

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

14TH Sitting

Wednesday, 26TH August, 2015

The Assembly convened at 9.54 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Apology for late start

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, before we commence our work proper this morning, I should apology to Members for the late start. The matters, which detained me, were matters which I had to deal with, hence my late arrival in the chamber. I know that we have a great deal of work to do today and every half an hour counts, but I trust that we will make up the time in our dedication and in our efforts. I thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL AND FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read for the first time:

INCOME TAX (AMENDMENT) BILL 2015 – Bill No. 8/2015

A Bill intituled:

“AN ACT to amend the Income Tax Act.” [*Minister of Finance*]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE 2015

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

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

AND WHEREAS the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Co-operative 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 resolve into the Committee of Supply to continue our consideration of the Estimates.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 48 Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security

Current Expenditure

Programme: 481- Strategic Planning, Admin and Human Services- \$119,302,000

Dr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, colleagues and all good morning. This morning we are dealing with a Ministry that is involved in representing people across Guyana and as such it is important that this Ministry has adequate allocations to provide for all the people of Guyana, especially under difficult circumstances. I am very interested, this morning, in terms of the adequacy of staffing, as to where persons will be placed in this Ministry. I do remember that there was talk about decentralising and having all the social services across the country.

Line item 6112, Senior Technical: I noticed that there is one additional staff and I am asking the Hon. Minister if she could give details as to the emoluments and where that staff will be placed?

Minister of Social Protection [Mrs. Lawrence]: Good morning to the Assembly. Hon. Member that relates to a superintendent of works, who was appointed and the salary is \$63,400 per month.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say what is the expertise of that staff?

Mrs. Lawrence: It is not at this time, Hon. Member.

Dr. Persaud: Would the Minister be able to provide a job description for the staff later on?

Mrs. Lawrence: Certainly.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I notice that there is an increased in the number of contracted employees. Could the Minister state where these staff members will be assigned and what are the emoluments?

Mrs. Lawrence: Hon. Member, would you like to know about the two additional persons or would you like a list of all the persons?

Dr. Persaud: Yes. Thank you.

Mrs. Lawrence: One is a Driver and his salary is \$43,137. The other person would be the Deputy Permanent Secretary whose salary is \$260,495.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, are you planning to increase the salary of the Driver to commensurate up \$50,000 as promised?

Mrs. Lawrence: Certainly, and we wish we could have given more, Hon. Member.

Dr. Persaud: Thank you.

Mr. Chand: Cde. Chairman, through you, could I ask the Minister to explain line item 6116, Contracted Employee? I noticed the number has increased by two but the allocation has greatly reduced to \$49.3 million as against \$89.7 million. What is the explanation for this?

Mrs. Lawrence: Hon. Member, the reason for the reduction was to facilitate the removal of staff from Programme 1 to Programme 3.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister state which drugs will be purchased and who will be the beneficiaries?

Mrs. Lawrence: We would like to ensure that we are well equipped to take care of any small emergencies which may occur in the various departments and as such we are purchasing first aid kits for each department.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, I notice that in line item 6222, Field Materials and Supplies, there was a trend from 2013, 2014 and now 2015 where we moved from \$85 million annually to \$96 million and then there is a sharp increase to \$200 million. Could you say why there is such an

increase and provide details of materials and supplies to be procured? What is the rationale for this steep increase?

Mrs. Lawrence: I may just point to the Member that the budgeted amount for 2014 was \$460,000 but the Ministry only utilised \$96,000. In the next four months of 2015, we will be seeking to ensure that our workers, who are going out on travelling duties, are equipped with the necessary equipment and gears for the various weather patterns which we have. Basically, that is going towards having long boots, umbrellas and raincoats.

Bishop Edghill: I would like to go back to line item 6116, Contracted Employees. The Hon. Member just told us that the reason for the reduction, from \$89 million in 2014 to \$49 million in 2015, is because of the transfer of workers from this programme to Programme 3. I am asking the Hon. Minister, if in actual fact this reduction is not as of result of the eight months that is budgeted for this agency until the new agency comes into place on the 1st of September, because for in Programme 3 the numbers do not reflect this kind of a transfer, Sir.

Mrs. Lawrence: As I have said before, several persons were removed from Programme 1 to Programme 3. That is one aspect of the reduction. The second aspect is because there was some shifting also in the Minister's Secretariat.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister provide details on the number of vehicles, how many of those are serviceable and what programmes are they assigned to basically?

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, there is a total fleet of 26 vehicles within the Ministry, four of which are unserviceable and the others are distributed as follows: eight to Programme 1, six to Programme 2, six to Programme 3 and six to Programme 4.

Dr. Jagan: Line items 6271 to 6273, heading "Utility Charges": Could the Hon. Minister state how many buildings will be benefiting from this? Could the Minister please provide the list?

Mrs. Lawrence: Certainly, I can lay that over.

10.09 a.m.

Bishop Edghill: It is just for further clarification because I am seeking to understand clearly what the Minister is saying. Maybe I could be helped in this. Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, there are two additional staff; there is a reduction of almost \$40 million. The explanation we have received is that some staff have been removed from this Programme 3 but when I checked Programme 3, Sir, it has just been increased, at line item 6116, Contracted Employees, by nine staff members. The explanation is as it relates to the decrease in \$40 million. Is it just the movement of staff? The Minister told us that the staff were moved to the Minister's Secretariat. How many staff and how can we explain the decrease in \$40 million, if it is not catering only for the eight months?

Mrs. Lawrence: I will try to simplify it as much as I can. We have shifted employees from Programme 1 to Programme 3. There are also two new employees. The particular details, which that we are looking at are the estimate of salaries for those persons remaining from January through August. When we go to the new Ministry we will see the difference there and also when we go to the next programme, Programme 3, we will also see the difference there.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister inform the Assembly, which company has been retained for these services and what are the locations that are being budgeted for under this line item?

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, through you, to the Hon. Member, one Security Company is employed here and that is Special Constabulary and it covers the buildings at Cornhill Street and Lamaha Street.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6241, Rental of Buildings, there has been a reduction by \$2,041,000. Could the Hon. Minister say which buildings are under rental and where are they located?

Mrs. Lawrence: This particular rental is paid for the Guyana Legal Aid office and it is paid quarterly. What happens is that the year for this contract does not run by calendar. It runs fiscally. There will be some balances moving back and forth.

Dr. Persaud: I notice under line item 6284, Other, that there are no details. Could the Minister please provide me with the details for the allocation for line item 6284?

Mrs. Lawrence: This particular line item covers a few things of which the Ministry's annual report, advertisement and the sanitation that we used on a monthly basis.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Which organisations will benefit and how many of these organisations will benefit in terms of allocation? How much will each receive? Interestingly enough I am not seeing Guyana Women's Leadership Institute (GWLI) mentioned on the list. It is an institution which is involved in training women in leadership advocacy and empowering them so that they can be financially stabled and independent. I am curious as to where this institution falls because it also deals with social issues and domestic violence, and all of these things. Where does this institution fall in this budget and what will the allocations be?

Mrs. Lawrence: I may point the Hon. Member to pages 530 and 531 where the Member will see the listing. When we come to Programme 2, the Member will see GWLI. It is on programme two.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, I did check but I did not see it. That is why I was asking the Minister. I would be grateful if you can provide clarification on this as we move through the pages.

Mrs. Lawrence: I would like to rephrase my last answer and that is that the GWLI now falls under the Ministry, so, there is no subvention anymore for it.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say, if there is no subvention how would this entity continue because it has been doing a lot of good work? I know that women, right across the country, benefit from this institution. How will you provide for it among other institutions that benefit women this way?

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Member, just for some clarification, this is not anything new. If you look at pages 530 and 531 you will see that it is not listed there. It did not even receive any money prior. I am told by the technical staff that it has been brought under the Ministry. It has received money last year and this year, through the Ministry. Its programme is written into the Ministry's overarching programme.

Programme: 481 – Strategic Planning, Admin and Human Services - \$119,302,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 482 – Social Services – \$5,394,934,000

Dr. Persaud: I am also looking at staffing under this line item 6112, Senior Technical, there is a senior technical officer. What position will be filled? Is the person a contracted employee? How much would that person be paid, in terms of their emoluments?

Mrs. Lawrence: This employee fills the position of a Senior Probation Officer whose salary is \$102,900 per month.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say where the person will be placed?

Mrs. Lawrence: The Probation Department is housed at the East Street office. The person is there but goes out to the various regions to supervise.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled: There has been a reduction in the number of technical and craft skill staff. Could the Minister advise why this is so, which agencies would have been affected because of this? Could the Minister say if there is an inadequacy, which now exists in any agency, due to the loss of these staff members and what posts are now vacant? It is because it is important for a Ministry of this to have a number of skilled persons and experts, especially since it has expanded its child protection programme. I am interested in learning if it is catering for those people.

Mrs. Lawrence: There were some movement on this particular line. There were two Senior Probation Officers who were promoted; there was one Pharmacy Assistant who is now paid under line item 6115, Semi – Skilled Operatives and Unskilled, and there were four Probation Officers, unfortunately, who were dismissed and one Probation Officer who retired along with an Assistant Accountant.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say with the dismissal of those Probation Officers, how much of an impact it will have on your sector? Now that someone has retired – I know that there is a dearth of Probation Officers, as it is – could you say how that will impact and if there are plans to have new persons filled this and how soon?

Mrs. Lawrence: The Ministry could never get enough Probation Officers to address the many social ills that we have in our society, presently. Notwithstanding that, I am told that those vacancies have been advertised and within a few weeks the commission will be doing interviews to replace those persons.

Dr. Persaud: It is just to follow up on that, specifically where is affected? Is it a central issue or it is something that is regionally affected because, as it is known, there are problems all around, every region?

Mrs. Lawrence: I am told that it is at a regional level.

Dr. Persaud: Could the Minister say which regions, please?

Mrs. Lawrence: The regions affected are Regions 1, 2, 6, and 7.

Ms. Persaud: Under the same line item 6111, Administrative, could the Hon. Minister say who were the persons who were dismissed?

Mrs. Lawrence: Hon. Member, I think you have the wrong line. There was no dismissal or removal. There were two in 2014 and two remains in 2015.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, I noticed that there were 130 staff member in 2014 and 160 proposed in 2015, under line item 6116, Contracted Employees. I know that the new Government has had a position on contracted employees. I am curious. What are the positions being filled based on this increase, 30 new contract workers? Could the Hon. Member tell us of the designations and emoluments of the top ten of the additional staff, where will they be employed?

Mrs. Lawrence: Hon. Member, you know that there is Onverwagt centre and so there were 24 persons who were employed there; one Assistant Administrator at the Palms Geriatric Institute, one Food Supervisor and four Patient Care Assistant (PCAs), at the Palms Geriatric Institute. I can lay over that list just to save us time.

10.24 a.m.

Dr. Persaud: Yes, because there are about 30 persons.

Mrs. Lawrence: Yes, I can lay that over.

Dr. Persaud: I will be very interested and happy to receive that.

Under line item 6131 – Other Direct Labour Costs: Can the Hon. Minister give details as to what falls under this heading?

Mrs. Lawrence: This expenditure relates to acting and replacement allowances for when persons go off on leave. They call it responsibility allowance.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances: Could the Hon. Minister please provide details?

Mrs. Lawrence: Line item 6133 relates to motor vehicle and vacation allowances.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6221- Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister please state who will be purchasing the drugs and who will be benefitting from this purchase?

Mrs. Lawrence: This particular Programme covers several of the centres where we house those lesser fortunate persons or persons who are going through a period of distress in their lives. This particular allocation is to purchase First Aid Kits and so on and to ensure that we are equipped to address issues as they arise.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister I would just like to interject. Under line item 6133: You talked about benefits and allowances, can you say who the beneficiaries will be for these benefits and allowances and what are the allowances specifically that you are referring to - \$13 million?

Mrs. Lawrence: This line item covers those persons who enjoy one month's vacation leave and it also covers the travelling allowances for the travelling officers. We are specifically referring here to the Probation Officers.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister please give the amount of vehicles that are under this social service, how many of them are serviceable and what programmes are they assigned to?

Mrs. Lawrence: Just let me refresh what I said when this question was asked. Under Programme 2, the Ministry is having six vehicles.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, in terms of line items 6113 – Benefits and Allowances and 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence, the Hon. Minister mentioned that a lot of the allowances were geared towards travelling for the Welfare Officers and that kind of thing. Is it different to what is budgeted for Local Travel and Subsistence? Would it be that another group of persons are benefitting? Can the Hon. Minister just clarify for me?

Mrs. Lawrence: We are speaking about two categories of workers here. In the first instance, we are talking about those persons who would enjoy, as part of their condition of service, one month's annual leave and also a travelling allowance.

With regards to line item 6261, we are talking about those persons who do not enjoy duty-free allowances.

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6343 – Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance: I have noticed a budgeted amount for \$4,867,300,000. I would like the Minister to confirm that this is the budgeted amount from January to August.

Mrs. Lawrence: Just for clarity on where we are right now, we are looking at the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, and so all of the expenditures here are anticipated for the period January through August.

Bishop Edghill: I would just like to make myself clear. I am under Programme: 482 – Social Services, pages 292 and 293, line item 6343. That is where we are.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, may I repeat what I said. All of the expenditures that we are looking at under this particular programme refer to the period January through August. When we go to the new Ministry, we will look at the difference. If you go ahead, you will see the difference and if you add it up, you will get back the same total.

Dr. Persaud: We are looking at line item 6284 – Other, could you give us some details on that?

Mrs. Lawrence: This particular line item 6284 covers advertisements, agency fees for the Guyana Post Office Corporation, consultant policy fees, funerals, bank charges, pension books, security labels and that sort of thing.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6292 – Dietary: There has been a reduction in the dietary allocation. Could you say which agencies are affected? Are there any feeding programmes that assist women and children? Will those be affected by this reduction or is there something else to account for that?

Mrs. Lawrence: This particular line item relates to Night Shelter at Onverwagt. We know that they have a capacity of almost 200, but they were just operating under 15 persons. We have now been able to remove some persons from the Night Shelter there so that they can benefit. That is why you would see the reduction in the amounts of moneys utilised.

Dr. Persaud: So you have not cut the allocation in totality for the Night Shelter or Onverwagt, meaning that if you have shifted persons there, should you not have some more?

Mrs. Lawrence: When we get to page 305, we will see the difference.

Dr. Persaud: Training is very important because we know that there are many inadequacies that exist because of all the issues that we have to deal with and hear about from day to day, when we talk about domestic violence and child abuse. Line item 6302 – Training: I would just like to know what the nature of the training is and who are the beneficiaries of this training?

Mrs. Lawrence: We will be having several training and hopefully we will be able to conclude all of these by the end of December. They are in the areas of suicide prevention, gender-based violence, counter trafficking in persons, community advocates against violence and abuse, to name a few.

Dr. Persaud: Could you say specifically, who would benefit from the training? Would it be in-house training? Will the Ministry be going out regionally to train persons in non-governmental organisations (NGOs), faith-based organisations (FBOs) or community workers?

Mrs. Lawrence: These programmes will benefit both the staff in-house and also persons from NGOs and communities.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Who are the recipients of these scholarships and what is the amount allocated to scholarships? Where are these persons going to benefit from these scholarships? Can the Hon. Minister advise?

Mrs. Lawrence: No scholarships are awarded in this amount? This is basically for training.

Dr. Persaud: I saw it mentioned in the line item that is why I am seeking clarification.

Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could you advise, Hon. Minister, which organisations will benefit. I have noticed an increase in the allocations and subsidies to local organisations. I perused the list and I have noticed that the allocations have not been increased. In fact, there is a decrease in the allocations to the Guyana Relief Council (GRC). Could you say where additional moneys will be allocated, as in what agency? A breakdown would be greatly appreciated. How much would each agency receive under this line item?

Mrs. Lawrence: I would like to point the Hon. Member to pages 527 to 534. That would be able to give you a breakdown. Should you need a further breakdown, the Ministry would be very happy to facilitate you.

Dr. Persaud: I saw that list, but it does not really specify the individual allocations to correspond with the figure identified. I am just curious; has it been increased under another programme or is it under this programme that you have made the increase? There seems to be a reduction when you check it out. Just for clarification. I will be happy if you can provide that in a list.

Mrs. Lawrence: Certainly Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chand: Will the Minister explain line item 6291 – National and Other Events. Last year the Ministry had budgeted \$1million and already it has expended \$1.3 million; I suppose it was up to August of this year. Could the Minister advise; could some of the events that occurred since May account for this increase?

Mrs. Lawrence: The only event which occurred would have been International Women's Day.

Programme: 482 – Social Services- \$5,394,934,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

10.39 a.m.

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$205,482,000

Ms. Persaud: Under Staffing Details: It is noted that there has been an increase in staff by seven persons. Under line item 6111 – Administrative: There have been two additional persons added to the staff. Could the Hon. Minister say what the positions are, the date of appointments and in the same vein, the emoluments for these persons?

Mrs. Lawrence: The two persons employed took the positions of two Regional Cooperative Officers and their emoluments are \$107,290 per month. They were appointed on 2nd January, 2015.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There has been an increase of nine persons. Could the Hon. Minister say to which areas have these persons been allocated to and their dates of appointment?

Mrs. Lawrence: I can inform the Hon. Member that those persons who were employed went to the Labour and Co-ops Department. With regards to their positions and their dates of employment, that can be laid over.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There has been a decrease of \$1,145,000. Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles are within this agency and how many are serviceable?

Mrs. Lawrence: First let me point the Hon. Member to page 306, where the difference can be seen in the total as against that allocated for 2014. There are six vehicles and they are all serviceable.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: There has been a decrease of \$616,000. Could the Hon. Minister state which are the buildings that will receive maintenance and where they are located?

Mrs. Lawrence: This allocation on page 294 is what was spent. When you go to page 306, you would see that there is quite a large amount that was allocated there. This money is specifically for the Labour Department at Brickdam.

Ms. Persaud: Under line items 6271 to 6273, utility charges, could the Hon. Minister state to which departments would these moneys be allocated for these utility charges?

Mrs. Lawrence: These allocations cover the four Departments of Labour, also the three offices in the region.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6281 – Security Services: There has been a decrease by \$10,735,000. Could the Hon. Minister state the reason for the reductions, if it reflects a reduction in locations or if it is due to the termination of contracts by the service providers?

Mrs. Lawrence: It is none of the above. Actually, this line item on page 295 relates to the period January to August and as you move to page 307, you would see the difference that would cover from September to December.

Mr. Chand: At line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: With regards to a question to my Colleague, Mr. Persaud, yesterday, it was explained that the Guyana Public Service Union (GPSU) was allocated \$2 million. Is that outside of the allocation to trade unions? If it is outside, what is it for?

Mrs. Lawrence: The matter to which the Hon. Member referred can be found on page 526, under Public Service Management, under the Ministry of Presidency. The GPSU is not covered under our Ministry.

Mr. Chand: Under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: In Agency 48, it is covered under your Ministry. Can you please clarify?

Mrs. Lawrence: Just to clarify, I was responding to the Member's mention of \$2 million being allocated to the GPSU. I was pointing him to that.

With regards to the allocations for the subsidies, this in relation to training within the various unions, who will submit a programme to the Ministry and upon review, the Ministry will allocate from this particular subvention.

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration - \$205,482,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 484 – Child Care and Protection - \$253,080,000

Dr. Persaud: I have notice that there was an increase in the total number of staff. It moved from 124 to 138. If we look at line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, could the Hon. Minister say where the additional contracted workers would be placed, their designation and emoluments? If one looks further, at line item 6114 - Clerical and Office Support, there is none. Is it that those persons have been removed from under this Ministry? If the Ministry has taken on new staff, when were these staff employed and to fill what vacancies?

Mrs. Lawrence: The persons who were employed were employed prior to May 2015. They were employed in the Probation and Social Services Department. There are five Social Services Assistants, nine Probation Officers, one Receptionist and one Administrative Assistant.

Dr. Persaud: On that same note, are these officers going to be centrally placed or are they regionally placed?

Mrs. Lawrence: With regards to the Receptionist and the Administrative Assistant, they are at the Child Care and Protection Agency. The five Social Services Assistants were placed in the three homes. The nine Probation Officers were spread among the representatives for the regions.

Dr. Jagan: Under line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances: Could the Hon. Minister please provide some details on that?

Mrs. Lawrence: The figure that the Hon. Member would see under this line item represents Vacation Allowance, Motor Vehicle Allowance, Uniform Allowance and Station Allowance for those officers who are stationed in the various outlying regions.

Dr. Jagan: Under line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister say what drugs and supplies would be used here again?

Mrs. Lawrence: I am quite certain that the Member is aware that we have several homes and there are persons in those homes who would need to have certain prescribed medications. This line item meets that expense. It is also for First Aid Kits and over-the-counter drugs for those homes.

Dr. Jagan: Under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: Here again, could the Hon. Minister tell me how many vehicles does the agency have and how many of them are serviceable at this time?

Mrs. Lawrence: This particular department has six vehicles and all six are serviceable.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister provide details of the maintenance works that are ongoing?

10.54 a.m.

Mrs. Lawrence: The allocation here represents plumping services for the Mahaica Children's Home and also for the Cornhill Street Building.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister please provide details of the works to be done and where they are supposed to be done.

Mrs. Lawrence: The line item refers to the maintenance of the compounds, the three children homes and also the head office. It relates to cleaning the drains, cutting the grass and washing the yard and that sort of thing.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister please provide details for me, please, given that I see an increase in allocation.

Mrs. Lawrence: Hon Member, in order to address the needs of the vulnerable out there, this money is set aside for our Child Care and Protection Agency officers, who must respond to calls wherever, in the 10 administrative regions.

Dr. Jagan: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister please provide details under this line item of the number of companies and locations they would be taking care of and the cost details.

Mrs. Lawrence: This amount relates to one company only and that is RK Security Services which covers the three homes and the head office of the Child Care and Protection Agency (CCPA).

