$3,000,500? With respect to land transportation, would \$10 million suffice to provide the level of transportation promised to the indigenous children in this very current budget debate? Could the Minister state why the budget does not even match the 2014 budget? In 2014, the capital expenditure totalled \$1.1 billion.

An. Hon. Member: It is a budget for four months.

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: It is not for four months; it is from May to December, 2015. Is it this how long persons would have to wait, after an election has been won, in gestation for the governmental level of support to be provided to the indigenous people? So, can the Minister respond to the question?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai, did you ask your question?

Mrs. Campbell-Sukhai: Yes. I asked a question on project code 1403700 - Amerindian Development Fund, project code 2405300 - Water Transport and on project code 2405400 - Land Transport.

Mr. Allcock: It includes: Amerindian Village Council Village Offices at Four Miles, Karwab, Kature, Baitun. It is \$1.5 million each for village office.

It caters for woodworking centres at Kibana, Paramakatoi, Bina Hill at an allocation of \$5 million each.

There is an allocation for a subvention to Bina Hill Institute for \$40.5 million.

There is an allocation for sports gear for Hobodia, Yarakita, Wallaba, Santa Crus, Warapoka, Krebana, Kocrete, Barabina, Savannah Black Water, Kamwatta, Mabaruma, Moruca, Batavia, Kopenang, Umparo, Baribara, Apoteri, Katoka. These are sums of \$200,000 each. These are to purchase generator, television and DVD player.

For sports at Kamarang, \$800,000 has been budgeted.

Musical instruments would be purchased for Whitewater, Kirbana, Santa Rosa Island, Ringcon, Waramuri, Hobodia, St. Cuthbert's and Moraikobi. We have Santa Mission, Paramakatoi, kurukubaru, Suarama, and Sand Creek. All of these would be given \$1 million each.

Agriculture equipment – cassava mill would be purchased for Assakata, Baramita, kariabo, Dog Point, kurukubaru, Monkey Mountain, Canal Bank, Hobodia, Shiya and River View at a cost of \$5,050,000 each.

2.17 a.m.

Agricultural development: tractors and implements would be purchased for Yarakita, Cebai, Wikki, Santa Mission, Karrau, and Kwaimata at a cost of \$9 million each.

Tourism Development – Support to ecotourism projects: Capoey– \$1.5 million; North Pakaraimas Expo – \$15 million; Rupununi Music Festival – \$3 million; and Rupununi Expo – \$2 million.

Support to Language Revival Project – Kamwatta, St. Monica, Moraikobi would receive \$2 million and \$1.5 million each.

Support to Culture Groups: Kabana, Mainstay, Paramakatoi, Nappi would receive \$1 million each.

Chemicals – Acoushi ants bait - liquid and powder: \$2 million.

Cultural Enhancement – Establishment of Resources Documentation Centre, including funding for nine areas - \$18 million; training of Toshaos and Councillors - \$37.4 million; support of women's group - \$21 million; support to youth initiatives - \$17 million; support to governance and welfare training for Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9 - \$18 million.

It is a total of \$287,400,000.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will postpone putting the question until tomorrow.

[The Question was not put]

Agency: 52 Ministry of Legal Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 521 – Main Office - \$28,657,000

Mr. Nandlall: I have a few questions for the Minister of Legal Affairs. I observe that there is an increase in the number of contracted employees. It is two persons and the salary allocation has increased by \$2 million. Could the Minister state when these two persons were hired, at what salaries, and what positions they hold?

Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Williams]: It is a Confidential Secretary – \$54,934 and vehicle driver - \$46,588. Those are for the Permanent Secretary (PS).

Mr. Nandlall: Could the Minister state when they were hired? That was one of the questions I asked.

Mr. Williams: They were hired during the tenure of the former Attorney General.

Mr. Nandlall: This is a 2015 budget. They could not have been hired last year and it is reflected in this year's budget. It is 3 o'clock in the morning. I could stay here until 6 o'clock.

Mr. Williams: I reiterate that they were hired late last year during the tenure of the former Attorney General.

Mr. Nandlall: Could the Minister explain to me why it is reflected in the 2015 budget?

Mr. Williams: The 2014 budget had already been passed when they were employed.

Mr. Nandlall: Under the heading "Materials, Equipment and Supply"...

Mr. Williams: What line item is that?