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say what falls under line item 6284 – Others.

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, in order to ensure that our children are provided with a well-rounded education this allowance goes towards paying for extracurricular activities - dancing, karate, football, swimming, music lessons, literacy lessons, *et cetera*.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you tell me where these children are housed and who would benefit from this because I think this is excellent, so I am interested in learning where and how many children are under this line item.

Mrs. Lawrence: All of these training and lessons are done in-house at the three centres. The facilitators will come to the homes, so we can ensure that they are well secured.

Dr. Persaud: Under line item 6292 – Dietary: I noticed there is a reduction, but I know this is from January to September as you said. I combined the two figures from the Ministry of Social Protection and this and I notice that the figures are just about the same, yet, you spoke about expanding all the Ministry’s feeding programmes and all the programmes in relation to children. Are you saying that you have under budgeted for this and will any of the agencies that you mentioned be impacted negatively, in terms of not being able to adequately provide for children? Could you say what institutions are provided for here?

Mrs. Lawrence: This allocation is basically for meals for the three homes. With regards to whether it is adequate or not, we know that, as a nation, we are geared to take care of our children. This is an anticipated amount, it is in the Estimates. Should we go over? We know that this House would certainly approve those extra costs.

Dr. Persaud: I will definitely, always, be asking for more for children and women because you know I am passionate advocate for both groups.

Now, we talked about all of these things that your Ministry is providing. Has there been a tendering process for the providers of all of these - the dietary things to facilitate. How are you going around obtaining all of this?

Mrs. Lawrence: The Tender Board was used in the beginning, but what happen, I am told, was that many of the persons who won those awards reneged on providing the necessary materials that was needed by the various homes. What we did was, we returned to the Tender Board and

used selective tendering. We are hoping that, in moving forward now, we can go back to open tender.

Dr. Persaud: We would be grateful for a list of the names of providers of all of these things, seeing that it was selective tendering.

Line item 6294: Could you say what fall under “Other”?

Mrs. Lawrence: This particular line item deals with all of the needs of the children, except educational and food. It deals with their clothing, toiletries, school bags, school equipment, *et cetera*.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, I hope in other budgets we will see more provided for this because I know that it requires a lot.

Under line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Here again, like the last “including Scholarships” is bracketed. I know that you mentioned the last time that no scholarships will be provided, is this something that you are going to removed or can you clarify for me and the benefit of this House, what is the nature of the training, who are the beneficiaries, what agencies will benefit from those who are trained, who will be the recipients of scholarships - if they are and what is the cost envisage for either or both, if you like.

Mrs. Lawrence: There is no scholarship again here, so we do not need to disaggregate the amount noted there. But this goes to the training of foster parents, including capacity building of staff and children in the various institutions. That is also done also during this August holiday, Easter holidays and so on.

Dr. Persaud: Could you clarify, in term of the second part of my questions, which agencies specifically will benefit or have you not yet decided and will do that later.

Mrs. Lawrence: Certainly Mr. Chairman, this is the Child Care and Protection Agency.

Dr. Persaud: No, I understand that, but I meant regionally. Is it going to filter out of a central...

Mrs. Lawrence: This is basically for the staff, so it is all of the staff and the foster parents in all of the regions where they are.

Dr. Persaud: Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you Hon. Minister.

Programme: 484 – Child Care and Protection – \$253,080,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration – \$702,000

Dr. Jagan: I see that there has been an allocation of \$702,000, could the Hon. Minister tell me what or for who is the retention for, under project code 1206800 – Buildings.

Mrs. Lawrence: This has to do with the Labour Department in Brickdam. This contract was awarded to Mr. Elias Howard and it is the retention, as noted there, for the building.

Programme: 483 – Labour Administration – \$702,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency 49: Ministry Social Protection

Current Expenditure

Programme: 491 – Policy Development and Administration – \$97,269,000

Dr. Persaud: Just for clarity, for the sake of the House and for everyone, this is a new Ministry. Based on the numbers allocated, there are 55 Contracted Employees. Could the Hon. Minister say if these are new employees for this Ministry or whether there would have been a shift from the old Ministry or a department to constitute this new Ministry? What are the designations and emoluments of the highest paid staff and were these posts advertised, if these are new persons?

Mrs. Lawrence: Please note that the Staffing Details came across from the old Ministry, so it is the same thing. The highest paid person here with the highest position would be the Permanent Secretary (PS).

Dr. Persaud: I am curious. You said that you would have persons coming across, specifically from what section of the Ministry? Hon. Minister, you are now, literally, moving from what was

a holistic approach to Social Services or Human Services, to Social Protection, what specifically?

Mrs. Lawrence: These persons were shifted from the Labour Department. They are the same two persons that I spoke of in the beginning, which were the Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS) and the Driver. They are now under Programme One in the Administration Department

11.09 a.m.

Dr. Persaud: Thank you, Minister. I was actually speaking about the 55 contracted employees but we can go through the line items.

Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: Could you kindly tell us the designations and emoluments of the senior technical officers and what skills and expertise they would have taken to the Ministry of Social Protection?

Mrs. Lawrence: These are the same persons who were under the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security. I did mention that we have appointed a new Superintendent of Works. It is the same person coming over; there has been no change.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, you have to forgive me. With all of these changes, I think, aside from the school children, who have to learn about all of these Ministries and Ministers, it would take some getting used to for all of us.

Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I am assuming that the 55 contract workers would have been shifted. Are there any new persons who would have been employed or are these specifically workers who were there before?

Mrs. Lawrence: For the last question, you are correct.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Buildings would have been rented. Could you say which buildings?

Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Which buildings are being maintained?

Mrs. Lawrence: The rental relates to the Guyana Legal Aid Centre which I referred to earlier. I did say that the rental is being paid quarterly.

For line item 6242, I did mention that repairs are being done to Cornhill Street.

Programme: 491 – Policy Development and Administration - \$97,269,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 492 – Social Services - \$3,486,328,000

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I notice that you are moving and shifting staff. Are you saying that 160 members of staff would have been shifted in the entirety and you have not taken on any other members of staff? If you have, can you say when they would have been employed and what their designations and their emoluments are?

Mrs. Lawrence: Just as on page 293, the same staffing detail is represented here. There has been no increase or decrease.

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: Could you advise what constitutes other travel and transportation for the sum listed?

Mrs. Lawrence: This line item represents the cost incurred for chartered flights to the various interior locations for the payment of old age pension and public assistance.

Dr. Persaud: Under line 6284 – Other – there is an allocation of \$40.215 million. Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of what that amount entails?

Mrs. Lawrence: I did give a breakdown of what this amount relates to. Are you speaking in terms of cost?

Dr. Persaud: Yes.

Mrs. Lawrence: I can assure you that some of these will vary from month to month so, to give a breakdown would mean that we can give only what has already been incurred.

Dr. Persaud: Could the Minister give an idea of how the moneys will be spent?

Mrs. Lawrence: It is the same thing. It is a lump sum and it depends on whether we do advertisements, agency fees, how many pensioners go to the Post Office for service, funerals, *et cetera*.

Dr. Persaud: I notice that you have old age pension and if the figures are combined, could you say whether there has been a significant removal of over \$1 billion that should have been there that is not really budgeted for? It is a deficit based on the new figure for all of these.

Ms. Teixeira: [*Inaudible*] calculate, Minister, the funds allocated for old age pension under the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security under line item 6342 – Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance to the Allocation - in Programme: 492 and the Ministry of Social Protection, Programme: 343, we are coming up with a figure that does not seem to cater to the increase in the old age pension which would be assumed September to December. The figures when added appear to be a little bit more than what the revised 2014 Budget was? But, when we do our calculations to include the increase for the old age pension, it is not being reflected. Could you clarify that please?

Mrs. Lawrence: Certainly. I will take the question that the Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira, asked first. The Budget has not been passed and so those amounts cannot be included here. We have to pass the Appropriation Bill first.

Secondly, the amount here that is indicated on both pages 305 and 293 is just a little off and it is an estimation based on the number of pensioners that would have applied over a period. I cannot tell you what aggregate was used in order to come up with the various amounts.

Bishop Edghill: Follow-up: If I can be helpful to the House, I would like to refer us to page 22, the aggregated totals under this line item. Line item 6343 – Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance: In 2014, \$7,895,544,000 was spent. Budgeted in 2015, for the entire year, is \$8,085,442,000. My understanding is that the old age pension would be increased from 1st September. The Hon. Minister can confirm that to the House. There is a difference of about \$186 million in the aggregated totals. If there are approximately 42,000 pensioners in this country, every month, we will have to allocate 42,000 times \$3,875 which will give a total of \$162 million. For the four months, we will have to multiply \$162 million by four and that will give us \$651 million.

Respectfully, I am submitting that the \$3,875 increase, from \$13,125 to \$17,000, is not reflected in these figures. What I want the Hon. Minister to confirm, however, is if there is a deduction of the water subsidy and the electricity subsidy from old age pension from this line item. If so, how

much is that subsidy? Then the reworked figure will show, based on my calculation - I can be confirmed wrong if the Hon. Minister can get help from the Hon. Minister of Finance - that the old age pensioner is only actually getting \$1,104 as the increase.

I am suggesting that this figure needs to be explained by the Hon. Minister to say whether the increase to pensioners is included here. And, if the water subsidy and electricity subsidy are deducted, what will be the real figure? Maybe the Minister of Finance will need to help.

Mrs. Lawrence: When I look at line item 6343, it states Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance. It tells me that there is a combination: one which caters to the old age pension for the number which was given by the Ministry of \$43,500 and the difference goes to the public assistance recipients.

With regards to the increase, this House will have to vote first. It cannot be added here unless the House votes on it.

Bishop Edghill: I think we need to get the Minister of Finance here to help because the reality is that we are coming with an Appropriation Bill. Once we vote and the sums are considered a part of the Estimates, then that is what is included in the Appropriation Bill. If we vote and it is not included, it means that the benefits that should go for old age pensioners, which we are in agreement with, will not be included in the Appropriation Bill. All that we are seeking to do from the floor while we are considering these Estimates is to ensure that the benefits to the senior citizens are guaranteed.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I thank you and I think that the Hon. Minister follows you clearly.

Bishop Edghill: I am not satisfied with the answer because I have two questions to get clarification on. The Minister is seeking to explain that public assistance is included and so I would like her to give us...

Mr. Chairman: Could you put the questions you wish to ask the Minister?

Bishop Edghill: I will put them one at a time so that there will be no confusion.

Could the Hon. Minister tell this House how many pensioners there are?

Could the Hon. Minister tell the House how many persons are on public assistance and what is the total for public assistance?

11.24 a.m.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, the number of old age pensioners to be estimated for the year 2015 was given at 43,500 pensioners to the Ministry of Finance and also 10,000 persons to receive social assistance. With regard to the amount of money to be estimated for that, I am told by my technical people that that is left for the Ministry of Finance to so allocate. Therefore, this number that we have here would not have come from the Ministry of Social Protection; only the number of recipients would have come from the Ministry of Social Protection. So, it would be the Minister of Finance who can give to us, if we combine labour and human services and that in social security, the disaggregated amount to represent those two numbers.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I am happy that the Minister of Finance is taking a seat, maybe to help us. It is an issue that we want clarification for. If there are 43,000 pensioners who are to benefit, just using last year's figures, Sir...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, is it possible that you could just couch the issue in a succinct form so that, if the Minister of Finance needs to make any intervention, he can do so without the benefit of the preambles?

Bishop Edghill: Sir, I am trying my best. I am just seeking to bring the figures to indicate that we have a difficulty that there is an allocation here for the increase. I am making the point that, if there are 43,000 pensioners and in the provision there was \$13,125 per pensioner, then that would give us a total of \$564 million every month times 12, which would give us a total of \$6.772 billion.

The total allocation last year was \$7.895 billion. The balance would be on public assistance. Using the very same formula, Sir, it would indicate that there is a shortfall in the allocations in these Estimates for old age pensioners, as announced as a budget measure of \$17,000 for old age pensioners. We would like to have an explanation of how this shortfall would be addressed to ensure that the senior citizens get the benefits that were promised to them.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, with guidance from the Minister of Finance, if we turn to page 23, line item 6343 – Old Age Pensions and Social Assistance - if we put on our glasses, we would note that it states pension increases \$2.7 billion and that is separate from the \$8,085,442,000 that is there for the pension and public assistance.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I would like to be guided. We are referring to page 23, which is the aggregated total that has been presented to this House. We were told that we are having a budget of \$221 billion. In this total of current expenditure, we have an aggregated total for 2015 of \$181,661,765,000. If we go to page 25, we will get the aggregated capital totals and, when we put them together, we will get the \$221 billion. In this current expenditure total, the budgeted amount for Old Age Pension and Public Assistance is \$8,085,442,000 which is only an increase of \$186 million which is insufficient to fund the budget measure that was announced of increasing pensions from \$13,125 to \$17,000. We would just like to have an explanation from the Minister of Finance.

If we are wrong, then we are prepared to admit that we are wrong. But we would like to have an explanation or clarification.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, I reiterate what I said: I said that, under the Ministry of Social Protection, the increase is not there. I further pointed the Hon. Member to page 23 which indicated that the increase of \$2.7 billion was catered for in the Budget and I would now further like to point the Hon. Member to page 65, under Agency: 03, Programme: 032 – Public Financial Management. At line item 6343, he will note that the increase for 2015 is listed there again as \$2.7 billion.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, for clarification, I would like the House to be so guided, Sir. Line item 6342 deals with Government pensions. When there is an increase in salary, pensions are increased and this is the allocation under which pensions are increased. Old age pensions are treated differently from Government pensions, so, if there is a problem, I would believe that it would be better for us to look at the figures, have them adjusted and corrected before there is grandstanding in the House. I am just simply pointing out that we have a concern.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, I have already addressed this matter and I have shown the Hon. Member two other pages where the increases were catered for and so I would like us to just rest this matter, please.

Ms. Teixeira: It is regrettable that what is, on this side of the House, genuine effort to have pointed out that there appears to be a shortfall has been treated in this manner by the Hon. Ministers. Sir, I am asking that the pension increase, which the Hon. Member refers to under Ministry of Finance...we have not come to it as yet.

I agree with my Hon. Colleague on this side that the \$2.7 billion that is being referred to... when we come to that, we will ask the questions again because there is a distinction between Government pensioners and old age pensioners. We would want that clarified again under that line item.

Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I wish to ask you to note, Mr. Chairman, that this is one of the agencies where we had to do a correction based on the discussions on Monday. Therefore, when it is put to the House, Sir, I am asking that it be put as amended because, under line item 6321, the contributions to the Rights Commissions and others are now being moved to the line item that deals with contributions to constitutional bodies. When the vote is put on this, could you, please, I am proposing, put that the vote be on the motion ‘as amended’ and, when we come to the motion in the House on that, it would, therefore, make some synergy between the two things.

It is regrettable; we try to be helpful but...

Programme: 492 – Social Services – \$3,486,328,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration – \$222,075,000

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations – \$136,374,000 is allocated. However, when you go back to the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security, January to August, for the Board of Industrial Training (BIT), it is \$72.8 million approximately and, under this, September to December, for BIT is \$127 million. If my Mathematics is right, the total allocation for 2015 for BIT is \$199.8 million. However, the

allocation for 2014 was \$212.8 million. Could you advise on why there is a decrease in the allocations for the BIT in this year? Although there were elections and prorogation, the point is that the BIT - I know, personally - was having a lot of very good training programmes all over the country. Could you explain what the consideration to reduce the allocation for the BIT was?

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Member, I am happy to report that the training will not be cut or shortlisted because of the reduction in the amount allocated. Basically, that reduction relates to better practices being introduced in terms of the quality of training that is being done, the locations and institutions that we are using now to ensure that those persons get the required skills as per our programme. It is basically a whole shift in how we are managing the money.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, just a follow-up question on that: you said that you would be putting the training in institutions and cutting back but the success of this training would have been taking the programmes out to the people so that more persons can access training. That is something we have definitely advocated because a lot of people cannot come to an institution, *per se*, and that restricts how many persons would actually benefit. So, we look at widespread training and, as such, taking the programmes out. Are you saying then that that facet of training provided by the BIT will be cut?

11.39 p.m.

Mrs. Lawrence: No. In every region, there is training and we are using the vocational and technical training centres more.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, I know that the Hinterland would have benefited a lot from these training programmes, and that would require a lot to be spent to take these persons out of the Hinterland in. You have a reduction. Are you saying that people who are in these far-flung areas will not benefit because these programmes were not going outwards, because you have institutionalised more of these programmes?

Mrs. Lawrence: No. That is not what I said. I said that the training in the various regions continues. As a matter of fact, training is going on in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10. The committee is now looking at Region 8, as to what we can do for those young persons there. Apart

from those Regions, we are also utilising the technical and vocational training centres and the industrial training centres. I can tell you that, this year, we are using the Mahaicony Technical and Vocational Training Centre, the Leonora Technical and Vocational Training Centre, the Upper Corentyne Industrial Training Centre, the Forestry Training Centre Inc., the Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) Training Centre at Port Mourant and the Heavy Duty Equipment Maintenance Programme through the Machinery Corporation of Guyana (MACORP).

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships) - as it relates to training, just for clarification, could the Hon. Minister, state if the training would include those for which the Hon. Minister, Ms. Simona Charles-Broomes, spoke about, of training labour officers in such areas as trafficking in persons (TIP)?

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, the TIP Programme is being done under Programme 492. I did mention it when we were dealing with that.

Mr. Chand: Comrade Chairman, through you, could the Minister advice on line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations? You have allocated to the board of industrial training \$127,374,000 and you have allocated to the unions \$9,650,000, but the two numbers do not add up to \$136,374,000. Could you please clarify?

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, may I point him to pages 531 and 532? Page 531 indicates that, under the former Ministry head, BIT received \$72,856,000 and, if we go to the new Ministry, we will note that BIT is receiving \$127,374,000.

Mr. Chand: Yes, Comrade Minister, I follow. One hundred and twenty-seven million, three hundred and seventy-four thousand dollars added to \$9,650,000 is more than \$136,374,000, Labour Administration on page 532. The figure of \$136,374,000 is understated when you take into account the BIT allocation, the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG) allocation, the Guyana Trade Union Congress (GTUC) allocation and other unions' allocations.

Mrs. Lawrence: I am not following the Member. I am going to go through so that he can tell me where I am lapsing in terms of what he is trying to point out to me. On page 301, line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations - it speaks to \$136,374,000. When I go to

page 532 for Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, at 3. Labour Administration, it shows me \$136,374,000 was allocated and how it was broken down. So, what am I not seeing?

Mr. Chand: We are together but, when you add, Comrade Minister, \$127,374,000 and the other numbers, you are not getting \$136,374,000.

Mrs. Lawrence: Okay. I can look at that and draw it to the attention, if needs be, to the Ministry of Finance. Thank you.

Mr. Chand: The Minister, in his Budget presentation, spoke to \$11 million but what you have allocated to the unions is \$9,650,000. Could you please clarify?

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, if you note, of that \$9 million, it is disaggregated into three sections: FITUG gets \$500,000; GTUC gets \$500,000 and the other trade unions, in order for the Government to support their training programmes, we will have the amount of \$8 million to spend among them.

Mr. Chand: I am pointing out that there ought to be an allocation of \$11 million, in keeping with the Minister's Budget statement. There is less allocated from these numbers.

Mrs. Lawrence: I know that it is not the usual way in how we look at the Estimates, but there is \$2 million under the old head for the GTUC, so the \$2 million and \$9 million will give you the \$11 million. Thank You.

Mr. Chand: Thank you, Comrade Minister. Comrade Minister, how could you explain that FITUG, with a membership of 30,000 plus, that is the affiliated unions members accounted for... Here you have the TUC living out the Guyana Public Service Union, which is not active in the TUC, with a membership of under 10,000 members, that is affiliated unions that are members of the TUC, being allocated \$8 million while FITUG is allocated merely \$500,000 as against \$8 million. Look at the wider disparity of the membership. Is it not discrimination?

Mrs. Lawrence: It depends from which lens you look at it. If we are going to support all the other small unions to make them strong, we must allocate a large amount of money to be able to help several unions, as opposed to a union, as the Hon. Member said, that has the largest

membership; we are just assisting them. If we were to use the argument that he is using, then we should have given FITUG less and the smaller unions more.

Mr. Chand: Here I am not talking about the smaller unions; I am talking about the two umbrella bodies. There is a clear discrimination, in my view. I want to make that point.

Mr. Chairman: You have made the point. Is there another question?

Mr. Chand: The other question, Comrade Chairman, is: what yardstick will be used to allocate the allowance to the unions? Is it that the membership return, which is a requirement by law, will be used? We need to be guided because there are many unions that have not been able to produce audited statements for decades.

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, the amount allocated here is to assist the workers of those unions and I do not know whether he may or may not have heard that the Ministry of Social Protection has recently engaged several persons and has established a monitoring and evaluation unit within the Ministry. These unions must present a training programme which will be evaluated first before any disbursements are made.

Programme: 493 – Labour Administration - \$222,075,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 494 – Child Care and Protection – \$174,699,000

Dr. Persaud: Looking at line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: I noticed that there are 12 staff members under Other Technical and Craft Skilled. With all of the services being mentioned here, would you say that that is a sufficient number of staff members? And would you say that, within this number where there is a requirement of persons to deal with many social issues, specifically child abuse and child care, there is provision for psychologists, social workers and that kind of officers? Twelve seems very small, for me.

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, I would be the first to agree that, when you are dealing with social issues, you need as many persons with the necessary skills to be able to deal with smaller groups instead of large groups. This is the number which we have presently. We have

sent to the Public Service Commission for the recruiting of persons to fill the various vacancies, especially with the probation and social services, the psychologists and so on.

Dr. Persaud: Thank you, Hon. Minister. Could you tell me, of the 12, what skills do they bring to the table? What areas are they in? What regions are they in, specifically? Thank you.

11.54 a.m.

Mrs. Lawrence: I am told that these are Probation and Social Services Officers. With regard to the breakdown of their designations, and so on, I can lay that over for you.

Dr. Persaud: I am very concerned about adequacy here, because if the Ministry is going to offer programmes and you want the programmes to be effective, then we need to have much more than is listed here.

If we look at line items 6114 and 6115 nothing is listed there. I know we are now looking at social protection, but there is no clerical support or semi-skilled staff. Could the Minister clarify what is happening there?

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, it is just to inform you that these are contracted staff.

Dr. Persaud: There is 115 here.

Mrs. Lawrence: Yes.

Dr. Persaud: In the 115, were any new staff added?

Mrs. Lawrence: No.

Dr. Persaud: In the 115, could the Minister say what the emoluments are of the top five? Do you have that information, Hon. Minister?

Mrs. Lawrence: Hon. Member, would you like to have the name and the emoluments or it is just the position? The Legal Counsel, the Manager for the Children's Home, the Director of Child Care and Protection Agency, the Manager of the Foster Care, the Manager of Child Abuse. Those are the persons in the top positions.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, could you say if there is any provisions in these line items for the new programmes you plan to have under the new Ministry?

Mrs. Lawrence: There are two programmes which we will be rolling off at the beginning of September. One has to do with the early childhood centre but that is paid for, in terms of the consultancy. There is also the advocacy centre. We will be working with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to establish the other three centres. The Early Childhood Development Department will just be the consultancy process. We are doing up the terms of reference (TOR) and so on.

Dr. Persaud: Hon. Minister, just for clarification, as far as I am aware that would have started two years ago. Is this a whole new programme? I am a bit confused.

Mrs. Lawrence: To the Hon. Member, it may be old but it is now being put in place.

Dr. Persaud: I am still confused because that was there before.

Programme: 494 – Child Care and Protection - \$174,699,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I had asked that when you would have called for vote on the Child Care and Protection, Programme 494, I suggested that it be put to the vote as amended. That is just for the records.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member. Your request will be noted.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 491 – Policy Development and Administration - \$9,750,000

Dr. Jagan: The Rights Commission, project 2509200, there has been \$750,000 budgeted for the purpose of computers, printers, water dispensers, air conditioning units and UPS. Could the Hon. Minister please provide details of which of the Ministry locations will be benefiting from these?

Mrs. Lawrence: The Rights of the Child Commission will benefit from these items where an office will be set up within the Ministry for them.

Dr. Jagan: Project 2509300, Office Equipment: There is \$9 million for the provision of chairs, desks, filing cabinets, computers, printers, and others. Which office those items are intended for? Which are the locations in which the surveillance systems intended for? The final question is: Are other locations catered for in this?

Mrs. Lawrence: With regard to the surveillance cameras and the intercom system they will be for the head office at East Street. We will also be having a biometric clock-in system placed at Cornhill Street. The chairs, desks and filing cabinets will be for the five departments within the head office of the Ministry of Social Protection.

Dr. Persaud: Under project 2405700, Programme 492, I notice that vehicles will be purchased. I would like to know how many and where they would service?

Mrs. Lawrence: I do not think we have reached there. That is Social Services. Mr. Chairman, some guidance. We are only at Programme 491.

Mr. Chairman: That is where we are. Hon. Members we are at Programme 491, Policy Development and Administration.

Programme: 491 – Policy Development and Administration - \$9,750,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 492 – Social Services - \$18,200,000

Dr. Persaud: I would just like to repeat the question I inadvertently asked earlier. How many vehicles will be purchased and where will they serve? That is under project 2405700.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, that \$4 million will go towards purchasing two all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for Regions 7 and 8, so we can be able to go to the various villages to address the social issues that may occur there.

Dr. Jagan: Buildings, project 1216400, I see there is \$2.2 million allocated for the Hugo Chavez Centre for rehabilitation, for electrical works. Could the Hon. Minister state the nature of the electrical works and is it new electrical works being done to the centre?

Mrs. Lawrence: All of these moneys will be spent at the Hugo Chavez Centre. The electrical works pertain to installation of fans in the female dorms and also to works to be done to the water trestle which is in need of repair.

Dr. Jagan: Project 2509400, Office Equipment: There is a \$5 million for purchase of beds, chairs, refrigerators, and others. Could the Hon. Minister say who the intended beneficiaries are?

Mrs. Lawrence: We would like to ensure that the residents at the Palms Geriatric Institute are comfortable and well taken care of so all of this money will be going towards beds, chairs, refrigerators, screens, fans, cabinet and water dispensers. It is just to name a few of the items that will be purchased under this item.

12.09 p.m.

Programme: 492 - Social Services - \$18,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 493 - Labour Administration - \$17,300,000

Ms. Persaud: Under project 1216400, Buildings, there is an allocated amount of \$6.5 million which will be catering for the provision of building, bridge and pathways. Could the Hon. Minister state which locations will benefit from these infrastructure works and where will they be carried out?

Mrs. Lawrence: Some work was done last year and the contractor was not fully paid, so \$3.5 million is catered to complete that payment. That was for the extension work that was done at the Labour Department. The bridge, which is presently there, needs much work and so we are going to address the bridge and the pathway leading into the downstairs building. As it would be known that when it rains it floods and so we are going to fix that.

Ms. Persaud: Project 2509300, Office Equipment: There is an allocation of \$3.8 million will be for the purchasing of furniture and equipment. Could the Hon. Minister state which department, under labour, will benefit from that?

Mrs. Lawrence: This will go to all of the departments. We would like to have more money here but this is what we have to work with and so we will now have to sit and look at priority, in terms of all of the departments within the labour section.

Mrs. Persaud: Thank you Mr. Chairman. That was my final question.

Programme: 493 - Labour Administration - \$17,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 494 - Child Care and Protection - \$31,300,000

Dr. Jagan: Through the Chairman, project 1216400, Buildings, Cde. Minister, there is \$10 million advocated for the construction of reservoirs in the Mahaica Children's Home. Could the Hon. Minister please tell the Assembly what service will be accommodated with this extension, and there is also to the building there? How much the extension cost and what would be the cost for the reservoir?

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Hon. Member, you are right that provision is here for a reservoir for the Mahaica Children's Home and we are going to split that between that reservoir and some works at the office at Broad Street. Seventy per cent will go to the reservoir and 30 % will go to the head office of the Child Protection Agency.

Dr. Jagan: Project 2405700, Land Transport: I noticed that there is \$7.5 million to purchase a vehicle. Could the Minister give details on the type of vehicle and the purpose of the vehicle?

Mrs. Lawrence: I will not be able to furnish the Member with the type, and all of that, right now. We have this money and we will go out to tender a 32-seater bus for the children at the Mahaica Children's Home so that we can transport them to school and other after school activities.

Dr. Jagan: Project 2509300, Office Equipment: I noticed that there is an allocation of \$8 million for the purchase of furniture and equipment. Could the Hon. Minister state what type of furnishings will be purchased for this amount?

Mrs. Lawrence: There are several offices out of Georgetown and we would like to use this money, to stretch it as far as we could, to ensure that we equip those offices with the necessary furnishings so that our staff can carry out their duties.

Dr. Jagan: Project 2509400, Equipment: There is a sum of \$5.8 million for the purchasing of equipment. Could the Hon. Minister state what sort of equipment is being purchased? What is it used for and what are the quantities?

Mrs. Lawrence: This amount of money allocated here will be used to purchase a washer and dryer for the Drop In Centre and at the Sophia Centre. They are presently using an oven that was there since the days of the Guyana National Service. We are going to buy them a new oven so that they can bake nice bread and cakes for our children.

Programme: 494 - Child Care and Protection - \$31,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have just completed consideration of the Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, if it pleases you, I would like to bring some clarity to the pension and social assistance figure of \$4,887,00,003.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, for the period September through December that figure will be allocated as follows:

- Old Age Pensioners, 42,397 at \$17,000 which would amount to \$2,829,900,000
- Public Assistants recipients, we are catering for 9,361 at \$6,500 per recipient and that would amount to \$243,400,000
- Single parents who will come to the Ministry from time to time another \$30 million was placed there for them.

I trust that this brings clarity to that figure. During the month of January through August, the Ministry would have expended some \$4,887,00,003 for the old age pension and social assistance Sir. May the record so reflect that.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, I would wish to suggest that we continue to work and treat with Agency 23, Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce and then take our break. It seems that the Minister of Tourism is not in the room, so I crave your indulgence for a few minutes.

12.24 p.m.

Hon. Members, I thank you for indulgence. The Minister is absent from the room. The Hon. Minister of Business will treat with matter in her stead.

Agency: 23 Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce

Current Expenditure

Programme: 231 – Main Office – \$340,552,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: As a result of the reduction in the budgetary provision, could the Hon. Minister provide the category of contracted employees; the designations and the emoluments of the two newly contracted employees?

Minister of Business [Mr. Gaskin]: I thank the Hon. Member for her question. There are three new contracted employees, even though the total difference is two. Those three newly contracted employees are a Tourism Development Officer with a salary of \$76,464, Machine Operator at \$44,370 and a Research and Planning Analyst at \$136,500.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6281, Security Services, \$25,757,000: Could the Hon. Minister say what period this allocation will be covering?

Mr. Gaskin: This allocation covers the period January to August, 2015.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister kindly say when last local organisations benefited from the \$177,845,000 subsidies and

contributions have been audited? Could the Hon. Minister say how much of the \$177,845,000 have already been spent between May and August?

Mr. Gaskin: Mr. Chairman, at this point I cannot say how much was spent between May and August. I can give you the total for those two organisations. One was the Guyana National Bureau of Standards – \$95,400,061 and the other was the Guyana Tourism Authority – \$82,000,084. I think the Hon. Member had one other question, which was whether any of those two organisations had been audited. I am assuming he is referring to the forensic audit which was carried out recently. Well, there have been no audits carried out recently.

Mr. Ali: Through you, Mr. Chairman, line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, \$3,005,000, could the Hon. Minister say whether this represents a true cost of fuel and lubricants for the period January to August?

Mr. Gaskin: It does reflect the cost of fuel and lubricants from January to August, 2015.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, in light of this, would the Hon. Minister then agrees with me that the public pronouncement that there was abuse of any fuel can be withdrawn at this time?

Mr. Gaskin: I am unable to reach the same conclusion as the Hon. Member.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the building or buildings which have been earmarked for maintenance?

Mr. Gaskin: Bear in mind that these figures reflect expenditures between January to August, 2015, most of which would have already occurred. When the Hon. Member asked about the buildings earmarked for maintenance, I think it has already happened. There are two buildings - the Arthur Chung Conference Centre, formerly known as the International Convention Centre, and the National Exhibition Centre in Sophia.

The conference centre's maintenance was to the tune of \$850,000 and the maintenance to The National Exhibition Centre was another \$350,000.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6322, Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations: I note that an amount of \$17 million under this line item. Could the Hon. Minister say how much is paid for

membership in the Caribbean Tourism Association? It is to give us the names and amounts of any other international organisations that would benefit from the \$17 million allocated under this line item. What value are we getting from this?

Mr. Gaskin: The amount to be paid is \$17 million, the entire amount as our annual fees.

Mr. Gill: What benefits are we getting from this?

Mr. Gaskin: The list of benefits would include awareness and branding identity within the Caribbean, coordination and participation at trade shows, public relations for the country and the Caribbean, publications – calendars and other, statistical tourism information, training, advocacy, for example air passenger duty and intra-regional travel, research report and Caribbean statistical data – about size, origin, growth, employment within the tourism industry.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister say if there is an evaluation or membership and contribution to the Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO)? After that evaluation, would he want to venture an opinion as to whether it brings value to Guyana's product, being a member of that organisation?

Mr. Gaskin: There is a meeting scheduled with the officials of the CTO for this week, after which it will be determined whether or not to continue.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister identify the other infrastructure which was or were maintained, utilising this budgetary provision?

Mr. Gaskin: It would be for the convention centre.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6284, Other: Could the Hon. Minister identify the other goods and services which were procured utilising this budgetary provision?

Mr. Gaskin: It would be for advertising, designing and printing of brochures, flyers, business cards and other marketing documents to promote the Guyana International Conference Centre (GICC), changing of leather on executive chairs, cleaning of carpets and purchasing of curtains.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6291, National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister state which events these amounts cover?

Mr. Gaskin: This amount caters for lending of support to the promotion of tourism in Guyana, Mashramani, Emancipation celebrations, Wakenaam Night, Lake Mainstay Regatta, Rupununi Rodeo, Easter Monday at Number 63 Beach, Rockstone Fish Festival, Duck Curry Competition, Muslim Qaseeda Competition and the Rupununi Arts Festival.

12.39 p.m.

Ms. Persaud: As follow-up question under the same line item, could the Hon. Minister provide the amounts that were allocated to each of these events?

Mr. Gaskin: We can supply this information at a later date.

Mr. Lumumba: Line Item 6291 - National and Other Events: Will there be any consideration for the change of the Mashramani route? Maybe, there can be a proposed suggestion looking towards the Seawalls or something like that? Is there an objection from the Government for fresh thoughts? Are they polluted by old thoughts? Will there be any consideration or is too early to discuss that?

Mr. Gaskin: I believe the Hon. Member is confusing his ministries. The Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce does not prescribe the routes for Mashramani.

Mr. Lumumba: I thought that part of the Mashramani activities would be under tourism. I am not the one that is limited.

Mr. Gaskin: Mr. Chairman, this is a budget for the year 2015, January to August. Mashramani occurs in February and, therefore, would have already occurred. The relevance of the Hon. Member's question to Budget 2015 is lost on me.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6302: Could the Hon. Minister identify the category and number of persons who benefitted from training utilised in the budgetary provision?

Mr. Gaskin: This training was for employees of the Conference Centre involved in cleaning and other areas. It basically was for customer care training. I am told there were about 7 or 8 persons. I can give the Hon. Member a specific figure if she likes, at a later point.

Ms. Selman: I would Sir and I do appreciate. Thank you.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6134 – National Insurance: Could the Hon. Minister state why, even though there has been an increase in staffing, there is a reduction in the amounts to the National Insurance Scheme (NIS)?

Mr. Gaskin: The amount reflected under the year 2015 is for January to August, which is 2/3 of the year. If we were to look at the amount under that line item for the year 2014, it is \$176,000. This year it is a \$122,000 for 2/3 of the year. I believe it is within the ballpark that one would expect.

Programme: 231- Main Office- \$340,552,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 232 – Ministry Administration - \$39,508,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister provide the designations and the emoluments of the 11 Contracted Employees?

Mr. Gaskin: The 11 contracted workers are as follows: One Principal Assistant Secretary - \$183,895; one Accounts Clerk - \$53,984; two Office Assistants - one at \$48,741 and the other at \$43,703; one Electrician - \$93,105; three Drivers/Mechanics at \$58,014, \$68,145, \$47,961, respectively; and one Telephonist - \$46,588.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6231– Fuel and Lubricants: There has been a significant decrease in that amount. Could the Hon. Minister state if this reduction is due to a reduction in the amount of vehicles within the Ministry and could he also state the amount of vehicles and how many are serviceable?

Mr. Gaskin: The reduction in the amount of fuel came about because this is fuel that is used for the generator. That generator was filled before the beginning of the year and we have not utilised all the fuel that was in it.

Regarding vehicles, there are no vehicles under that Programme.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister identify the building/buildings which was /were maintained using this budgetary provision?

Mr. Gaskin: Mr. Chairman, just the Head Office.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister indicate the number of persons who benefitted from training and the category of persons.

Mr. Gaskin: This was for the Administrative Staff and the training was in Supervisory Management, Audit, Inventory and Stores Management and Occupational Safety and Health. I do not have a list of those persons at hand, but we can certainly provide one.

Programme: 232- Ministry Administration - \$39,508,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 233 – Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs - \$70,689,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister identify the other goods and services which were purchased or procured utilising this budgetary provision?

Mr. Gaskin: These funds were used to prepare documents for the Tender Board for cadastral surveys, placing of advertisements, payment of moderator fees for live television programmes, *et cetera*.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarship): Could the Hon. Minister identify the category and number of persons who benefitted from training?

Mr. Gaskin: Staff were trained in the areas of market and product research. I can give an approximate figure – approximately four persons were trained.

Ms. Persaud: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister say which local organisations benefitted from these amounts?

Mr. Gaskin: There were two organisations: The Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission and the Small Business Bureau.

Programme: 233 – Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs - \$70,689,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

12.54 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 233 – Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs - \$235,064,000

Ms. Selman: At project code 4501500 – Industrial Development: Could the Hon. Minister provide an insight of what the project entails, which would seek to improve the infrastructure of business development in Lethem? Could the Hon. Minister provide the detailed breakdown in relation to the budgetary allocation for each aspect of the project which would enhance industrial development?

Mr. Gaskin: These are infrastructural works to an industrial estate in Lethem. This particular expenditure was for roads, drainage, drainage structures and culverts in Lethem. The Hon. Member was also asking for a breakdown of the amount spent. What I can disclose is that the contract amount was for \$183,963,042. This contract was awarded to ACAP Construction and Engineering Inc. To date, the amount spent on that contract is \$158,772,872, with a retention amount of \$18,396,304.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister say whether all the industrial plots would have been allocated and if not, where, as an agency and when would these allocations be made?

Mr. Gaskin: The plots have not been allocated as yet. In terms of when they will be allocated, I believe that we are waiting for the formulation of some clear policy as to how those plots are to be allocated. We do not seem to have benefited from a very clear policy and set of criteria. This is something that we are working to develop.

Mr. Ali: There was a public advertisement and a public process that requested project proposals and documents, has that process been abandon? What would be the outcome of those proposals that were submitted?

Mr. Gaskin: I am not sure whether the process has been abandoned, but I am advised that that process was for the Belvedere Industrial Estate. In the case of Lethem, we already have applications for that, even though we have not advertised. But like I said, pending the development of a clear policy and the establishment of a clear set of criteria that are aligned with our industrial developmental objectives, we will not be allocating any of those plots.

Mr. Ali: Could I enquire whether there is any appetite in transferring or promoting this area as a free zone?

Mr. Gaskin: I am not sure what is meant by appetite. I believe though that this is something that we will definitely be willing to examine to see if it can meet the objectives of expanding economic activities in the area for the purpose of ultimately increasing foreign earnings and increasing tax revenues.

Mr. Ali: I wish to say to the Hon. Minister that, on this side of the House we are willing to work with the Government in looking at the issue comprehensively because we believe strongly that creating a free zone in this area has tremendous benefits, not only from an economic, industrial, and manufacturing prospective, but has great potential also for tourism.

Ms. Selman: At project code 4502500 – Competitiveness Programme: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the amount of money which was spent or which will be spent to strengthen the institutional capacity to formulate and implement the national competitive strategy? Further, could the Hon. Minister say what budgetary provision has been set aside for enhanced export potential and what are some of the programmes and initiatives which would be pursued utilising the budgetary provision? Could the Hon. Minister identify the mechanism which would be employed to strengthen tourism regulation and facilitation and how much budgetary provision has been set aside to achieve this objective?

Mr. Gaskin: The amount seen here, which is \$64,109,000, has already been spent. It is not money that we are proposing to spend. The breakdown of that expenditure is as follows: The \$13,949,075 went towards the digitisation of the Deed Registry; \$20,454,660 went towards purchasing equipment for that project; \$8,935,098 was expended on civil works to the former NBS (New Building Society) building for use by the Deed Registry; \$7,460,845 was spent on the implementation of the Doing Business Action Plan, which involves consultancies to review laws that affect the processing of business start-ups; \$2,044,828 went into the production of television programmes for the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS) communication campaign; \$10,766,825 was used to fund the management of the project; and \$497,665 is currently being expended on a project evaluation.

Ms. Selman: At project code 4502800 – Rural Enterprise Development: Could the Hon. Minister say how much moneys were spent or will be spent in relation to payment for call centres at Tuschen and Enmore? Could the Hon. Minister say how many persons have benefited or will benefit from job opportunities and employment as a result of these call centres? Could the Hon. Minister provide a detailed breakdown of how the budgetary allocation will be spent on chip processing machines, factory, staff buildings and all the other aspects of the project identified in that project profile? Finally, could the Hon. Minister say whether the budgetary provision for consultancy takes into account the Hinterland Tourism Development Plan? If it does, how much of the budgetary provision will be spent on that? If it does not, what does consultancy entail?

Mr. Gaskin: The consultancy that was referred to by the Hon. Member is for the design and the supervision of the contract awarded for the construction of the two call centres. The contract amounts for the two call centres at Enmore and Tuschen are \$106 million and \$114 million, respectively. The two plantain chip factories - one is located at Leguan and the other in Wakenaam - the contracts were awarded for the construction of those chip factories at \$53 million each. A contract was also awarded to procure the machinery and equipment for the production of those plantain chips and that award was for \$21,240,000. I believe that makes up approximately \$380,000,000 in contracts that were awarded for that project.

Mr. Ali: I think that there was one additional aspect in terms of the jobs that would be created. Could I ask the Hon. Minister how advance are the negotiations are with the various providers of call centre services, in relation to the operations and management of the facilities?

Mr. Gaskin: It is a little difficult for me to give a very accurate projection of the amount of jobs that these projects will create. However, the call centres are expected to employ a maximum of 300 persons at each location. To date, there has been no negotiations *per se* with any operator regarding the operation of those two call centres. We have had an expression of interest, but no formal proposal.

1.09 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Again, I thank the Hon. Minister. In effort to help and advance the process of development, I would not mention the names of any company or individual because of the

confidentiality clause. But I want say to the Hon. Minister that I am aware of negotiations that went to a level that was close to finality. There were counterproposals and proposals exchanged in the relation to the management and operations of these two call centres. There were also assessments done by the company. So just an advice to the Hon. Minister, maybe we may want to pursue the notes of that discussion, in the interest and benefit of Guyana. Thank you.