Mr. Nandlall: That heading covers line items 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies to 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials. There has been a phenomenal increase from \$419,000 to \$1.6 million, some 400% increase. For example, the allocation for office materials and supplies has been increased from \$320,000 to \$800,000 and the allocation for non-print materials has been increased from \$84,000 to \$800,000

Mr. Williams: I understand that it is because activities for the Attorney General's Chambers have moved to under this Programme to merge with the PS's.

Mr. Nandlall: Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase from \$239,000 to \$852,000 under line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service?

Mr. Williams: Three additional vehicles have now been added under this programme.

Mr. Nandlall: Were these vehicles purchased? Where did they come from?

Mr. Williams: It is just like the previous one. These three vehicles have been moved over to this programme.

Mr. Nandlall: Where was it moved from?

Mr. Williams: It was moved from Programme 523.

Mr. Nandlall: What is Programme 523?

Mr. Williams: It is Attorney General's Chambers. Do you not know how many vehicles were there? Are you not aware that those vehicles were there?

Mr. Nandlall: Under line item 6284 – Other, there is an increase from \$1,250,000 to \$1,800,000.

Mr. Williams: Two monitoring and evaluation surveys are to be undertaken.

Mr. Nandlall: What would be monitored and what would be surveyed?

Mr. Williams: The Ministry has a monitoring and evaluation department and officers travel all over. I would have thought that you would have known that.

Mr. Nandlall: I thought that you would have known it too. So, what would be monitored and what would be surveyed?

Mr. Williams: The monitoring would be done under the MJOS Programme. The Magistrates Courts and the High Court would be monitored, all within the curtilage of the administration of justice, which the Hon. Member would be familiar with.

Mr. Nandlall: What use would be made of the monitoring and surveying?

Mr. Ramson: I have just one question, but it has two parts.

Mr. Chairman: Would you please proceed with your question, Mr. Ramson.

Mr. Ramson: Under line item 6271 – Telephone Charges, I have noticed that the allocation for telephone charges has increased from \$668,000 to \$1,200,000. That is part (a).

In reference to the Minister's original statement that he made in relation to the two new contracted employees for line item 6116, he stated that the salaries are just over \$50,000 each. But an increase of over \$2 million, if one did a total aggregate of their sums, even if one calculates it for the entire year and includes gratuity, it does not come up over \$2 million. Could you explain the difference in the disaggregated amount?

2.32 a.m.

Mr. Williams: I will answer the last question first. The gratuity, which is 22 ½ % every six months, is a substantial amount, and there is vacation allowances and the like.

In relation to the first question, there are four lines and two cell phones, all of which were moved from the Programme which deals with the Attorney General's Chambers and put under this current Programme.

Mr. Ramson: A follow-up question: the Minister said that two cell phones are included in the charges. Who are the cell phones attributed to?

Mr. Williams: They are cell phones that were inherited from the previous AG.

Mr. Nandlall: You never inherited cell phones from me. I have my cell phones.

Programme 521 – Main Office - \$28,657,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 522 - Ministry Administration - \$45,228,000

Mr Nandlall: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: there is a decline in the number of contracted employees. My Friend, in his budget speech, said that he would strengthen the human

resource of the department, *et cetera*. Could he explain why there is a decline? Who have left? When did they leave? Or, were they dismissed?

Mr. Williams: An Accountant, an Assistant Accountant, and four Accounts Clerks were transferred from one programme to the programme which deals with the Deeds Registry.

Mr Ramson: Line item 6281 - Security Services: the allocation has moved from \$2,700,000 to over \$4,000,000. What accounts for the increase? Has there been any new security service that has been employed? If yes, what was the process by which an award was made?

Mr Williams: The security service remains the Guyana Police Force (GPF) and the increase is due to the rates being increased from \$250 to \$350.

Mr Ramson: Is that per hour?

Mr Williams: Yes.

Programme: 522 - Ministry Administration - \$45,228,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 523 - Attorney General's Chambers - \$816,989,000

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6294 – Other: there is an increase from \$15,000 to \$16,706,000. Could the Hon. Member explain that rise in expenditure?

Mr. Williams: Line item 6284 is the allocation for payment to Rudisa International NV and line item 6294 is payment for the Walter Rodney Commission of Inquiry (COI).