Programme: 233- Commerce, Industry and Consumer Affairs – \$235,064,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 22 Ministry of Tourism

Current Expenditure

Programme: 221 - Policy Development and Administration – \$60,244,000

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There is the budgeted amount of \$1,823,000. Previously, the Hon. Minister had stated that the amount of \$10,000 was for the fuel for the generators. Could the Hon. Minister state here, under this line item, if any vehicles will be covered under this amount.

Minister of Tourism [Mrs. Hughes]: Yes, Hon Member, there are seven vehicles that are going to be covered here. They are actually distributed between the Ministry of Tourism, itself, the Guyana Tourism Authority and also the Arthur Chung Conference Centre.

Ms. Selman: Line items 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings and 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: For Maintenance of Buildings, could the Hon. Minister identify the buildings which were earmarked for maintenance. Secondly, could the Hon. Minister say what other infrastructure has been identified for maintenance in relation to line item 6255.

Mrs. Hughes: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: That is mainly for our new location which is in Colgrain House. The funds cater for purchase of electrical fixtures and fittings to make it compliant with the electrical regulations, internal plumbing, changing of toilet fittings and also replacement of doors and locks.

Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Actually that is split between the Head Office and the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. That is for replacing doors and windows in the

Chinese quarters, which is external to the building - that is at the Arthur Chung Conference Centre

Ms. Selman: Line item 6284 – Others: Could the Hon. Minister provide a list of the other goods and services which are captured under this line item.

Mrs. Hughes: Yes Hon. Member. Under that line item, it caters for the purchasing of curtains for the office, to create a comfortable and friendly work environment; advertising for security and also advertising for staff vacancies; refurbishing of cabinets and furniture to ensure the proper storage of records; and accommodation for the staffs.

Mr. Ali: The Hon. Minister mentioned advertising for security, under line item 6281 – Security Services, \$7,287,000, is that service acquired as yet, because I am aware that the Ministry has already moved.

Mrs. Hughes: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Is in fact security for the Arthur Chung Conference Centre. The new location that we are at right now has the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority Office in there still; they have not totally moved out. The security there that is what they have provided, so we will need to get our own.

Mr. Ali: Is the Hon. Minister saying that the allocation, under line item 6281 –Security Service, \$7,287,000, would be for a new security service that would complement, add or would it replace, what exist at the new location. The Hon. Minister just mentioned that there is already security there provided by the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority. What would be the purpose of this allocation under this head?

Mrs. Hughes: Hon. Member, the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority, when they move, will take their security. Therefore, we would need to put in place our own facility.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6291 – National and Other events: Could the Hon. Minister state which events these will be and the cost attached to each event.

Mrs. Hughes: Hon. Member I could give you the events, but I do not have the breakdown of the cost. I can promise to get that to you as soon as possible. The events will be familiarisation trips to the Orealla Regatta, the Diwali Motorcade, New Amsterdam Town Day, Tourism Awareness

Month, the Annual Christmas Tree Light Up, the Annual Christmas Tree Jamboree, also, the funds caters for the promotion of cultural diversity among the staff.

Mr. Ali: Would any of these resources be used for preparatory work for the annual Guyana Festival, if there are any plans of having one.

Mrs. Hughes: We do not have any plans between now and the end of the year, which is the period this budget covers, for the Guyana Festival, but we are looking at next year's 50th Anniversary and that, quite possibly, could come as part of that entire package.

Mr. Ramson: I did not get an undertaking from the Hon. Minister on whether she would share the quantum awarded to these specific agencies that the subventions are going to be made in relation to, the specific line item 6291 – National and Other events. I am sure that the Hon. Minister would, no doubt, share that information with us.

Mrs. Hughes: I think I said I would more than happy to do it.

Mr. Ramson: I am most grateful. On the second question that I have, I have noticed that there are 26 Contracted Employees. Could the Hon. Minister say whether any Contracted Employee has been employed from May until now or whether it caters for any additional staff as well?

Mrs. Hughes: Hon. Member, these are staff that existed before; there have been no new additions. Sorry, did you have another aspect to the question that I missed?

Mr. Ramson: No, that was it, thank you.

Mrs. Hughes: Okay, thank you.

Mr. Ali: Could the Hon. Minister say whether there is any pooling of common services between the Ministry of Investment and the Ministry of Tourism? I am seeing the Permanent Secretary being the Technical Advisor for both Ministers. This is welcomed. I just want to confirm whether there was any pooling of technical staffs and resources.

Mrs. Hughes: Thank you for that observation. It highlights the challenge that we had been working with. We have, in fact, been sharing our Permanent Secretary (PS), but hopefully by 1st September, 2015, we will be able to regularise that.

Programme: 221- Policy Development and Administration – \$60,244,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 222 - Tourism Development – \$72,093,000

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister say if this amount budgeted here is in collaboration with the amounts that would have been paid for the two agencies mentioned before.

Mrs. Hughes: This specifically is for the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA).

Mr. Ramson: Follow-up to that question: It is the Guyana Tourism Authority Board - I have noticed that in the previous year the Ministry has had a \$123 million allocation, which was in 2014. Now, the Ministry is going to have in total, if you are taking the allocation from the Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce which would have ended in August, to the new allocation under your Ministry, Hon. Minister. This is \$72 million which would take the total to about \$150 million. Could the Hon. Minister please account for the addition \$30 odd million.

Mrs. Hughes: Yes, Hon. Member, you are absolutely correct. The additional \$30 million is for the implementation of the marketing plan. To give you an idea of what we will be doing there; it is the attendance at trade shows, the America Bird Expo and World Travel Market. It also includes the production of advertising and print and non-print advertisement, *World Travel Market* Catalogue, *Guyana Where and What*, the *Explore Guyana* magazine, the *Bird Watch Magazine*, the 50th Anniversary jubilee celebrations, advertising in Caribbean Airlines, all these are vehicles that we want to utilise to promote the destination Guyana. It also involves the production of collateral materials, booklets, sales manuals, copies of *Explore Guyana*, checklist, posters, accommodation guide and also the production of a few souvenirs, which we take to quite a few of our trade expositions. Those include things like pens, bags, a lot of figurines, key chains, umbrellas, Universal Serial Bus (USB) flash drives.

1.24 p.m.

It also includes our plans for local events initiatives like welcome at the Airports when there are large groups of people arriving at a specific time, example at Mashramani time. In this case, it

would be like the motor racing, the Rockstone Fish Festival and the Rupununi Expo; all of those costs are packaged into that area.

Mr. Ramson: While I have no difficulty with the increase - in fact, I am happy with the increase for the tourism sector - this is more than just information sharing; it is also about accountability and, so, I respectfully request the Hon. Minister to share the exact information on the quantum, the amounts, the awards, the intention to grant contracts to do printing and production, *et cetera*.

Mrs. Hughes: I can give the breakdowns if you need it.

Mr. Ramson: In the interest of time, it may be better if you share it.

Mrs. Hughes: Okay, I have it here. I will give it to you after.

Programme: 222 – Tourism Development – \$72,093,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 223 – Consumer protection - \$32,154,000

Mr. Gill: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I note that, from the previous Ministry, an amount of \$20.1 million was allocated to the Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission from the \$177 million project, from the same line item, and an additional amount of \$23.5 million under the current Ministry for the rest of the year was allocated. Could the Hon. Minister say whether the total amount allocated for the Competition and Consumer Affairs Commission for 2015 is totalled at \$43.6 million and whether she is satisfied that the sector is getting value for money?

Mrs. Hughes: The total of the \$43.6 million is correct. I think that the sector is getting value for money. We are actually in the process of hiring some staff in the next couple of weeks. You may have seen advertisements in the newspapers and, of course, as you would know, the focus of the Commission is certainly to ensure that we can serve the public and look at issues such as price fixing, competition law and price dominance. I think we are justified in what we are doing.

Ms. Persaud: Under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees – we see that there are five persons as contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister say if these persons are already working within the Ministries, when they were appointed and the areas in which they were appointed?

Mrs. Hughes: There are six employees. There was one addition recently. They are broken down as a Consumer Affairs Officer, three Research Assistants, a Research Analyst and the Head of the Department, which would make it seven.

Ms. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister state their emoluments?

Mrs. Hughes: The Researcher Analyst - \$76,464; the second one – 72,823; the Research Assistants - \$58,014, \$50,300 and 58,000; and the Consumer Affairs Officer - \$76,464.

Mr. Ramson: The Hon. Minister may want to consider whether the Consumer Protection Department might rightly and properly come under the Ministry of Business since it is specifically dealing with protection of consumers and regulations of business practices of that nature. While I am not questioning a specific line item, I would respectfully request that the Minister considers this entirely.

Programme: 223 – Consumer protection - \$32,154,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 221 – Policy Development and Administration - \$7,800,000

Programme: 221 – Policy Development and Administration - \$7,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme: 222 – Tourism Development - \$2,000,000

Programme: 222 – Tourism Development - \$2,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 223 - Consumer Protection - \$5,600,000

Ms. Selman: Project code 4402400 – Competition and Consumer Protection Commission: Could the Hon. Minister provide the detailed breakdown of how the moneys will be spent on the three aspects of the project outlined in the project profile, reference 81?

Mrs. Hughes: Hon. Member, I can tell you what is included in the amount. It is completion of the building, provision of parking area and partition walls and rebuilding the walkway. This Building is located in the National Exhibition Centre site area in Sophia and, when it rains, it gets extremely flooded so that is why we are building up the walkway. There is purchase of tables, desk, air-conditioning units, chairs and stabilisers.

I do not know if you require a costing or further breakdown of those or if that explanation will suffice.

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Madam Minister. I have read the project profile and what I am requesting is the budgetary breakdown of how the moneys will be spent on each aspect of the project as outlined here.

Mrs. Hughes: I can promise to have that for you.

Mr. Ali: The Hon. Minister mentioned the Sophia Exhibition Complex. Earlier, we were advised that the Sophia Exhibition Complex falls under the Ministry of Business, notwithstanding the fact that there are agencies that are accommodated in the Sophia Exhibition Complex. In terms of walkways, drains and so on, would it not be better if capital provisions were made under the Ministry of Business to facilitate infrastructural works like these?

Mrs. Hughes: Hon. Member, this is an important temporary measure. I think you might have heard that I have raised the suggestion that we want to work towards moving the Guyana Tourism Authority (GTA) and eventually...

Mr. Ali: [*Inaudible*]

Mrs. Hughes: Thank you. I appreciate your support.

Programme: 223 - Consumer Protection - \$5,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I thank you. We have arrived at that point where we can take the suspension. When we return, we will, eventually, if not immediately after our return, be looking at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC).

I want to make two observations and seek your assistance in that regard. Our Standing Orders prohibits the use of cell phones in this Chamber. I ask Members to remember that.

1.38 p.m.

Secondly, it was brought to my attention this morning that persons, taking advantage of their presence in the Chamber, took photographs unbeknown to the persons whose images were being captured. They took photographs of Members in this Chamber. And persons have posted them on Facebook. I believe the freedom must also be tempered with responsibility and restraint.

Members, I think it is a good time to suspend and we will return one hour from now.

Sitting suspended at 1.39 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 2.40 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 46 Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation

Current Expenditure

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital – \$3,951,460,000

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, at line item 6116 – Contracted Employees - the number of contracted employees has declined by 22. Could the Hon. Minister state the positions or designations of those persons?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask the Hon. Member if he could allow us to provide this at a later date.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the answer from the Hon. Minister.

Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister say to us what are the items and quantities that were purchased under this heading?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I can openly say that, in the broadest terms, there were pharmaceuticals, dialysis supplies, radiological supplies and laboratory for orthopaedics and medical, but I would have to provide the quantities at a later date to the Hon. Member.

Dr. Mahadeo: Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the drugs and medical supplies that are being bought from line item 6221 fall within the essential drugs list as prepared by the Ministry of Health?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, this is prepared from a Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation list as well as a Ministry referral hospital list - both.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, could a copy of the list of those drugs and medical supplies be provided to us?

Dr. Norton: Yes.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: There was a reduction of about \$8 million while the number of staff moved up from 350 to 391. Could you please proffer an explanation?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Member repeat the question?

Dr. Mahadeo: Yes, Mr. Minister. There has been a decrease in the amount of money spent, \$308,225,000 as compared to \$223,875,000 in line item 6113, whilst the number of staff has increased by 41.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, it is because this sum is only supplied for eight months.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister state whether or not drugs purchased under this line item would also be used for the Linden Hospital Complex?

Dr. Norton: No.

Dr. Mahadeo: Follow-up, Mr. Chairman: Could the Hon. Minister say whether drugs and medical supplies from this head will be used in the clinics that are managed by the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Chairman, line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: There has been a drastic reduction in the sums there, from \$146,211,000 to \$82,263,000.

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the answer is, once again, the eight-month sum.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, on the same line item, could the Minister state what are the equipment that we would be maintaining and which departments? Can we get a disaggregation?

Dr. Norton: Yes, Mr. Chairman, we can do that but we would have to supply it at a later date.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Minister say which buildings would be maintained and the sums of money to be expended on each?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, we do not have this in detail but we can certainly say that the health centres that are under the control of the GPHC as well as the GPHC building itself.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6292 – Dietary: Could the Minister say whether this is a sufficient allocation for the patients of the GPHC?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, it is an affirmative.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Minister state what this line item would be used for?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, this “Other” includes payment for attendant services, computed tomography (CT) scans, airfare for Cuban and other doctors and laboratory tests done at private institutions.

Dr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, under line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships), as we know, the GPHC has expanded its ambit in training and a lot of younger doctors are being encouraged to go into postgraduate programming. The years 2013 to 2014 show that there has been an increase in the allocation and actual utilisation of this allocation exceeding the figure, so the revision warranted more in 2014.

Now, the Hon. Minister has reduced that allocation to training. Could you provide an answer to this House as to what training would be undertaken and if doctors will now have to forgo their chance at additional training with the reduced figures? Thank you.

Dr. Norton: I can, once again, mention the eight month's sum as well as the specialist area in which the training would continue – paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, emergency medicine, anaesthesia, administrative training, *et cetera*.

Dr. Persaud: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Those are programmes which have been going on for some time. I know that you would have mentioned that you have new programmes. Are those programmes catered for here or would they fall later?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the new programme would be referred to as the Family Medicine Programme.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, line item 6131 – Other Direct Labour Costs: What would that be used for? And, perhaps, he can enlighten us of which line item is used to pay the doctors who are on call at the Hospital?

Dr. Norton: This would be under overtime. The line item is 6131. The Hon. Member is asking where the on call is being paid and my answer to that is under the overtime category.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: Could the Minister say what field materials and supplies would be purchased?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, those supplies would be long boots, raincoats, umbrellas, tools and safety items.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6283 – Cleaning and Extermination Services: Could the Minister tell us the cleaning companies, the contracted sum and what areas of the Hospital are being cleaned?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, this again can be provided very soon for the Hon. Member.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say which buildings are being rented and where they are located?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I can mention the addresses of these buildings if it would satisfy the Hon. Member: 250 Thomas Street, 212 Laluni Street, 175 Middle Street, 288 Middle Street, 50 Sandy Babb Street, 16 East Courida Park, 239 Camp Street, 240 Camp Street, 196 Oronoque Street and 322 New Market Street.

Dr. Mahadeo: Follow-up, Mr. Minister: Are the buildings accommodations for doctors?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, yes, they are accommodations for doctors, visiting tutors and examiners.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Minister state what this sum would be used for?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, this would be for works done in the compound and surroundings as well as sewage and the fence.

2.54 p.m.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Again, I guess that would reflect eight months there. But how many vehicles...?

Dr. Norton: The number of vehicles is 10, including seven ambulances.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister tell us under which line item the disposal of medical waste would come?

Dr. Norton: This operation is undertaken by the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation; it is not a line item.

Dr. Mahadeo: Would the Hon. Minister say whether, although it is taken care of by the GPHC, it does not incur a cost?

Dr. Norton: This operation involves a cost but is met by the GPHC.

Dr. Mahadeo: Under which line item does it fall, Mr. Minister?

Dr. Norton: It is under line item 6272 – Electricity Charges.

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital - \$3,951,460,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital – \$59,312,000

Dr. Ramsaran: Under project code 1209900 – Buildings - Provision for maternity ward, operating theatre and ICU up to August 2015 (Transferred to Agency 43 Project Code 1216300): In the relevant project and the new Ministry, it continues. Could the Minister tell us how far this key flagship project has gone, that is, the maternity ward? How many new beds would it bring to that service? And what exactly is the maternity ward that was started a few months ago?

Dr. Norton: First, I would like to clarify for the public because I think it was deliberately said that this extension caters for 100 beds and that is not true. It is 50 beds and I would like to clear that point. It is about 50% complete.

Dr. Ramsaran: I must congratulate the Minister for that. My indication is that it is 40% but I am happy that it is 50%. Mr. Chairman, through you, could we ask the Minister to tell us, besides the 50 beds, what other key facilities will be included there? Maternity ward might be a global description for the lay public. What exactly do we understand as professionals? What services would be given there besides direct maternity services?

Dr. Norton: It pleases me to inform the Hon. Member that there will be an extension, also, of the neonatal care unit as well as the operating theatre and the teaching facilities in the form of classrooms.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister say to us how many neonates would be accommodated in the new area?

Dr. Norton: I would inform the Hon. Member that the exact number is still with the planners. We have not arrived at a definite number as yet.

Dr. Ramsaran: It is good to hear that some progress is being made with the neonatal unit. However, I am certain that the Minister can wager a guess, as if it is more units or less units than the existing facility and what will happen to the existing facility that we do have now for neonatal care because this is a transformational move.

Dr. Norton: Once again, it pleases me to inform the Hon. Member that every effort will be made by this Government to improve on that neonatal unit that is in existence. We certainly will increase the number of units, that is the incubators, to its maximum.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the additional 50 beds for the maternity ward would be adequate, given that, at the GPHC, they do more than 7,000 live deliveries per year?

Dr. Norton: While it is our desire never to have again, in the maternity department, patients doubling up on one bed, we are not guessing; the 50 beds have been arrived at after evaluation and assessment.

Dr. Ramsaran: I am happy that we are getting some good answers from the Minister and I will ask that he indicates when his planners will be able to tell him, on the floor space that I think he would be having on the upper floor, how many units will be for the new wing? When will he be able to tell us this and table it in the National Assembly, since this is a huge project - \$250 million? And when is the project, which is about 40% or 50% complete, expected to be finally completed and commissioned?

Dr. Norton: That amount we can give the Member in the next two days and the exact date would be in February, 2016.

Programme: 461 – Public Hospital - \$59,312,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 47 Ministry of Health

Current Expenditure

Programme: 471 – Ministry Administration – \$675,677,000

Dr. Anthony: Hon. Minister, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see here that we have an increase of 28 new employees. Could the Minister state the designations of these new employees?

Dr. Norton: Actually, these 28 employees were really employees from the Materials Management Unit (MMU), who were inadvertently omitted.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, same line item: Could the Hon. Minister say how many of these contracted employees are being paid by the Ministry of Health, but are located in Region 6? And, could we have their designations? Thank you.

Dr. Norton: These employees were based at the Diamond Bond Centre.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could I, again, ask the question of line item 6116 – Contracted Employees? Could the Hon. Minister say whether he has any contracted workers being paid by the Ministry of Health, working in Region 6? Could I have their designations and emoluments?

Dr. Norton: We do not have anybody in Region 6 being paid by the Ministry of Health.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item 6116, the Hon. Minister informed the House that the 28 workers are from the MMU at Diamond. My questions to him are: does this satisfy the logistic requirement for getting the medicines to all of the various regions and does this staffing adequately remedy the deficit that existed?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, we are reconstructing the system that we have in place, in order to improve on what the Member commented on.

3.09 p.m.

Bishop Edghill: I am happy to hear that because it is one of the issues that would have come on the floor while we considered the regions. However, my follow-up question: Is there a consideration for the central procurement of drugs and what role would the 28 staff play in increasing its efficiency?

Dr. Norton: Yes, the central procurement system will remain in place and these workers will be working in the bond to improve the efficiency of the system.

Bishop Edghill: My final question on this matter, Sir... It is because the Materials Management Unit (MMU) is one of the bigger facilities there is in this country for the delivery of goods and services, quite a lot of expenditure is entailed there. As it relates to the structure, do we have qualified, trained and experienced persons managing this system? If we do, could the Minister explain to this Assembly what is the administrative structure and how that is being handled, since we know that there were consultants there before and the unit is now taken over by the locals, so to speak, we want the assurance that everything is in place?

Dr. Norton: I will like to inform the Hon. Member that the consultants are still working with us and we are still training persons to take over from them.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled: I see here there is an addition of two persons. Could the Minister state their designations and emoluments?

Dr. Norton: There is a new warehouse manager appointed and another technical person.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, could I ask the Hon. Member on line item 6272, Electricity Charges, if he has included the MMU under Programme 471, how is there a electricity bill dropped? The MMU, as far as I know, consumes quite a lot of electricity. Could you enlighten us please, Sir.

Dr. Norton: It is once again the pleasure to inform the Hon. Member that this caters for the eight-month period.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister state what drugs and medical supplies we are purchasing under this head, and the quantities?

Dr. Norton: This deals with the Food and Drug Department. We are purchasing reagents and other laboratory supplies.

Dr. Anthony: line item 6222, Field Material and Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what he is using this allocation for?

Dr. Norton: It is for consumables for the laboratory services.

Dr. Anthony: Could you give us the breakdown of which laboratories we are talking about?

Dr. Norton: It is for the Food and Drug Department.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321, under Fuel and Lubricants, there is a moderate increase. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if this caters for the fleet of vehicles for the distribution of drugs from the MMU throughout the country. If that is so, how many trucks are available? Do we have an adequate amount of vehicles for the management and logistics of getting drugs across the country?

Dr. Norton: Part of the restructuring of the MMU is to look at outsourcing this specific operation.

Bishop Edghill: Am I to understand, Sir, that it is not catered for here?

Dr. Norton: At the moment there are three trucks available.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister state which buildings will be maintained under this heading and can he disaggregate the sums?

Dr. Norton: It will entail the head office of the Ministry of Public Health, the MMU, the centre at Kingston and the Diamond Hospital. Just let me finish. With respect to disaggregating the amount we can supply that shortly.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, it is if you may allow me a question. Mr. Minister, going back to line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, and linking it with Senior Technical, line item 6112 and 6113, you mentioned the consultancy which we know is far advanced. There was some indication, as the discussion was going on a few hours ago when we looked at the regions, that there are logistical issues with drug supply. The consultancy would have indicated that it would be desirable to hire ten persons, that is one for each region, who would be directed by the MMU, that is centrally, to go and get done the job of quantifying what number of drugs is needed in a particular region, each region having one person, and keep things timely in terms of submission. That, I suppose, can be implemented, because it was about to be implemented. How far have you been able to add to the Other Technical and Craft Skill or Senior Technical in regard to providing the system with the ten support staff to be attached to the regions but being centrally managed, to bring in pure, better information, to solve the logistical problems of drug supply?

Dr. Norton: I will inform the Hon. Member that that system is well advanced. The persons are identified and almost ready to go out into the regions.

Dr. Anthony: Coming back to line item 6221 or 6222, in the Minister's previous answer he mentioned that we will be buying mostly reagents for the Food and Drug Administration Department. I am also wondering, for the National Public Health Institute, whether reagents necessary for the laboratory would be purchased from this head as well.

Dr. Norton: Yes, but it is not under this programme.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I am inclined to put the question after the next three questions.

Dr. Ramsaran: I will take just one, Mr. Chairman. I will be generous with my colleagues. Mr. Minister, could you - it is about one year now that the consultancy has been looking at the ten positions - when will they be advertised and under what heading will they be falling under staffing details? We eagerly look forward to the advertising quickly because this has been a work in progress for about eight months. It is not a fresh start.

Dr. Norton: I am pleased to inform the Hon. Member that those positions are already advertised and they will under Programme 1.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6322, Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister say why we continue to pay Caribbean Food and Nutrition Institute (CFNI)?

Dr. Norton: Just to inform the Hon. Member that it is very much a part of us and continues to assist us in many ways.

Dr. Anthony: Hon. Minister, would it not be fair to say that it has been reabsorbed into the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)? There are a number of international organisations, which I see, that we are paying subsidies to which they have now being part of the regional body. It has been absorbed into one umbrella body but, yet, we have, in our allocation, separate funding for each of those. Perhaps we might need to change it.

Dr. Norton: I am happy to let the Hon. Member know that we have noted his suggestion, and that even though the organisations are affiliated to CARPHA, that is the body, they still exist independently.

Mr. Chairman: The last question Hon. Member.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I note that there are a number of local organisations listed here, for example, the Central Board of Health and the Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association. In the first part of the year a sum of money was listed but for the rest of the year there is no provision for them. Is it that we would not be giving them any subsidies in the future?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, it is that we have already paid them.

Programme: 471 – Ministry Administration – \$675,677,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 472 – Diseases Control - \$337,077,000

Mr. Seeraj: I have noticed in the staffing details, line item 6116, that there has been an increase of some 40 contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister say if this is a reversal of their stated policy not to encourage contracted workers?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, this is a transition of absorbing persons who were on the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) and the Global Fund. We are now absorbing them into our system.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up on the same line item, line item 6116. I think what the Hon. Minister is explaining to the Assembly is that the workers being absorbed were workers who were on specific programmes that were funded by international organisations. These workers are now coming into the public service properly. Why not put them on the establishment? Why are them being contracting?

3.24 p.m.

Dr. Norton: Those persons were there before 2015.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6292, Dietary, \$743,000, under Budget 2015 and the total allocation in 2014 was \$1 million. Using the Minister's explanation, given to the other members, he would have said that the budget is a two-part budget, which is correct. Line item 6292, under Disease Control, has for September to December \$2,868,000, so it is a 200% increase on the allocation for 2014. Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase?

Dr. Norton: It is for the support of the tuberculosis (TB) patients, encouraging them to come to the clinic by offering them the indifferent incentives, such as diets and so on.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Yesterday we heard from the Hon. Minister Bulkan that the Linden Hospital Complex medical supplies were being supplied centrally from the Ministry of Health. Could the Minister say whether this line item is the one being used to supply the Linden Hospital Complex?

Dr. Norton: The answer is no.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister state which line item we are using to supply the Linden Hospital Complex?

Dr. Norton: It is in Programme 474.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister state what are the drugs being purchased here, the quantity and for which programmes we are using this?

Dr. Norton: These are supplies for the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), TB, chronic diseases and reagents for the reference laboratory and malaria.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6294, Other: While the revised Budget 2014 reflected \$22,458,000, for the first eight months of the year, the allocation is zero. When the allocation is looked at for the remaining four months of the year, it is \$64,236,000. Could the Hon. Minister help us to understand the allocation?

Dr. Norton: This is all in preparation of the step survey and the chronic diseases.

Mr. G. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, it is a follow-up. Hon. Minister, could you say what is the expenditure that would normally take place under line item 6294, so that we did not need any such expenditure for the first eight months of the year, Sir.

Dr. Norton: That is specifically for this programme, the step survey, but it started in the latter half of the year.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, it is just for clarification Sir. Under line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, when my colleague the Hon. Dr. Anthony asked this question, we were told that these drugs and supplies were specific specialised intent, the HIV/AIDS and other reagents. Sir, there is a significant decrease from \$501 million in 2014 to just \$59,558,000 in 2015. Is there a scaling down of this programme and what would have led to such significant decrease in expenditure?

Dr. Norton: Once, again, I would beg to inform the Hon. Member that it is the first eight months.

Bishop Edghill: If we spent \$501 million in 12 months..., and this is an ongoing programme, because we spent in 2013, \$458 million on the same item. If for the first eight months in 2015, we have only spent \$59 million logically there is either a scaling down of the programme or there is something that is significantly impacting the programme. I would like to elicit from the Minister those explanations.

Dr. Norton: If we should look under Programme 432, Disease Control, you will see that there is an increase actually in the overall sum that is attached to that line item.

Bishop Edghill: I am lost, Sir. We are dealing with a particular line item and you are referring me to Programme 432.

Dr. Norton: This is happening because we are only doing the procurement in the latter part of the year.

Bishop Edghill: Okay.

Dr. Anthony: Perhaps the Minister would be able to lay over to us the drugs and medical supplies and the quantities that would be purchased under this line item. I would like to move to

line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships), could the Minister say who will be trained under this line item, the speciality?

Dr. Norton: This is basically training of internal health care workers.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, it is if you will allow me to ask another question of the Minister. Coming back to line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, I would like to indicate that the Ministry of Health recently has to take more and more of the burden of TB, HIV/AIDS and malaria. Following the question of Mr. Edghill, obviously something is wrong here, the decline from \$501 million to \$59 million it should have been a significant increase since we have taken this burden over from these agencies.

If it is not here, where is it and this is the first question?

If I go back to the comments the Minister made two questions ago concerning non-communicable diseases. He indicated that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are on the front burner, where is the provisions for the recently created Presidential Commission on the prevention and control of NCDs, which was quickly upscale to become the Presidential Commission on the prevention and control of NCDs and mental health. Where is that included, especially if under others and you have now reduced others under line item 6294 to zero? If I remember Minister, the Minister of Finance significantly took out the Non-Communicable Diseases Commission as one of the main armaments in the fight against disease of the Government, continuing from the previous administration.

Dr. Norton: I humbly beg to ask the Hon. Member to do the maths. It is \$59 million then add it to Programme 432 and the Member will end up with a total of \$541 million as compared to that of \$501 million.

Dr. Ramsaran: This will be the last question on this item, Mr. Chairman. What I am indicating is that life in vaccination programme, the foreign agencies are releasing to us. We have grown to what is called a middle level income country. Therefore even that amount, which is seen as an increase, I am suggesting, or would say to the Minister, that this is not enough to take for TB, HIV/AIDS, malaria plus the vaccination programme which we are being forced to absorb as we have been able to raise the economy over the past few years. I am suggesting... and I recognised

that there is a second new Ministry, having integrated those two figures, does the Minister think that this is still enough due taking into consideration what I have reiterated, TB, HIV/AIDS and malaria which are powerful big programmes, plus there are 16 antigens for the vaccine programme which is about number one in the world, over the past few years in Guyana?

Dr. Norton: Our budget will never be enough but what I can say to the Hon. Member is that we are not pulling figures out of the sky. We are trying as much as we could to present a budget that we can afford and to some extent I might agree that, yes, we can do with more in this particular area but this is what the budget can offer.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, under this programme I suspect that the NCDs and mental health were put on the front burner in recent months, especially from the 10th October, World Mental Health Day, last year. Where are the provisions for the roll out of the programme that came out of that, the National Mental Health Action Plan for this year which is supposed to go until 2020? Otherwise this is a significant omission I suggest to the Minister because mental health had been put on the front burner by the previous administration. Where is that? The Minister made a slip because he did not give me the answer?

Dr. Norton: We have a specific subvention under Agency 43 for mental health.

Dr. Anthony: Under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister state which local organisation and what they would be doing with the almost \$10 million that have been allocated and whether the Ministry has been in receipt of a report from this board?

Dr. Norton: Under Programme 2, there are subventions to the Guyana Cancer Society and the Guyana Chest Society.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member Ganga Persaud, you had wanted the floor.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: You will be the last speaker on this item.

3.39 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Follow up on line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Minister, the allocation is \$16,910,000, in comparison to 2014 when it was \$10,482,000. You have named the three organisations, Hon. Minister, based on the question you responded to a few minutes ago. Is there any particular reason why those were the same three organisations that you would have increased the subsidies or is it that you would have added any other organisation to the list of receiving subsidies from this item?

Mr. Chairman: Does the Hon. Minister wish to respond to the question?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the answer to that question is the Cancer Board.

Programme: 472 – Disease Control –\$337,077,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 473 – Primary Health Care Services - \$542,991,000

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what he will be buying with line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies?

Dr. Norton: This will be mostly vaccines because we are taking over from Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization (GAVI) – the vaccine alliance.

Dr. Anthony: Under this heading, it is Primary Health Care Services and the sum here, under line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, could the Minister say what amount would be spent on vaccines? What other drugs and medical supplies would be purchased from this head? I come back to a question which I keep asking, and that is, whether the medical supplies to the Linden Hospital Complex, will be funded from this heading.

Dr. Norton: The other items, apart from vaccines, would be dental supplies and contraceptives. The Linden Hospital Complex is not supplied by this programme.

Dr. Anthony: The Ministry of Health, I think, has an essential package of services that are offered at various levels of the health system and at the health centres and health posts. It has an essential package that is normally offered there. Could the Minister say how this heading would help in offering those services? Whether the drugs needed as stipulated by that essential health

package, whether they be bought from this heading? It is not only contraceptives and the vaccines; there are other services.

Mr. Chairman: I should now put the question. The Minister has to reply.

Dr. Norton: The PBGS, which the Hon. Member referred to, does not necessarily provide the medical supplies. What it does is it outlines the programme, what is supposed to be delivered by the different levels of health centres.

Programme: 473 – Primary Health Care Services –\$542,991,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 474 – Regional and Clinical Services - \$4,049,215,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Under the programme Regional and Clinical Services, line item 6116, Contracted Employees, could the Hon. Minister say whether there are any contracted employees in Region 6 who are being paid by the Ministry of Health?

Dr. Norton: The answer is in the affirmative.

Dr. Mahadeo: A follow-up Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Member provide us with the names, designations and the emoluments of these contracted workers?

Dr. Norton: The contracted workers, there are several doctors and nurses.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister state why there is a reduction in the amount of contracted employees by 286, in line item 6116?

Dr. Norton: This number really should have been 841 instead of 541. It is because we did not include the worker from Linden.

Dr. Anthony: There is a mistake here. I guess they will have to correct that. Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister state what drugs and medical supplies would be purchased by this line item and whether or not the Linden Hospital Complex would be getting medication from this line item?

Dr. Norton: Yes, Linden Hospital Complex is included here and it is the essential drug list that it will be using.

Dr. Jagan: Could I ask the Hon. Minister to say, if there is any, how much budgetary allocations have been made in the field of dental health care in Guyana?

Dr. Norton: Dental health care is under Programme 3.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, if I may, line item 622, Drugs and Medical Supplies, I heard the Hon. Minister say that the essential drugs list will be used to purchase medications under this heading. Mr. Minister, how are you going to cater for the special drugs needed for the National Psychiatric Hospital?

Dr. Norton: It is essential drugs plus other drugs.

Dr. Ramsaran: There is one more question. Now, Mr. Minister, I am certain that you stick to the philosophy of “more services to more people by more specialists at more times.” I would note that, for example under line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, there has been a significant inflation. I suspect that those are many of the doctors returning, the so-called “Jagdeo’s scholars”, and others. However, the outreach activities have to be supported by more field materials and supplies, line item 6222, more fuel and lubricant, so that the medical outreaches can go out. Mr. Minister, although I have noted some increase when the two are united, that is the original Ministry and the new Ministry. This is not commensurate with the large army of new doctors, that is there, and the commitment to take them for primary health care further down. When the fuel bill is not adequate to support the activities, more outreaches, is that so? Do you think so?

Dr. Norton: The commitment is there. I would like to, however, inform the Hon. Member that it is not doctors who are accounted for the increase but nurses, much more so. With respect to the other items he referred to, it is once again on the eight-month period that we are dealing with.

Mr. Chairman: This is your last question.

Dr. Ramsaran: Thank you. I recognise your indulgence, Mr. Chairman. I have summated both and they are just slightly more than the original. What I am saying is that there are more nurses

which the Minister has spoken to. The Minister can identify where there are the 100 more doctors somewhere, and that gives an army for this primary health care drive. Would the Minister accept this as a question? Do we need to have more fuel and lubricants? Do we need to have more field supplies to be able to support that army? While even understanding that I have recognised - I have summated the two - it comes up just about the same thing as last year, whereas, we are getting more doctors every year. I think there are about 500 new doctors now. Where are they residing in this programme?

Dr. Norton: While I agree fully with the Hon. Member, our aim is to improve on the efficiency of the utilisation of these materials and fuels, so that we will get that output that we are hoping to, and we know that is necessary.

Programme: 474 – Regional and Clinical Services - \$4,049,215,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education - \$312,228,000

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister explain why at line item 6116, Contracted Employees, there has been a decline by 15?

Dr. Norton: It really should be 22 instead of eight. It is the inclusion of the staff from the Charles Rosa School of Nursing in Linden.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Could the Minister state who will be trained under this line item, maybe the specialities that we are looking at, the programmes that we have for training under this line item? How many persons we intend to train this year?

Dr. Norton: This line item deals with all the paramedical training that is there, including nurses and it is the payment of their stipend.

Dr. Anthony: Maybe the Minister can perhaps later share with us a document giving us the various programmes and how many persons were trained this year. I would like to ask, Sir, another question and that is, at the regional level, the on call for doctors, I think, varies from that of Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation. Is there any move to make sure that the doctors on call at a regional hospital would be the same as those at the national hospital?

3.54 p.m.

Dr. Norton: Could the Hon. Member kindly repeat the question?

Dr. Anthony: When doctors are on call at the regional hospitals, they receive a different on-call fee than that of Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC). The Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation is more. Is there any move to make sure that the persons who are serving at the regional hospitals would receive the same sums of moneys on-call as those doctors at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation?

Dr. Norton: While I agree that this is something that we should consider and strive to get them on the same level, we must never that the Georgetown Public Hospital is a corporation and can decide differently. Besides, it is the main referral centre in the country; it is the tertiary level institution. The level of care should be superior to that in the other areas.

Bishop Edghill: Line Item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: This has been a matter under consideration on several of these discussions - procurement of drugs and medical supplies. To note that the aggregated total that we will be spending this year, on pages 22-23, is \$5,496,240,000, which is almost a \$300 million increase over the expenditure for last year.

This matter has been one of ensuring value for money. We have heard all the various things about inappropriate procedures for the procurement, I would like to have the Hon. Minister respond to me by indicating to this House, what new measures would be put in place to ensure, as promised to the nation of Guyana, people get value for money in the procurement of drugs, especially since in 2015 we will be spending \$300 million more aggregated as against 2014.

Dr. Norton: Just to let the Hon. Member know that we are in a process of a total revision of the procurement system.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, am I to understand that the procurement in 2015, with these sums allocated, would have to await that revision, which will definitely not be in time for the procurement of drugs in 2015? The Ministry has to keep procuring, so we are anticipating some changes for 2016.

Mr. Chairman: Does the Hon. Minister wish to respond to the last question?

Dr. Norton: I beg that the Hon. Member be direct with his question so that I can understand.

Programme: 475 - Health Sciences Education - \$312,228,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 476 - Standards and Technical Services - \$408,505,000

Dr. Anthony: Line Item 6221- Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister tell us what he will be buying - again the list of drugs and the quantities?

Dr. Norton: This is mainly for the National Blood Bank.

Mr. Hamilton: Line Item 6116 – Contracted Employees – Standard and Technical, there is an increase of 13 employees. When one looks at the expenditure, it has just increased by some \$600,000 or there. Could you clarify, Hon. Minister?

Dr. Norton: The increase by 13 contracted employees is the transition of workers from the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to the National Blood Bank.

Mr. Hamilton: The point I am making is that, there is not a commensurate increase of the allocation. With 17 employees in 2014, what was utilised was \$28,211,000 and with the addition of 13 employees the Ministry just have \$28,818,000 which is just an increase of about \$600,000 or there about.

Dr. Norton: These workers came on at different times of the year, not January.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: Could the Hon. Minister say whether these pieces of equipment would include those in the region?

Dr. Norton: Yes, it involves the equipment in the region.

Dr. Anthony: Going back to line item 6221, the Hon. Minister stated that this is for the purchase of reagents dealing with the National Blood Bank. My question is, about two weeks ago there was spoilage of blood products in Region 2, was that as a result of shortage of blood reagents? What was the problem? Why did we have spoilage of blood products in Region 2?

Dr. Norton: While I inform the Hon. Member that it is regrettable that that happened, we are in the process of investigating exactly why that took place.

Mr. Hamilton: Line Item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: Firstly, could the Hon. Minister confirm that this includes bio-medical equipment?

Dr. Norton: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hamilton: Follow-up question: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House who are the contracting companies that will be giving this service to the Ministry?

Dr. Norton: The contracting company is Meditron Scientific Sales.

Programme: 476 – Standards and Technical Services - \$408,505,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services - \$206,533,000

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister tell us what is the sum given to the local organisations at line item 6321? What are these organisations doing with this sum of money? What are their activities and maybe if he has a report?

Dr. Norton: The organisations are the Ptolemy Reid Rehabilitation Centre and the National Commission of Disability (NCD).

Programme: 477 – Rehabilitation Services - \$206,533,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 474 – Regional and Clinical Services - \$74,809,000

Dr. Ramsaran: I have noticed here that there is \$17,503,000 for project closure for the Specialty Hospital Project. This is special and it is a very expensive investment. Does the Minister recall that the foundation has already been laid to the tune of over US\$4 million? Does the Minister consider that a significant?

Dr. Norton: What is the project code?

Dr. Ramsaran: This is the Specialty Hospital Project, project code 1213000, under the legend “Provision for project closure \$17,503,000”. Does the Minister recall that US\$4 million has been sunk into the flagship transformational project? Does he recall that the contractor, Surendra Engineering Company Limited had delivered measured works that was commensurate with moneys paid? Could the Hon. Minister tell us what will happen with the outstanding or remaining moneys from the Indian line of credit?

The other question is: I see nowhere in the Estimates alternative provisions for similar services. Does it mean that we have abandoned the efforts to create such services?

Dr. Norton: We have abandoned that approach.

Dr. Ramsaran: The Minister did not indicate what will happen with the investment of US\$4 million. Are there plans for that money? By simply abandoning US\$4 million worth of piles and development of a site for a project which was taken on also by the Indian Government, which would not invest their moneys willy-nilly...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, did you want to repeat the last part of your question? If so, please do.

Dr. Ramsaran: What happens to the investment in the ground; what happens with the money; and what are the alternative programmes? That one is abandoned.

4.09 p.m.

Dr. Norton: I would like to inform the Hon. Member that an evaluation is being done to decide on the way forward with respect to this particular project.

Mr. Hamilton: At project code 1201700 – Ministry of Health – Buildings: I note that there is no allocation. Could the Hon. Minister advise us whether the Ministry of Public Health is proceeding with the construction of the office complex? I note that under building capital there is no...

Dr. Norton: I would like to inform the Hon. Member that time does not permit us to continue with that programme for this year.

Mr. Hamilton: Hon. Minister, are you indicating that in 2016, the construction of the Ministry of Public Health Complex, so that the employee would be made comfortable, would be in that...

Dr. Norton: I would like to inform the Hon. Member that we will debate that for the 2016 Budget.

Programme: 474 – Regional and Clinical Services - \$74,809,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education - \$5,502,000

Programme: 475 – Health Sciences Education - \$5,502,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 43 – Ministry of Public Health

Current Expenditure

Programme: 431 – Policy Development and Administration - \$346,214,000

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister say why, under line item 6221- Drugs and Medical Supplies, there is no allocation?

Dr. Norton: This is because this is Head Office; the drugs are not consumed there.

Dr. Anthony: At line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister say what maintenance work would be done there? Could he assist us by disaggregating the number?

Dr. Norton: This allocation is for the fencing of the Head Office, taking care of the grounds, drains, and other structures in the compound.