Mr. Nandlall: Are you saying that the Walter Rodney Commission of Inquiry was paid for under the Attorney General's Chambers?

Mr. Williams: Rudisa International NV is to be paid under line item 6284.

Mr. Nandlall: Could the Hon. Member state how much money was paid under the Rudisa International NV judgment because the judgment was \$1.2 billion.

Mr. Williams: Half of the amount is budgeted for.

Mr. Nandlall: Under which line item is it budgeted?

Mr. Williams: It is under line item 6284 – Other.

Mr. Nandlall: Is it \$651,000,000?

Mr. Williams: Remember, it was a very large judgement that the previous Administration did not pay.

Mr. Nandlall: So, you have budgeted to pay.

Programme 523 – Attorney General’s Chambers - \$816,989,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 524- State Solicitor - \$25,892,000

Programme 524- State Solicitor - \$25,892,000 agreed to and ordered to strand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 522 – Ministry Administration - \$20,100,000

Mr. Ramson: Project code 2401100 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Minister explain the sum allocated for the purchase of the vehicle and state whom it would be assigned to?

Mr. Williams: This is for the purchase of a Toyota Land Cruiser. That answers the question.

Mr. Ramson: There was a second part of the question which asked: to whom will the vehicle be assigned?

Mr. Williams: It will be assigned to the Attorney General.

Mr. Ramson: As the Minister is on his feet, could he state to this honourable Committee when the last Land Cruiser was purchased for this Ministry and assigned to the former Attorney General?

Mr. Williams: I am advised that it was purchased in 2012, but the vehicle is a wreck.

Mr. Ramson: Since the Minister stated that the vehicle is a wreck, could he state where the vehicle is currently? And, could he state whether any kind of expert evaluation was done to determine it as a total constructive loss?

Mr. Williams: My shoulders are still hurting. There were no springs and no shocks. I could barely raise my hand after a long journey. I cannot give you that information.

Mr. Ramson: Where is the vehicle that was last purchased?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you should address the Chair.

Mr. Ramson: Mr. Chairman, through you, to the Minister: where is the vehicle that was purchased a mere two and a half years ago that was assigned to the former Minister? Regarding the vehicle that would be purchased, would that be a new Land Cruiser?

Mr. Williams: It is a new Land Cruiser, a duty-free. It is not the types that were brought by members of the previous Administration such as Lexus. It is a Land Cruiser.

Mr. Ramson: The answer still remains not proffered at this stage. Where is the vehicle that was purchased by the Ministry of Legal Affairs and assigned to the former Attorney General a mere two and a half years ago? That is the question that was asked at the very outset and the Hon. Minister seems to be deflecting it and being reticent about it.

Mr. Williams: Are you trying to find out if the former Attorney General took the vehicle? What is it that you want to know? Do you want to know if that is one of the vehicles that were taken away?

Mr. Nandlall: Where is the vehicle? It is a simple question.

Mr. Williams: The vehicle is with the Ministry. I am not answering another question on it.

Mr. Ramson: Then you may have to be assigned a new responsibility. If the vehicle is at the Ministry, could the Hon. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have asked many questions on this matter. Let us not be repetitive. Please take your seat. Let us proceed.

2.47 a.m.

Mr. Nandlall: Could the Hon. Minister state what procedure would be employed in accessing this new Land Cruiser? It is because he seems to be getting a better deal than the Prime Minister. If he could outline the process through which he is getting a new Land Cruiser for \$16 million, perhaps the Prime Minister can be guided. What process is going to be involved in acquiring this vehicle or where would it be acquired from?

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, unlike the single sourcing that occurred previously in the Ministry, we are going to go out to tender. The places would include Associated Industry Limited (AINLIM), Beharry Automotive Limited and Rose Ramdehol Auto Sales.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, if I may crave your indulgence, Sir, I have a follow-up question in relation to the question that was asked by my colleague and Member of Parliament, Mr. Charles Ramson. The question about the whereabouts of this vehicle is important and I will say why. Of recent, the Administration has set up an Assets Recovery Unit (ARU).

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not want to interrupt you, but I thought I overheard the Minister say that the vehicle is with the Attorney General's Chambers. I thought I heard him say that.

Mr. Rohee: I am seeking to rephrase the question to get a more specific answer.

Mr. Williams: I am not answering again on this matter.