Dr. Ramsaran: Are you dismantling the existing fence and putting up a new fence or are you fencing another piece of property? Does the Minister of Health know that that piece of property adjoining the Ministry of Health might not be part of the Ministry of Health? The Ministry of Health has recently converted it into the Wellness Park as part of the ongoing efforts, for two

years now, to enhance the Square of the Revolution. So, which fence is it? Do we need a fence? Could we use the moneys more rationally?

Dr. Norton: The fence that we are taking about is the fence at the Kingston property.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister explain line item 6294 – Other. What are those moneys being expended on?

Dr. Norton: This is for medical treatment.

Programme: 431 – Policy Development and Administration - \$346,214,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 432 – Diseases Control - \$863,790,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Under line item 6291- National and Other Events - \$15.9 million: Could the Minister advise what national and other events would consume nearly \$16 million within the four months that we have available?

Dr. Norton: To mention: Caribbean Wellness Day, World Aids Day and other health days that the Ministry has.

Dr. Anthony: Under line item 6294 – Other: Could the Minister explain what he would be using this line item for?

Dr. Norton: This is to continue with the step survey.

Dr. Anthony: Under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister tell us which local organisation would benefit?

Dr. Norton: This is for the National Commission for the prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases.

Dr. Mahadeo: Under line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies - nearly \$21,985,000 and line item 6224 – Print and Non- Print - \$33,707,000, in addition to what was there before. Could the Hon. Minister advise us as to how the Ministry would spend these moneys within the last four months?

Dr. Norton: This is for the procurement of consumables that would take us into the New Year.

Dr. Mahadeo: A follow-up question: Could the Hon. Minister advise me on what are the kinds of consumables under feeding materials and supplies?

Dr. Norton: They are consumables for the laboratories that we have.

Dr. Anthony: Under Local Organisations: Could the Minister be kind enough to tell us who are the members of the National Commission for the prevention and control of the Non-Communicable Diseases?

Dr. Norton: That Commission is under review and we can supply the list of the members at a later date.

Programme: 432 – Diseases Control - \$863,790,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services - \$222,531,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Under line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Am I to think that the \$79.9 million would be used to purchase vaccines, Hon. Minister? If so, will these vaccines cater only for the last four months or would it go into the New Year?

Dr. Norton: That is so true, but it would not only be for vaccines. It would also be for the others that were mentioned in this category.

Dr. Mahadeo: Would it go into next year or is it only for this year?

Dr. Norton: It is possible and we hope that it does go into the next year.

Dr. Anthony: Yesterday, in our discussions here, we noticed a lot of the moneys scheduled for or appropriated for drugs and medical supplies were in the region. We were told that it would be warranted back to the central Ministry so that the Ministry could do one, central procurement. Does the Minister has within the Ministry that comprehensive list with drugs and medical supplies so that the Ministry can now go out and tender and buy those drugs?

4.24 p.m.

Dr. Norton: To let the Hon. Member know that, the whole process is under review. Of course, it is based on consumption of the past and requests, as well as the data supplied by the regions themselves. We would arrive at what we would refer to as an accurate number or quantity of medications.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contribution to Local Organisations: I see that the Ministry would be giving \$10 million to the Salvation Army. I think it is a very welcomed move. But, do we have, maybe, a service contract with the Salvation Army to assist the Ministry with drug addiction because I think that is what the programme is about.

Dr. Norton: We will be engaging the Salvation Army to evaluate the benefits we could enjoy from such a measure.

Dr. Jagan: Could the Hon. Minister says under line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies, if there are any dental supplies included into that and how much money has been allocated, please.

Dr. Norton: Yes, it is in the affirmative, but we can give him that amount at a later date.

Mr. Coal: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contribution to Local Organisations: I want us to go back to the whole aspect on the procurement of the drugs and medical supplies. Yesterday, we did raise the question with the Hon. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you speaking to this line item?

Mr. Croal: Yes Mr. Chairman. Sorry, it is line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies, the Hon. Minister he mentioned that the entire system for the procurement for the regions was under review. Yet, he has changed the allocation, provided the resources to the regions and then yesterday, we were inform that, when the procurement is going to happen, the regions would be required to warrant that money back to central Ministry of Public Health, whereby the Ministry of Public Health would be doing the central procurement. So, if the entire system is under.....

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have a question, would you put it please.

Mr. Croal: I am coming to it Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Please do not take a long time to get there.

Mr. Croal: If the entire system is under review, could the Hon. Minister indicate why they made that change now, notwithstanding that we still have issues about storage and a whole host of things, which I do not want to repeat from what we had mentioned yesterday.

Dr. Norton: This has to do with the allocation of funding.

Programme: 433 - Family Health Care Services – \$222,531,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 434 – Regional and Clinical Services – \$3,389,241,000

Mr. Seeraj: Staffing Details – line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I have noticed here Hon. Minister that you have listed employment for 541 employees by way of contract. I have noticed in the agency details, over this new Ministry proposed to employ 930 persons by way of contracts. Could the Hon. Minister say whether this is the preferred way of employment for this Ministry?

Dr. Norton: This Government inherited that situation and we certainly will be looking into that.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I have noticed \$2 billion allocated for the GPHC, if I am correct. I had asked when we were considering the GPHC about the equipment maintenance and I was told that it was for only the eight months. I do not see in the explanation at the back here, where the subsidies are listed that the Hon. Minister has equipment maintenance. Hon. Minister could you explain?

Dr. Norton: The GPHC would now enjoy a subvention.

Dr. Mahadeo: A follow-up: Yes, it is enjoying the subvention Hon. Minister, but the subvention also has a breakdown at the back here as to what it would be spent on. I do not see equipment maintenance.

Dr. Norton: It would not be reflected there.

Dr. Mahadeo: When I had asked Hon. Minister, if you could remember, when we had considered GPHC, about the amount of money that was there for equipment maintenance, you

told me it was for eight months. So where would the rest of the equipment maintenance come from.

Dr. Norton: It would be under the subvention.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister say if the hospitals at Charity and Suddie, in Region 2, have an adequate supply of snake venom injections.

Dr. Norton: We depend directly on the region to supply us with that information.

Mr. Damon: Why I said this is because we lost a life in that hospital about two months ago because there were no snake venom injections there.

Programme: 434 – Regional and Clinical Services – \$3,389,241,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 435 – Health Sciences Education – 201,535,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6291 – National and Other Events: I had summed up all the moneys under National and Other Events and it came up to over \$30 million to be spent in the next four months, that is in all the areas: Health Sciences, Regional Clinical Services and so on. Could the Hon. Minister tell me how it is going to be spent?

Dr. Norton: Apart from those that I have mentioned before, which are numerous, we also have activities for graduations and different prize giving health related activities and the national events as well.

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, could you tell me whether the annual award ceremony that the Berbice Regional Health Authority would do, that is sponsored by the business community at no cost to the Government, is included in this.

Dr. Norton: If it is at no cost to the Government it would not be included in the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Does the Hon. Minister intend to respond to the question?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I did answer the question.

Programme: 435 – Health Sciences Education – \$201,535,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 436 – Standards and Technical Services – \$231,600,000

Mr. Damon: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: Hon. Minister, when you visited the Region 2 Diagnosis Centre in Suddie, you promised to do some rehabilitation works there. Could you say how early you would start with those works - likewise the Charity Hospital?

Dr. Norton: That is not covered under this line item.

Mr. Damon: Under Equipment and Maintenance: Could the Hon. Minister say, when he would fix the equipment at the Diagnosis Centre at the Suddie Hospital

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, that does not fall under this programme.

Programme: 436 – Standards and Technical Services – \$231,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4.39 p.m.

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$83,777,000

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$83,777,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 431 - Policy Development and Administration - \$19, 858,000

Programme: 431 - Policy Development and Administration - \$19,858,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 432 – Disease Control - \$82,450,000

Dr. Anthony: Project code 2405600 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Minister explain how many boats and outboard engines will be procured and state where they will be located?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, this project code is to strengthen vector control in the different regions.

Mr. G. Persaud: Project code 2509000 – Equipment - Medical: Could the Hon. Minister share with us the names of the equipment that will be purchased and say which locations they will be deployed?

Dr. Norton: I can list some of the medical equipment and, to let the Hon. Member know, they will be placed where the disease burden is most prevalent. For instance, there is the Olympus Compound Microscope, replacement gauze, pulse oximeter, X-ray with viewing boxes, blood pressure apparatus, glucometers, microscopes, autoclaves, sluice sinks, *et cetera*.

Mr. G. Persaud: Follow-up: Hon. Minister, I agree with what you are saying that, depending on the prevalence, so you will respond with regards to equipment. But I am certain that you have a more definitive response. Where would the equipment be kept? Will all be housed centrally and then deployed or would it be better to send the equipment out where it can be used even for individual cases, rather than wait for an epidemic?

Dr. Norton: I agree with the Hon. Member. Just to let him know, for instance, under vector control, there will be the Olympus Compound Microscope, the pulse oximeter, the replacement gauze; in [*inaudible*] there will be X-ray viewing boxes; for the enhancing diseases, there will be glucometers, blood pressure apparatus; and we will have a sluice sink.

All these are for the different departments that have regional outreaches and they will decide where the equipment will be sent.

Programme: 432 – Disease Control - \$82,450,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services - \$15,600,000

Dr. Anthony: Project code 2509000 – Equipment – Medical: Could the Minister tell us the equipment that will be bought and where they will be placed?

Dr. Norton: Monitors will be placed at the Linden Hospital Complex and the West Demerara Regional Hospital; dental chairs are for the Cheddi Jagan Dental Centre and Annai, Midwifery

kits are for Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9; delivery beds are for Regions 1, 2 and 3; incubators are for Regions 1, 2, and 4; and autoclaves are for the Cheddi Jagan Dental Centre and Issano.

Programme: 433 – Family Health Care Services - \$15,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 434 – Regional & Clinical Services - \$470,314,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Project code 1216300 – Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation: Could the Hon. Minister say to us how many ambulances there are at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, how many will be procured and whether there is some degree of compatibility between what we have and what will be procured? I ask this because there are too many vehicle graveyards around.

Dr. Norton: To answer the question, we are trying to achieve compatibility with what there is presently and what was there before. With regards to the number that is there at the moment and how many are functioning at the moment, that will be provided at a later date.

Dr. Anthony: Under the same project code, with the extension of the Renal Care Centre, could the Minister tell this House if that is where the dialysis machine is and how many units are catered for?

Dr. Norton: We are still in the process of deciding how many will be put but we are hoping to get about four or five more.

Dr. Mahadeo: Previously, I know that the Ministry of Health had bought some equipment. For example, I had asked the question in Region 5 about an incubator to transfer neonates from Region 5 to Georgetown or to New Amsterdam. Previously, the Ministry of Health would have added to what the Region did not get.

I am asking, under this programme of Regional & Clinical Services, whether the Minister would have catered for some of these vital pieces of equipment that the Region, maybe, did not get in its budget.

Dr. Norton: Just to inform the Hon. Member, we have catered for that improvement.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you.

Mr. G. Persaud: Project code 2405600 – Land and Water Transport: Will the Hon. Minister say to us how many vehicles will be procured with the \$15 million and where will the vehicles be deployed?

Dr. Norton: To inform the Hon. Member, the vehicles will be earmarked for Linden and the ATVs for Regions 1, 7 and 8.

Programme: 434 – Regional & Clinical Services - \$470,314,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 435 – Health Sciences Education - \$32,902,000

Programme: 435 – Health Sciences Education - \$32,902,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 436 – Standards & Technical Services - \$21,500,000

Dr. Anthony: Project code 2509000 – Equipment - Medical: Could the Hon. Minister tell us where the equipment will be placed?

Dr. Norton: These equipment will be placed at the Blood Bank.

Programme: 436 – Standards & Technical Services - \$21,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$6,280,000

4.54 p.m.

Mr. Persaud: Thank you Mr. Chairman, project code: 2405600 – Land and Water Transport - Purchase of motorcycles: how many and for whom?

Dr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, these motorcycles would be for Regions 3 and 8.

Programme: 437 – Disability and Rehabilitation Services - \$6,280,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have completed consideration of the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation and the Ministry of Public Health. Our next item for consideration is the Ministry of Home Affairs.

I believe this may be a good time for us to take a break but, before I do, I crave your indulgence to simply repeat what I had said this morning. It may be that, when I spoke, some Hon. Members may not have been in the room. I presume that Hon. Members share the same desire, as I do, for decorum and respect for the Standing Orders in this House. And so, I would rely on Hon. Members to ensure that they would inform other Members, who may have been absent from the Chamber when I spoke concerning the use of cell phones in this building, to inform those Members as to the expectations of the Speaker.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4.57 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 6.08 p.m.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 51 Ministry of Home Affairs

Current Expenditure

Programme: 511 – Secretariat Services – \$412,531,000

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of the materials that were made available to the Forensic Laboratory under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, the items are first aid kits and drug test kits.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister give this Hon. House an indication as to what those kits are to be used for?

Mr. Ramjattan: These are first aid testing kits for the Forensic Laboratory - testing drugs.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: According to the staffing details, in 2014, there were 162 contracted employees. By 2015, there were 189 contracted employees. Could the Hon. Member give us a breakdown of how many of these contracted employees were employed from January to August, 2015?

Mr. Ramjattan: The additional from January to August is 27. But, if you want a breakdown of them all, I will do that too.

Mr. Rohee: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister provide the details with respect to the utilisation of the resources - \$13,878,000 under Other?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, it is for internet charges, advertisement, identification cards, and customs fees, washing curtains, advisory, software upgrade, Integrated Crime Information System (ICIS) and a documentary.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister provide greater details with respect to the utilisation of the resources amounting to \$30,126,000?

Mr. Ramjattan: This caters for the expenditure for the Citizens' Security Programme office, the Juvenile Holding Centre, the Community Policing Group, the Stray Catcher Unit at the Ministry and the Strategic Management Department at the secretariat.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister provide this House with information with respect to the employment of Liaison Officers, whether it is covered under this head?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, the answer to that is yes.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister give this House the number of Liaison Officers currently employed at the Ministry of Public Security, formerly the Ministry of Home Affairs?

Mr. Ramjattan: There are 11 Liaison Officers of the Community Policing Group.

Mr. Ali: Through you, Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say whether the Community Policing Group and the Stray Catching Unit are still in operation?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, yes, they are both in operation.

Mr. Ali: Through you, Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say what are the complements or sizes of human resource capacity in these two units?

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, as I have indicated, there are 11 Liaison Officers in the Community Policing Groups. Total membership for the Community Policing Groups, if that is what you are looking for, is 5,061 and they range Agricola, Moblissa, Ithaca, Kwakwani, Mahdia and Pomeroun, Essequibo Islands.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Chairman, line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister state which are the organisations that are catered for under this budgetary allocation?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, the breakdown would include the National Commission on Law and Order, the National Road Safety Council, the Parole Board, the Guyana Legion and the Gaming Authority.

Mr. Nandlall: I observe that there has been a reduction by nearly 100% from last year to this year in that budgetary allocation. Could you explain why there has been a decline?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, that is as a result of the Customs and Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU), which was under local organisations and funded from that, now being separate. The decline is then as a result of CANU being a separate programme under the Ministry as of May, 2014.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: The total allocation for 2014 was \$206,004,000. The Contracted Employees increased by 27 but the total allocation for the year 2015 increased by \$62 million. Could the Hon. Minister provide us the designations of the 27 persons, the dates they came on board and the salaries that they are receiving?

Mr. Ramjattan: The designations I have at hand but I do not have the names. I can provide you with the names. The 27 positions: 15 are Data Entry Clerks, one is an Administrative Assistant, three are Typist Clerks, two are Civil Engineers, one is a Cleaner, one is an Assistant Secretary, one is a Systems Development Officer, and three Forensic Support Officers.

Mr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether the staffing complement at the Forensic Laboratory is up to the number in accordance with the structure of the Forensic Laboratory?

6.20 p.m.

Mr. Ramjattan: I am informed and I will advise this Committee of Supply that 19 out of 21 are in place, so it is about 90%.

Mr. Rohee: The Hon. Minister is satisfied with the current staffing complement at the Forensic Laboratory.

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, we are doing a review of the Forensic Laboratory, and, in the context of that review taking some time, the 19 will hold until the review is completed.

Mr. Rohee: In respect of the Liaison Officers of the Community Policing Group, could the Minister give us the cost of the 11 Liaison Officers at the Ministry?

Mr. Ramjattan: Their salary scale each is \$75,944. Multiply that by 11 for the 12 months of the year. That will give you a fair idea of the cost.

Mr. Rohee: Mention was made, under line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, of the National Commission on Law and Order (NCLO). Could the Hon. Minister inform this House, Mr. Chairman, whether the NCLO has met for this year?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am unable to say whether it has met for this year. Since the Administration has taken over, I have not met them. That National Commission on Law and Order, too, is under review.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister say which service is providing the security service?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that it is Calibre Security Systems Ltd. and MMC Security Force.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this honourable House whether any Liaison Officer's service has been terminated at the Ministry of Home Affairs?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes, I understand that there were two of them who were terminated.

Mr. Seeraj: Hon. Minister of Public Security, line item 6281: The Guyana Police Force is seen in the country as the largest provider of security. Is it not sending a wrong signal to our population that you have to employ the services of a private security company? Is there an issue of competence?

Mr. Ramjattan: This is something I inherited and I have continued it, quite frankly.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether the Strategic Management Department at the Ministry of Home Affairs falls under line item 6294 – Other?

Mr. Ramjattan: Indeed, in the affirmative, yes.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister inform this honourable House whether the Strategic Management Department at the Ministry of Home Affairs is functioning with the full staff complement?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Seeraj: Follow-up question on the same line item 6281: Could the Hon. Minister of Public Security inform this House of the type of security services that is being contracted by the Ministry?

Mr. Ramjattan: One does monitoring and the other provides arms service at certain centres.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether the Guyana National Computer Incident Response Team (GNCIRT) is covered under line item 6294?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether the GNCIRT has a full complement of staff and what cost does it bring to the Ministry?

Mr. Ramjattan: The answer is no; there is not the full complement and we have advertised to ensure that there is the full complement.

Programme: 511– Secretariat Services - \$412,531,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 512 – Guyana Police Force – \$5,498,250,000

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House that line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies - is the line item under which feed, dogs and horses are procured by the Guyana Police Force?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House of the number of horses and dogs that have been procured by the Guyana Police Force from January to August, 2015?

Mr. Ramjattan: From January to August, no dog or horse was purchased.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: The allocation for 2014 was \$132 million. The allocation for the first eight months of this year is \$373,332,000 plus, for the remainder of the year, there is \$59,864,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain the significant increase and the purpose for which this sum was used?

Mr. Ramjattan: The significant increase is due to the printing of 502,000 redesigned machine readable passports and upgrade of security features.

Mr. G. Persaud: Follow-up: This information does not sit well with the information that was shared by the Minister of Citizenship, in this House, a few days ago.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: We note that there is an increase of four persons over 2014. Could the Minister confirm whether all 16 of those persons are civilian personnel?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes, there is the increase in the enlistment of the four members; I understand three are civilians and one might be a member of the Guyana Police Force.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6293 – Refreshment and Meals: The money that was spent on refreshment and meals from January to August was \$5.4 million, and another \$2.7 million is allocated for the rest of the year. Could the Hon. Minister explain how it is possible to provide meals and

refreshments for an additional 412 employees when the budget is exactly the same as it was last year?

Mr. Ramjattan: Well, that was the amount allocated and the Guyana Police Force has been asked to work within that amount.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): I noted that \$72.1 million was spent from January to August on training for the Guyana Police Force and another \$151.5 million is budgeted for the balance of the year, totalling \$223.6 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain to this honourable House how he expects to better prepare our young men and women in uniform to bring down the escalating crime rate when this allocation for training our brave police officers remains exactly the same as it was last year?

Mr. Ramjattan: This is the sum that we will utilise for the purposes of training. It includes both local and overseas courses and lecture fees. As to whether it is sufficient, as the Member is asking, at this stage, yes, and we are going to make more improvements next year.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Minister, line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: You indicated that the budgetary allocation covers the acquisition of horses and dogs. You also stated that, from January to August, the Ministry did not acquire already.

6.35 p.m.

We have the Minister's public commitment to acquire horses and dogs. Could the Minister tell the Assembly out of this \$68 million, from August to December, how much will be allocated for horses and dogs? How many dogs do the Ministry contemplate buying and how many horses?

Mr. Ramjattan: The item for dogs and horses, the Canine Section and other sections, would be under capital expenditure. This item is for the feeding of those horses and dogs that are presently in the police force.

Mr. Nandlall: Line items 6116 to 6117, Wages and Salaries, Mr. Minister, the Government had made a public pronouncement of a rate of increases for policemen and policewomen. I believe it was 20%. Could you say if it was catered for in those budgetary allocations? If so, what is the percentile increase in wages and salaries?

Mr. Ramjattan: The percentile increase is just 5%. [Ms. Manickchand: It is not 20%.] It is not 20% but, that is also something we are speaking to the Ministry of Finance about for 2016.

Mr. Nandlall: A follow-up on that same set of line items. Mr. Minister, you, yourself, and your Government have repeatedly stated a public intention, and commitment, to implement the recommendations of the Disciplined Forces Commission.

Mr. Ramjattan: Could the Member kindly say which line item he is dealing with?

Mr. Nandlall: It is line items 6111 to 6117. We have a commitment from the Minister to implement the recommendations of the Disciplined Forces Commission. Those recommendations include a movement of jobs from trained police officers to civilian personnel. Has that policy been implemented or will it be implemented by the Minister?

Mr. Ramjattan: It has not been implemented as yet. That call for a strategy to implement has not been done as yet. Indeed that is in accordance with the commission's report we intend to civilianise, as it were, certain sections.

Mr. Nandlall: Could the Minister give us some indication of when you will commence that exercise?

Mr. Ramjattan: That will more likely be a 2016 arrangement.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: It is very critical in so far as the patrol of the Guyana Police Force is concerned. Could the Hon. Minister give this Assembly an indication of whether the \$477 million allocated to the revised budget for 2014 proved to be sufficient for the force to carry out its activities?

Mr. Ramjattan: Right up to the month of August \$340 million has been spent. When we come to the Ministry of Public Security, in relation to the Guyana Police Force, there has been, for the next four months, an additional sum. We will come to that. This is a reflection of January to August. It is what was actually spent up to that time.

Mr. Rohee: Would the Hon. Minister say to this Assembly that the \$340 million utilised for fuel and lubricants proved to be value for money to the Ministry, in terms of police patrols?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised the answer to that is yes.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarship): Mr. Minister, last year \$223 million was budgeted for training. This year a mere \$72 million has been budgeted for training. In light of the phenomenal increase in crime in our country, and your repeated assertions that there will be heavy concentration in the training of police officers, do you not think that \$72 million, a decline of 300%, is inadequate for the training that you have promised publicly?

Mr. Ramjattan: There has been no decline. This is the \$72 million that has been spent from January to August, 2015. When we would go under the Ministry of Public Security the sum of \$151,452,000, some of which has been spent on courses going on, was also allocated in this budget.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister provide this Assembly with a breakdown of the number of buildings that were maintained for this sum of money, where they are located, what is the present state of affairs with respect to those buildings and how many of them are currently in the retention phase?

Mr. Ramjattan: We are under current expenditure but capital expenditure will deal with retention. The increase is due to the rehabilitation of seven police buildings. There are the living quarters at Ruimveldt, \$9 million, living quarters at Reliance, living quarters at Whim, living quarters at Beterverwagting, living quarters at Retrieve, Linden and living quarters at Wismar.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, could we please go back to line items 6111 to 6117. I recall moments ago the Hon. Minister indicating that the Guyana Police Force was granted a 5% salary increase. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he feels uncomfortable that the Government has broken its promise to the Guyana Police Force.

Mr. Ramjattan: What we have here is what I have inherited from the previous administration from January to August. That is what the force is making do with.

Mr. Hamilton: Line items 6111 to 6117: Mr. Minister, some time ago a recommendation was made to change the name from the Guyana Police Force to the Guyana Police Service. Would that recommendation be concluded? If so, how soon?

Mr. Ramjattan: I do not know if that comes under any one of the line items between 6111 and 6117, but that is not immediately a problem for us. The Guyana Police Force is good for us.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will allow two other questions before I put the question.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Hon. Minister inform this Assembly of the number of trips that were taken by the Guyana Police Force to service court cases in the interior, to transport prisoners from locations and other travelling matters?

Mr. Ramjattan: Unfortunately, I do not have all trips the Hon. Member is asking for but we can provide that at a later date. This line item is for ranks travelling to various parts of the country to conduct investigations to attend court, feeding of the ranks and imprest when doing so.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage: Could the Hon. Minister say whether sufficient resources have been made available for the crossing of the Berbice Bridge and other costs attached to this head?

Mr. Ramjattan: The answer to that question is yes.

Mr. Rohee: I would be happy if the Hon. Minister could tell us, at line item 6322, Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations, whether the Guyana Police Force has made provision for contributions to be paid to International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL).

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. This line item caters for the payments for contributions to Interpol and the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP).

Programme: 512 – Guyana Police Force – \$5,498,250,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 513 – Guyana Prison Service - \$888,373,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the procurement of drugs for the Guyana Prison Service is subject to public tender and what are the amounts that have recently been involved for the Guyana Prison Service?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that the public tender process is used sometimes and the quotation system is used additionally in other cases I understand that latter is used in cases of emergency.

6.50 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6302 - Training (including Scholarships): For the first eight months of the year \$16 million and for the remaining four months \$4 million, giving a total of \$20 million, as against a revised provision of \$30 million in 2014. Could the Hon. Minister say whether the Guyana Prison Service has meet its maximum, in terms of training and so it is scaling down?

Mr. Ramjattan: We will never be satisfied with the amount for training but that is the amount that we have and we are going to work with it for the year 2015. We are going to increase it certainly in 2016.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6292, Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the procurement of dietary is subject to a public tender process and what are the amounts that are usually allotted out per tender?

Mr. Ramjattan: The answer to your first question, I am advised, is yes. There are some bids presently and they are currently being evaluated in connection with certain other items.

Mr. Rohee: Under the same line item, am I to understand the Hon. Minister to be saying that there is no sole sourcing ion the procurement of dietary?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that there is no sole sourcing.

Mr. Nandlall: It is a follow-up on the question asked by my colleague, the Hon. Member Mr. Rohee. Hon. Minister, when you speak of public tendering, who administers the procurement process?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is the tender board and it is formally advertised to members of the public to put in bids.

Programme: 513 - Guyana Prison Service - \$888,373,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 514 – Police Complaints Authority - \$7,585,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: Three in 2014, seven in 2015, allocation in 2014 - \$2.5 million and allocation 2015, for the entire year, \$6 million Could the Hon. Minister share with us the designation of the additional new contracted employees, their salaries and the effective date on which they came on?

Mr. Ramjattan: They are four investigators, one Cleaner and a Confidential Secretary and their salary is \$72, 823, 000. They came on from April, 2015.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Chairman, through you, Sir, Hon. Minister, under the same line items 6111 to 6117, you have stated, Sir, that we will see reform in the Police Complaints Authority, in terms of increasing its capabilities. Hon. Minister, when could we see an increase in complement of staff to capture your public promises?

Mr. Ramjattan: Soon, it is a work in progress.

Mr. Nandlall: I would have to follow-up that because that is very vague, Sir. We are working within a financial year Hon. Minister and it would help me tremendously if you would approximate soon, in terms of this year or whether you are speaking about next year.

Mr. Ramjattan: It has started, as you would appreciate Member, through the Mr. Chairman, as of April with four investigators.

Mr. Nandlall: That is under us.

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. It was under the PPP's administration. Thank you very much for doing that. Yes. We are going to seek certain other investigators and what the Chairman of the Police Complaints Commission requests, and that is soon.

Mr. Nandlall: My question is...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, please take a seat.

Programme: 514 - Police Complaints Authority - \$7,585,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 515 - Guyana Fire Service - \$539,775,000

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon Minister provide this House with an indication with respect to line item 6284, Other, and what does it cover specifically?

Mr. Ramjattan: Line item 6284 is re expenditures for airtimerental, custom brokerage services, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) internet service, refurbished billiard table, washing of curtains and washing of windows.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this Assembly whether the internet service, enjoyed or utilised by the Guyana Fire Service, is a wide area network and whether the entire fire service has been *internetised*?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that the Guyana Fire Service is now implementing and establishing the wide internet network. Yes, we will soon be *internetised*.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister indicate under which head is the *internetisation* of the Guyana Fire Service found?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand and I am advised that hardware to do the *internetisation* comes under capital expenditure.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6294, Other: Could the Hon. Minister provide this Assembly with information, with a breakdown, with what is covered under the line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is for bridge fee, framing of pictures, landscaping, painting, payment of auxiliary, stipend for recruit board, purchasing of trays, stipend for work study students, rental of oxygen and the purchase of cylinders. All comprise the expenditures that come up to that sum.

Mr. Rohee: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to inform this Assembly where does the Strategic Management Department of the Guyana Fire Service fall?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that it is paid under line item 6294 and also across the other items too. The Strategic Management Department would require certain officers, materials and other auxiliary services. Even when the officers come in for training, it comes under line item 6302, across the board.

Mr. Rohee: I find that answer unacceptable. I would not press the Hon. Minister but, safe and except, that I understand there is a single unit of the Strategic Management Department. If there is not, then may the Hon. Minister kindly inform this Assembly that there is no single unit called a Strategic Management Department within the Guyana Fire Service?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that it is not a single unit as yet. We are working towards ensuring that it is done as a single unit.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skill: The staffing details shows an increase from 361 to 435, 74 persons. The allocation for the revised Budget 2014 shows \$260 million the total allocation for the eight plus the four months is \$364 million, an increase of approximately \$128 million for 74 employees. Could the Hon. Minister help us to understand this?

Mr. Chairman, with your permission, could I put my final question?

Mr. Ramjattan: No. This is long enough. It is if I may answer this first.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you Sir.

Mr. Ramjattan: I will proceed to seek...

Mr. Chairman: ...to answer the first question.

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Ramjattan: The increase was due to the promotion of six officers, three section leaders, six leading firemen and firewomen, to this item, and 93 new recruits being trained in 2014.

Mr. G. Persaud: I thank you Hon. Minister for your response.

Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Allocation in 2014 was \$23,423,000. For the first eight months of this year, we used approximately \$1 million per month for training, but for the remaining four months we have projected \$11,375,000. Could the Hon. Minister help us to see the wisdom in this training?

7.05 p.m.

Mr. Ramjattan: The amount of \$11 million plus comes around because there will be payment for junior leadership course in England, as of the four months, to the end of December, 2015. There are also going to be medical first responder course, basic recruit training, auxiliary training and an airport fire and rescue training which will require that sum of and an additional \$11,000 to the end of 31st December, 2015.

Programme: 515 – Guyana Fire Service –\$539,775,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 516 – General Register Offices –\$101,238,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6223, Office Materials and Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister provide this Assembly with information in respect to the materials and supplies covered under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is stationery, toners, pens and ink. Those are the items covered.

Mr. Rohee: The computerisation of the General Register Offices (GRO) started in 2014. Could the Hon. Minister give an indication under which head does this computerisation fall?

Mr. Ramjattan: The line item is 6284, Other.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister provide this Assembly with details in respect to the computerisation of the GRO, whether it is linked to a backbone under the e-Governance project?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that it is no. It is not linked to e-Governance, and at least not during this period.

Programme: 516 – General Register Offices – \$101,238,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 517 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit – \$66,225,000

Mr. Gill: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister, explain to this Assembly why there is no provision in the Budget 2015 to provide training for the

Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU) at the time when there is an obvious increase in the drug trade? Could the Hon. Minister say if this is an oversight or if this allocation was relocated to another section?

Mr. Ramjattan: There has been lots of training for members of this unit but it is overseas sponsored, at no cost to the Government of Guyana. There is a list of the officers who went for training and we can provide that.

Mr. Hamilton: Mr. Minister, line item 6116, Contracted Employees, the question is on the increase from \$29,667,000 to \$39,240,000. Is it more employees or the employees, who were there in 2015, are being paid better?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is for approval for a new structure and an increase of staff – that \$10 million increase.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this Assembly whether he, as Minister of Home Affairs, Public Security, is satisfied that the value for money was obtained in this first period January–August, 2015?

Mr. Ramjattan: I could proudly say yes, indeed.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister provide us, at some point in time, with the details in respect to that statement that was made, that he is convinced that the fight against narcotics was indeed successful?

Mr. Ramjattan: If it is interdictions that the Member is looking for, I can provide... One hundred and twenty eight kilogram has been seized locally and 200 kilogram overseas, as a result of the work of CANU.

Programme: 517 – Customs Anti- Narcotics Unit – \$66,225,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 512 –Guyana Police Force–\$55,821,000

Mr. Ramjattan: These capital items have been transferred now to the Ministry of Public Security and you, Mr. Chairman, would notice a lot of zeroes. When we come to the Ministry of Public Security's capital budget allocations we are going to deal with them there. Is that not so?

Mr. Chairman: Is the matter now clear to the Minister? Hon. Minister, is the matter now resolved?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that there are two.

Mr. Chairman: It has been resolved.

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 512 – Guyana Police Force – \$55,821,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 515 – Guyana Fire Service – \$931,000

Programme: 515 – Guyana Fire Service – \$931,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 54 Ministry of Public Security

Current Expenditure

Programme: 541 – Policy Development and Administration – \$236,827,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister provide this Assembly with the details with respect to the utilisation of the \$35.2 million, whether any of these supplies were used for the forensic laboratory?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that this sum was for procurement of reagent drug test kits and consumables for the forensic laboratory.

Mr. Hamilton: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: The sum there is \$81,930,000 for 189 employees. I suspect it is the same 189 employees who are transferred over to the new Ministry.

When the secretarial services are looked, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, for the set of persons, I suspect, the sum there for the eight months is \$205 million. Could you explain, Sir?

Mr. Ramjattan: That is the actual sum to be paid for the increases that they would have for the next four months, these contracted employees, that would come up to this sum of \$81,930,000.

Mr. Hamilton: The Minister, I suspect, has concurred that the 189 contracted employees, who were listed at line item 6116, under Ministry of Home Affairs' secretarial services, have been transferred to the new Ministry of Public Security, Policy Development and Administration.

7.20 p.m.

I am saying that in the four months the budgeted sum allocated is \$81,930,000, whilst for an eight-month period for the same staff you had allocated \$205 million, which would have been an average of a little over a \$100 million for a four-month period. I am just seeking clarity as to why the decrease; it is seen as a decrease.

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand for the first eight months, certain gratuities, leave passage and other payments were made that will not be paid for the latter four months. That is why it is downward.

Mr. Rohee: Line Item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: There has been a significant reduction in the allocation compared with 2014 to the first six months of the year, from \$37.9 million it was reduced to \$700,000.

Mr. Ramjattan: I fail to see that.

Mr. Rohee: Just a minute. Line Item 6265 is \$1,500,000, now it is reduced to \$700,000. Could you explain the reduction?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is not a reduction. The \$1,500,000 for the first eight months there is now ... This \$700,000 is for the bottom quarter of the year. It is more or less what it will take, but it is sufficient in accordance with the demands that we see at the Ministry of Public Security.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister explain the details are in respect to the coverage of this sum of money?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is the continuation of these charges for internet, advertisement, Identification Cards (ID), customs fees, washing of curtains, advisories that are posted, software upgrades, Internet Connection Sharing (ICS) and other documentaries.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister give us details in respect to the coverage of this particular line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: The purchase of personal items for inmates of the Juvenile Holding Centre, operations for the Citizens Security Programme office, the Stray Catchers Unit, community policing groups, the Fire Advisory Board, the Strategic Management Department and the Secretariat. These items will be purchased for their operations.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether the strength of the community policing Liaison Officers remains the same as it was in the first six months of 2014?

Mr. Ramjattan: It remains at 11. It was 13, I think two were sent off, as I had said earlier.

Programme: 541 - Policy Development and Administration - \$236,827,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 542 – Police Force - \$2,584,743,000

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: There is a sum of over \$2 million allocated, presumably for the next three months – rental of some building. Could the Hon. Minister say where that is building located, what is accommodated in it and what is the monthly rental?

Mr. Ramjattan: I do not have the specific answer to that. That could be provided shortly, by Friday.

Mr. Rohee: The Hon. Member informed the honourable House that line item 6222 has to do with provision of feed for dogs and horses. Could the Hon. Member indicate to the House under which line item is the procurement of sniffer dogs and horses.

Mr. Ramjattan: As I mentioned earlier, that is a capital allocated sum.

Mr. Rohee: Line Item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants: A sum of \$156.2 million has been allocated. Having regard to the additional police vehicles that have been made available to the Guyana Police Force (GPC), some taken from community policing groups (CPGs) and others to be imported, is it envisaged that this amount of money will cover for the utilisation of these vehicles to carry out an intensified patrols, given the statements by the Minister and other spokespersons who are seated in this House with respect to the security sector?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that the answer to that is yes.

Mr. Rohee: Does the Minister envisage coming to this honourable House for supplementary provision under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: At this time, no.

Programme: 542- Police Force - \$2,584,743,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimate.

Programme: 543 – Prison Service - \$415,111,000

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister state whether those officers employed under the Strategic Management Department fall under the number of contracted employees?

Mr. Ramjattan: The answer is yes.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Member provide this House with details in respect to the staff of the Strategic Management Department and the implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Guyana Prison Service?

Mr. Ramjattan: There are four members of the Strategic Management Department, namely, the Head of Strategic Management and three Technical Officers.

As to the question of whether an opinion can be made as to whether they are effective, yes the opinion is that they are satisfactorily functioning in that Strategic Management Department.

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister state whether the Cecil Kilkenny Training School...

Mr. Ramjattan: Is it line item 6301?

Mr. Rohee: Line item 6302 or maybe line item 6301, I am prepared to be guided Mr. Chairman, Could the Hon. Minister state whether provision is made for the functioning of the Cecil Kilkenny Training School.

Mr. Ramjattan: The answer is yes, there is.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6292 – Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister confirm whether this \$90 million that is allocated under Dietary for the Guyana Prison Service, during its procurement, will receive No-objection from its Cabinet?

I have a follow-up question.

Mr. Ramjattan: Could the Hon. Member kindly repeat that question?

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, could you confirm whether the dietary for the Guyana Prison Service, as budgeted for \$90 million, will it receive the No-objection of Cabinet?

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that the procurement of that set of items for the \$90 million is still being evaluated.

Mr. Dharamlall: Follow-up question: Hon. Minister, could you confirm that after the procurement Cabinet will offer its No-objection?

Mr. Ramjattan: I do not think that that requires an answer from me at this stage.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this honourable House, in respect to line item 6292 – Dietary, whether the meals provided to the prisoners are acceptable to the prisoners and whether he envisages any protest in respect to the quality of the food provided to the prisoners?

Mr. Ramjattan: The meals are acceptable.

Programme: 543- Prison Service - \$415,111,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

7.35 p.m.

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority - \$8,143,000

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this honourable House, under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, where I understand the four investigators are covered, whether an evaluation had been done in respect to the performance of the four investigators and whether the Ministry is pleased with the performance and the output of the four investigators?

Mr. Ramjattan: The Ministry has not done, at my level, any evaluation, but I understand the Chairman of the Police Complaints Authority has been doing that and I am advised that, yes, they are satisfactory.

Mr. Rohee: Could this honourable House receive, when that evaluation is completed, the report in respect to this evaluation exercise.

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand that there are weekly meetings with them that have caused them to continue their services since last April. It is on the basis of that that I am saying that their services are satisfactory. There has not been an official report or a document, but if that is required from the Chairman, I can provide it to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Nandlall: Under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: There is a budgetary sum of \$421,000. Is that the building where the Police Complaints Authority is located in Georgetown?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. That caters for some painting, tiling of the Chairman's offices and the changing of door locks.

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority - \$8,143,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 545 – Fire Service - \$345,842,000

Mr. Rohee: Under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister inform this honourable House whether the social workers at the Guyana Fire Service are covered under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform the honourable House how many social workers are currently employed at the Guyana Fire Service Headquarters?

Mr. Ramjattan: There are five such officers.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether it is anticipated to have social workers at every station of the Guyana Fire Service?

Mr. Ramjattan: At a later stage, yes.

Mr. Rohee: Under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Would the Hon. Minister advise this House whether the Headquarters of the Guyana Fire Service is covered under this line item?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes. There would be repairs to roof and the painting of the building at Anna Regina, construction of canopy, replacing windows and painting of building at Linden, changing of roof and installing of windows and air conditioning unit at the Headquarters.

Mr. Rohee: The Guyana Fire Service has spent millions of dollars at this prime real estate location over the years. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he has any plans to relocate the Headquarters of the Guyana Fire Service from where it is now, just behind the Stabroek Market, to a location which makes easier access and egress for fire attendants.

Mr. Ramjattan: At the present moment that has not been assessed and/or of course not determined. The answer is no.

Mr. Rohee: I would like to advise the Hon. Minister that at the Ministry of Public Security there is a plan and he may wish to search it up.

Mr. Ramjattan: Thank you very much for that information.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): I see that there is an allocation of \$11 million for training. We have about four months left in the year. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what training does he anticipates to be completed during this period and who would be trained?

Mr. Ramjattan: I had earlier indicated that this \$11 million is for the payment of the junior leadership course in England and the responder courses, also auxiliary training and airport flying and rescue training.

The number of persons in relation to the fire fighting basic training, which will be held at Lenora, will be 50 persons and the estimated cost is \$3 million. The Auxiliary Fire Unit training at Lethem, Mahdia, Kwakwani, Mabaruma, and Port Kaituma will involve 69 persons at a cost of \$1.9 million. Airport Fire Rescue training will include some 20 person. This will be done at Central and will cost \$400,000. The Information Technology Training Programme will involve 15 persons at Timehri and will cost, approximately, a quarter of a million dollars. The Medical First Responder training will include 40 persons at central and would cost \$850,000. Then, of course, the Junior Leadership Course that will cost \$5 million in England and five persons will be there.

Mr. Rohee: Under line item 6112 – Senior Technical: Is it envisage by the Guyana Fire Service, under the Ministry of Public Security, to expand the fix establishment of the Guyana Fire Service, having regard to the fact that more stations are being commissioned?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that the answer to that is yes.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6294 – Other: Ten million five hundred thousand dollars has been allocated there. Could the Hon. Minister give us an explanation, over the next three months, for what purpose this money is allocated?

Mr. Ramjattan: For the Member's information, again, this money is for the rental of oxygen cylinders, stipends for Recruit Board, landscaping, framing of pictures and the payment of auxiliary.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the Strategic Management Department of the Guyana Fire Service falls under line item 6294.

Mr. Ramjattan: I just missed that question. Could it be repeated?

Mr. Rohee: I was seeking to establish whether under line item 6294, is the Strategic Management Department of the Guyana Fire Service covered and whether the \$10.5 million is what is allocated to pay staff associated with this unit?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is catered for under a variety of line items for that Strategic Management Department. The materials and supplies under line item 6224 are for print and non-print materials. So it is across the board as I had mentioned earlier in relation to a similar question.

Mr. Nandlall: Just for my own clarification. The Hon. Member told us, when we were dealing with Ministry of Home Affairs – Prisons, under this same line item – Other, he was framing some photographs from January to August. I asked him again about another \$10 million and he told me again that he was framing photographs. Can I ask how many pictures are you framing and how long would these pictures take...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I do believe it is probably a most important question asked here this evening, probably the most important question asked this evening, but I wonder whether we are making the best use of time this way.