Mr. Rohee: The Administration has set up an Assets Recovery Unit but the Unit seems to be going in a particular direction in terms of going after the Opposition.

Mr. Chairman: Are you going to rephrase your question, Hon. Member?

Mr. Rohee: The question, therefore, is: why should the ARU not go after this vehicle which, like the ballot boxes that could not have been found in 1973, cannot be found? That is the question, Mr. Chairman. I am very serious about this matter.

I think that, in this House, justice should be blind. Mounted behind you, Mr. Chairman, are two scales – the scales of justice. The scales of justice must weigh equally on both sides of this

House, Mr. Chairman, with due respect. Therefore, the whereabouts of this vehicle, I submit, must be clearly defined. If it is in the compound, we should be told that it is in the compound.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member, when he craves the Speaker's indulgence, should really not abuse it.

Programme: 522 – Ministry Administration – \$20,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 524 State Solicitor - \$434,000,000

Programme: 524 – State Solicitor – \$434,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 55 Supreme Court

Current Expenditure

Programme: 551 – Supreme Court of Judicature - \$1,296,541,000

Mr. Chairman: Agencies 55 and 56 fall in that category of agencies which would be subjected to vote tomorrow, but this is the opportunity for discussion to ensue.

[The Question was not put]

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 551 – Supreme Court of Judicature - \$151,497,000

Hon. Members, you are not called upon to vote. What we are seeking to do is to encourage discussion on the items, if there is any desire to have that, because later today I hope that Members would be sufficiently encouraged to come straight to the point and vote.

[The Question was not put]

Agency: 56 Public Prosecutions

Current Expenditure

Programme: 561 – Public Prosecutions - \$107,983,000

Ms. Teixeira: This is also an agency that has to be included in the list of constitutional bodies.

Mr. Chairman: I did remark on that when I introduced them both.

Ms. Teixeira: I am sorry but with all of the noise, I did not hear.

Mr. Ramson: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: there is an increase of approximately \$16 million and I also see an additional number of six contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister state what accounts for this increase? The additional six persons who have been contracted, what are their emoluments, packages, names and contractual periods?

Mr. Williams: I thank the Hon. Member for the question and I would lay over those particulars not later than Thursday, 27th August, 2015. In particular, the representatives from the Director of Public Prosecutions (DDP) Chambers were here but, because of the issue with the DPP Chambers, they left with the understanding that we had to resolve it. It was resolved after they left.

Mr. Ramson: With respect to you Mr. Chairman, I take particular umbrage to the Hon. Minister's submission of the information subsequent to our voting and considering these Estimates. I would respectfully suggest that, as part of the consideration process, the information be contained so that this *unplate* can be presented before this honourable Committee during this period. I would say that the facetious or even flippant response about us getting it on Thursday is not well taken.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I interrupt you to say that words like umbrage and facetious are, perhaps, misplaced in the Chamber and, perhaps, you can find softer epithets, if you must use any at all.

Mr. Ramson: Well, I take objection, if objection is a word that Your Honour considers more appropriate. It cannot be countenance that the Hon. Minister said that he is going to lay over the information because he has been egged on by his Hon. Members and Colleagues.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I think we have exhausted our work for this evening and ourselves in the process, no doubt.

[The Question was not put]

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, before you rap up and before the Hon. Prime Minister tells us when we will resume, I would like to seek you advice. The following Ministers have given us assurances that on Wednesday, 26th August and Thursday, 27th August, 2015, they will be laying over certain documents and information to the Opposition. Among them are Mr. Basil Williams, the Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs, the Minister of State in the Office of the Presidency, Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon, Mr. Felix, Minister of Citizenship, Mr. Holder, Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Trotman, Minister of Governance, and Mr. Allicock, Minister of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs. They have all promised sincerely and I believe verily truly so to present the Opposition with information. I believe that, come later today and tomorrow, we would expect those documents to be laid over, would be laid over.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, there has to be some degree of restraint. Let me say this: if a Minister undertakes, in this House, to provide information, we are obliged to take his word. He must decide if his word is one that we cannot rest on. There is nothing more to be said about that.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Nagamootoo: Mr. Speaker, I move that this House be adjourned to 9.30 a.m. today, the 25th August, 2015.

Adjourned accordingly at 3.01 a.m.