Mr. Nandlall: Can the Hon. Minister explain, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed Minister.

Mr. Ramjattan: With the change of Administration a lot of framing had to be redone with all the Ministers, because just like with you we had to change your photograph.

Mr. Nandlall: I did not know that I was under the Guyana Fire Service?

Mr. Ramjattan: It was done through this programme.

Programme: 545 – Fire Service - \$345,842,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit - \$100,074,000

Mr. Rohee: I crave your indulgence...

Mr. Chairman: If the Hon. Member would allow a few minutes for the Minister to gather his forces together. Minister, are you ready?

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, I am craving your indulgence to seek clarification from whoever can provide it in this House on the Government benches. My perusal of the *Official Gazette Extraordinary*, of Guyana, dated the 6th June 2015. In reading the statutory portfolio, the responsibilities of Mr. Kemraj Ramjattan, Vice-President and Member of the Cabinet, Minister of Public Security...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am making an enquiry. Are you reading from the *Gazette* or from the...

Mr. Rohee: Yes. The reason why I am bringing this to your attention Mr. Chairman is to seek the guidance of whoever may be responsible for this and to provide the nation with information. I do not see listed here, in terms of the responsibilities, the Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit (CANU), but I see provision is made for CANU. If I am to read with your permission Mr. Chairman, the responsibilities of the subject Minister:

“Ministry of Public Security, Guyana Police Force, the Department for Security Services Reform, the Guyana Fire Service, the Guyana Prison Service, the Special Constabulary and the Youth Remand Centre’

I would like to have this matter clarified for my own self-edification, having worked in this sector for years. I believe that a number of questions have been asked as to who, in the Government, is responsible for CANU?

7.50 p.m.

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, I do not know if this might be a proper place for dealing with that in the Committee of Supply. That is a serious matter.

Mr. Nandlall: ... Budget for you.

Mr. Ramjattan: Well this is what I have here. I am dealing with the questions. It came over from the Ministry of Home Affairs and I am dealing with it. But, in view of that, if a question could be asked of the Minister or whosoever you think it falls under, that would be answered. But I would not want to venture and answer on that question this time. This is the Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not know whether it would be apposite to observe that this position of responsibilities is normally settled administratively. I do not know whether it would be helpful. If it would not be helpful then I suggest that you discard it immediately and not be influenced by it.

Mr. Rohee: Sir, I respect your ruling, but my problem is

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, it is not a ruling. I thought I might mention that. If it is not helpful, I suggest you discard it; if it is helpful embrace it.

Mr. Rohee: It is helpful in this sense that for me to ask questions with respect to CANU and the allocation of sums of moneys to CANU, I do not know who to address. That is my problem Mr. Chairman and that is why I seeking advice.

Mr. Ramjattan: The Minister of Public Security; it is here.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, if I could grave your endurance, Sir. It is not a simple matter just to say that I have been given it because we are asked based upon on the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act and all the relevant legislation to appropriate moneys to agencies that have been established legally.

While CANU, as we know, is an agency, we might be appropriating moneys to CANU under the Ministry of Public Security, only to discover that that is not the agency that should have been receiving CANU's money. It is not a case where we want to obstructionists Sir; I can assure you of that. It is just a matter of ensuring that things are done properly and tidily.

Programme: 546 – Customs Anti-Narcotics Unit – \$100,074,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programmed: 541 – Policy Development and Administration – \$60,440,000

Bishop Edghill: Project Code 1216500 – Citizen Security Strengthening Programme: The Citizen Security Strengthening Programme is a multi-year programme of some US\$15 million or \$3.12 billion. I have noticed that even though this programme has been signed, very paltry sums are being spent in 2015. My questions to the Hon. Minister are: Is this programme being pursued; is it being managed adequately; and how could we anticipate the expeditious disbursements to keep in terms with the project cycle?

Mr. Ramjattan: The conditions are now being satisfied for the disbursement. We had to have five special officers: The Coordinating Officer, a Community Officer, and a Financial Officer. Those names had been sent to the Inter Development Bank (IDB) and we are awaiting the no-objection to that. Once that is cleared, that was the final condition for disbursement. Indeed, yes, this would be a major programme for citizens' security.

Mr. Rohee: The sum of money that is provided here under this Foreign Funded Project, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister to inform this honourable House whether, it is in this sum of money that provision is made for the establishment of the Command Centre and the crime mapping that was announced publicly.

Mr. Ramjattan: This is not the sum. The sum for that Command Centre and the networking will be a very substantial sum that would come in relation to the finalisation of that Smart City Police Command Centre. That would be in the vicinity of US\$2.5 million.

Mr. Rohee: Is the Hon. Minister alerting this House that, in the not too distant future, the Hon. Minister will bring to this House a request for a sum of money that would come from the Treasury to fund this project.

Mr. Ramjattan: The money will come later as that programme for the Smart City Command Centre finds itself tuned by the IDB experts that are going to indicate all aspects of it and the procurement and whatever it will entail to make it happen. That had not been completed as yet, but this, however, is to strengthen that aspect of the programme here in Guyana.

Mr. Rohee: Is the Hon. Minister informing this House that the Government is currently negotiating with the IDB Funds for the establishment for the Command Centre.

Mr. Ramjattan: I understand and I am advised that the specific programme that that would come under, will be project code 1216700 – Citizen Security Programme II.

Mr. Rohee: That is what I just asked.

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Rohee: The Citizen Security Programme II (CSP II), the money is going to come from there.

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes.

Mr. Rohee: Well okay.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, just for clarification. This programme that this funding is coming from, under project code 1216700 is Citizen Security Programme II. We have already concluded project code 1216500 – Citizen Security Programme I, which was a flagship programme that was considered to be of huge success by all standards that were implemented. This is the Citizen Security Programme II. This programme as envisage did not include what the Hon. Minister announced to the House. The question should be asked, is there a renegotiating of the design of the programme to facilitate what he is talking about.

Mr. Ramjattan: Indeed. It would appear now that, the very first programme, the Citizen Security Strengthening Programme, is what is the “II” here and the project code 1216700 – Citizen Security Programme, marked “II” under project code 1216700, is a TC cooperation agreement. Indeed, it was a newly designed programme that was tweeted by the new Administration from the IDB for purposes for ensuring that Command Centre. So, indeed, it would come... That is what that \$25 million and \$10 million will help.

Programme: 541 – Policy Development and Administration – \$60,440,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 542 – Police Force – 391,320,000

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2405900 – Land and Water Transport – Police: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the floating base that was commissioned by the Ministry Home Affairs is

located at the place where it was expected to be? Secondly, having regard to the statements made by so many public officials, when does the Guyana Police Force anticipates having it air wing established?

Mr. Ramjattan: The air wing will not be established this year, definitely, and the M.B. Tamakay is at Ruimveldt, presently.

Mr. Rohee: It has not gone as yet?

Mr. Ramjattan: No, it has not.

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister informs this Hon. House what is the status of the outfitting of this floating base and why is it that the Guyana Defence Force taking so long to outfit this floating base?

Mr. Ramjattan: The operationalisation of the M.B. Tamakay floating base needs \$7 million more to be made efficient, for purposes of getting it to where it is supposed to be.

Mr. Rohee: Provision of vehicles - Land and water Transport, motorcycles, outboard engines, boats, *et cetera*, could the Hon. Minister indicates in what kind of framework are these means of land and water transport being provided to the Guyana Police Force. What is the strategic approach?

Mr. Ramjattan: The strategic approach largely has to do with the fact that we want more patrols out there. We are responding to that demand, the response time, *et cetera*, for the crimes that are in a high state now, with more motor vehicles. If you would like me to give you what is it the Ministry is buying for this \$193 million, I could give you.

Mr. Rohee: I did not ask for that.

Mr. Ramjattan: Well it requires a number of land and water transport vehicles for purposes of enhancing response time and also to having a deterring effect where the crimes are dense.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Rohee are you through with your question?

Mr. Rohee: I am moving off from that item. I am not pressing that any further. I would wish to ask, in respect to project code 2509500, whether the furniture and equipment envisaged to be purchased or procured here, will be for the data entry clerks located at all the various police stations.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I sometimes do not respond readily to the request of an Hon. Member for the floor, mainly because I do not see the Hon. Member, I only hear his voice. Perhaps, it would be helpful if there is a gap between when an Hon. Member wants to speak and giving the Chairman an opportunity to recognise him, it will work and then you would not have to give way.

8.05 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under Project code 2405900 – Land and Water Transport – Police - there is procurement of \$193,700,000 for vehicles, trucks, motorcycles, outboard engines, bicycles and boats by the Guyana Police Force. Could the Hon. Minister say whether, according to section 54 of the Procurement Act, Cabinet's no objection will be sought?

Mr. Ramjattan: This will be under public tender as soon as the spending is approved in this House for the purchase of all of these.

Mr. Dharamlall: I am seeking from the Hon. Minister, with this expenditure, under section 54 of the Procurement Act...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, what is the question you are asking the Minister?

Mr. Dharamlall: My question is: could the Hon. Minister say whether he will seek Cabinet's no objection?

Mr. Chairman: I understood that question to have been asked to another Hon. Member, not very far away from you, earlier in this evening, and the answer the Minister gave then, I suspect, is the same.

I thought the time we had was valuable time, but perhaps not.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the reason I am asking so is because the Hon. Minister had said publicly, on more than one occasion, that...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you had a question to ask the Minister and you have asked it. Would you give the Minister a chance to answer it now?

Mr. Dharamlall: I did ask the question, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Then you will give him a chance to answer.

Mr. Ramjattan: Earlier, I had answered that question about no objection in Cabinet and that answer remains.

Mr. Nandlall: Project code 2405900 – Land and Water Transport – Police: The description lists a number of vehicles, including boasts that will be acquired with this budgetary allocation. Piracy is obviously a serious problem in our country. Could the Minister explain whether there are any specialised boats with the requisite characteristics to combat piracy included in the fleet of boats that are to be bought with this allocation?

Mr. Ramjattan: Boats and outboard motors will be bought but the number 23 item comes closest to what I think my Friend is thinking about and that is a fibreglass boat which is very expensive. We do have five 40 horsepower outboard motors, 200 horsepower outboard motors and 75 horsepower outboard motors with boats. That also will help in relation to the piracy.

Mr. Nandlall: What is the engine capacity with the fibreglass boat?

Mr. Ramjattan: That will be more than 200 horsepower.

Programme: 542 – Police Force - \$391,320,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 543 – Prison Service - \$101,003,000

Mr. Rohee: Project code 1216900 – Buildings – Prisons: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House, at this point in time, what stage is the model prison at Lusignan at?

Mr. Ramjattan: It is at phase three, construction of the second floor, columns, external and internal walls and installation of steal and closure, outer corridor and so on.

Mr. Rohee: I am happy to hear that progress is being made. With respect to project code 2608400 - Other Equipment - Prisons, could the Hon. Minister inform this House whether additional closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras will be procured to ensure that all prison locations are covered, and not only the stations being covered - offsite viewing of the locations?

Mr. Ramjattan: The answer to that is yes. A sum of \$21 million is catered for that. All of the locations will be covered.

Mr. Rohee: Provision is made for the purchase of a vehicle. Could the Hon. Minister say who the vehicle will be purchased for and at what cost it will be purchased?

Mr. Ramjattan: I am advised that it is for the Timehri Prison; the cost for the vehicle is \$7 million and the vehicle to be purchased is a 4x4 pickup truck.

Mr. Rohee: Project code 2608500 – Agricultural Equipment – Prisons: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the extent to which the Guyana Prison Service has reached in terms of self sufficiency of agricultural produce produced at the various prison locations?

Mr. Ramjattan: The opinion that I would want to deliver to the Member is that it is satisfactory and there are four places that agriculture is being done – Mazaruni, Lusignan, New Amsterdam and Timehri.

Programme: 543 – Prison Service - \$101,003,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority - \$1,200,000

Mr. Rohee: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House, in respect of the purchase of furniture and equipment, whether the furniture to be purchased will be done through the public tendering process and whether Precision Woodworking Ltd. would be one of the companies that would be...has a track record?

Could the furniture envisaged here be manufactured by the Guyana Prison Service?

Mr. Ramjattan: Let me say, and I do so with a heavy heart in view of the questions asked: these are the items and they are small items, so they will not go through a tender process. It is a computer at the cost of \$600,000; executive chairs at a cost \$84,000; a refrigerator at a cost of \$76,000; television at \$72,000; a binding machine for \$65,000; American Power Conversion - uninterruptible power supply (APC-UPS) at \$228,000; and laminating machine at a cost of \$75,000.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same project code, I did hear the Hon. Minister say that the items will be procured without going through any tender process. Is the Minister saying to the House that he is prepared to expend Government funds without following the laws of Guyana?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, could you address the question without the additional so that we can move along?

Bishop Edghill: I am addressing the question. Whether it is a quote system, whether it is sole sourcing or public tendering, there is a procurement process and I would like for the Minister to confirm that what he said will actually happen and that is that we are procuring without a tendering process.

Mr. Ramjattan: If I may correct, the process will be that of a three-quote system.

Bishop Edghill: That is different.

Programme: 544 – Police Complaints Authority - \$1,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 545 – Fire Service - \$132,064,000

Mr. Rohee: Project code 1217000 – Fire Ambulances and Stations: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House what the status is with respect to the construction of the La Grange Fire Station?

8.20 p.m.

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, it has been completed but it just has to be accessorised with furnishing.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, project code: 2406100 – Land and Water Transport – Fire: Could the Hon. Minister inform the House, with respect to the purchase of water tenders, how many in addition to what is there is being envisaged?

Mr. Ramjattan: We are purchasing four additional water tenders to be used at Regions 2 and 4.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister bring the House up to date with respect to the number of water tenders that this four will bring the Guyana Fire Service to?

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, it will now come up to 37 water tenders.

Mr. Rohee: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister inform this House of the procedures that will be used to procure these four tenders?

Mr. Ramjattan: It would be sole source because of the specific nature of the item that we have and the company's name in England is Angloco Limited.

Programme: 545 – Fire Service – \$132,064,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 31 – Ministry of Public Works

Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration - \$426,681,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister of Public Infrastructure, I believe that it may prove helpful to some of the equipment here if you were to sit on the seat habitually used by you. If you are in that seat, then there is no need to move. But if you are not, then I would ask you to sit in the seat in which you usually sit.

Minister of Public Infrastructure [Mr. Patterson]: Mr. Chairman, I only did that to facilitate because of the several agencies. If anyone else has to come, instead of them...

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Minister for his assistance.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6321 – Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: \$266,667,000 has been budgeted for this line item which, I have noted in the legend is contributions towards the Transport and Harbours Department. The question, Sir, in

keeping with what we heard in the Budget debates, is: Could we anticipate increase in tariffs for the use of the ferries of the Transport and Harbours Department?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. No; you cannot anticipate that.

Bishop Edghill: A follow-up, Mr. Chairman: Could the Minister tell us, therefore, how the restructuring that was spoken of by the Hon. Member in this House will take place? Would you be reducing staff of the Transport and Harbours Department?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I am unclear as to the question that the Hon. Member is putting. Could he be a bit more specific?

Bishop Edghill: The Minister within the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, in her budget presentation, told this honourable House that she was very appalled at the state of things at the Transport and Harbours Department and that there will be restructuring. Consistently, the Government has given to the Transport and Harbours Department \$400 million every year. If, this year, the Transport and Harbours Department will get the same \$400 million and there would be massive improvements and restructuring, it will either be of two things: you have to have another source of revenue or increased revenue...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, could you address the question to the Minister?

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I have been seeking to do that and the Minister said he does not understand, so that is why I...

Mr. Chairman: Could you address it directly to the Minister rather than be circumlocutory?

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I seek your protection on this matter because it would appear that people are being annoyed by us enquiring. Should I not have knowledge of a sector? I am saying that we were told, in this House, that the Transport and Harbours Department will be restructured. Four hundred million dollars has been allocated again this year like would have happened every other year. How will the restructuring be done? I asked if there would be an increase in rates and was told no. Well, will there be a reduction in staff? I would like to have an answer to that.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Hon. Member. Firstly, I say yes; the Minister within the Ministry was absolutely correct. The conditions are appalling and what we are doing is the Transport Advisory Commission is reviewing the entire operations of it, ensuring that it will become the functional streamline agency – a fresh approach, Sir.

Bishop Edghill: I noticed the rhetoric was entertained but I did not get an answer to my question. I asked, specifically, will there be a reduction of staff?

Mr. Patterson: Sir, as I have said, the Transport Advisory Commission will be in place and, obviously, on the outcome of that report we will be able to enlighten the Member.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There is a reduction of three. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House who were the Members and the designations of the persons who were disengaged?

Mr. Patterson: Yes, Mr. Chairman: one Clerk, one Typist Clerk and one Cleaner resigned.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us what is the size of the fleet that utilises this budgeted amount?

Mr. Patterson: Programme 311 has 16 vehicles and the line item the Hon. Member quoted is obviously from January to August.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6281 – Security Services: There is a budgeted amount of \$33,182,000 as compared to \$49,805,000 and I am to understand that this is for the first eight months. Under the same Programme – Ministry Administration - under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, there is an additional \$35,104,000, which will increase security to \$70 million for the entire year. Could the Hon. Member say what is responsible for the increase and which is the security firm that is engaged? Did you get that, sir?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, I understand the question he is asking but he is asking for a response in two different agencies. With your leave, I would proceed to answer both and I do hope I do not have to return to it. For January to August, we have special constabularies in two locations and we have Strategic Security Services Inc. From the second half, it is Brans Security

Services. That is under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and it was done via public tender. I hope that clears both sides of the question.

Bishop Edghill: So, there is a significant increase from \$49 million to in excess of \$70 million as a result of that public tender process you just spoke of. I am just confirming that.

Mr. Patterson: Yes; we went to open tender and Brans Security Services was the lowest response of tender.

Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration – \$426,681,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 312 – Public Works - \$1,315,351,000

8.35 p.m.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: There is a whopping increase from \$54 million for the entire year to \$80 million for the first eight months. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what is responsible for the increase, which buildings are being maintained and the contractors that are engaged, if any, in these works?

Mr. Patterson: On assumption of office in the new Administration, as you know, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure has several buildings, including residence under our control. Due to the appalling conditions under which those building were left by the previous occupants, I had to submit a Cabinet Paper for renovations, repairs, in some cases fumigation of the buildings, extermination and those things. That is where things are and the Cabinet Paper was done for flat 2, Echillabar Villas, \$2.3 million was corporate construction building; flat 6, \$2.7 million, Compton Bess; flat 7, \$2.4 million, J W & Sons; flat 9, \$2.9 million, Eric Bess; flat 13, \$4.7 million, Aubrey Simpson; flat 14, \$2.3 million... I can provide the Hon. Member instead of going through it, if you want that. Thank you.

Bishop Edghill: Yes, I will be happy to have that laid over. But I would like the Hon. Member to indicate, to this House, the process that was used for the procurement of these services. Like I did earlier, under the new programme, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, under the same line

item, apart from the \$80 million that is being spent, there is an additional \$22 million, so that would take it to \$100 million of expenditure under Maintenance of Buildings.

Mr. Patterson: Once again, I will address just this one, unless you so advise, because the Member has also gone to Public Infrastructure. Under Public Works was selected tenderers and normal procurement procedures were prequalified tenders and their normal procurement procedures were followed.

Bishop Edghill: I am a little confused. Is there a process where the Ministry of Public Works would advertise, at the beginning of the year, for the prequalification of contractors and is it out of that pool of prequalified contractors that these persons were selected to do the various jobs?

Mr. Patterson: The Hon. Member is absolutely correct. In December, 2014, there was a process whereby we publicly advertised for prequalified contractors. I would like to inform him, just in case he is interested, that I have instructed that that process be reopened so that other persons can be eligible to do works under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Just like the Hon. Minister, proposed to lay over the buildings to be repaired, I will be happy if he could indicate what are the major roads to be maintained on this item and if he could lay over the entire programme. He could indicate, now, the major works and he could lay over the entire programme. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Patterson: I keep getting questions between Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Public Infrastructure. We are examining the Ministry of Public Works. Therefore, this would have been January to August. Therefore, they will be either works completed or almost about completed. I do not know exactly what the Member requires.

Bishop Edghill: I am on the Ministry of Public Works; we would like to know the ropes.

Mr. Patterson: Sir...

Bishop Edghill: Sir, while we are examining...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, allow the Minister to speak. Let us get one thing through and then another. We are doing Public Works now; we will look at Infrastructure after this.

Mr. Patterson: Under this line item, we did 56 roads all around the country. I have it here. Does the Member want me to go through it? Would you like me to go through all 56? I will. If not, I can lay it over.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, I will be a happy to have it laid over; that is my request.

Mr. Damon: To the Hon. Minister, line item 6254 – Maintenance of Sea and River Defenses: I see a large sum here. Could you tell me if there is any reservation in here for the building of groins, especially in the Essequibo region? Added to that, I would like to hear, under the same line item, about the restoration of the Mangrove Project in Region 2 and the East Coast. Thank you.

Mr. Patterson: Once again, the Hon. Member has asked questions about projected works. So, when we do get to Public Infrastructure, I shall tell you what actually is in place for Region 2. But I can tell you what was done between January and August in Region 2, if that would be helpful. We did sea defences at Lillydale and Liberty, Pomeroun, Fort Island, Charity, Essequibo. Under Public Infrastructure, I shall address the question, if that is okay by you, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Mustapha: Just a follow-up to my Colleague's question: The Hon. Minister mentioned that these works were already completed from January to August. Can the Hon. Minister say if any major sea defence work was done at Bush Lot on the Corentyne and on the East Bank public road?

Mr. Patterson: The contract for the Bush Lot emergency works has just been awarded and I do thank you for raising that. The Hon. Member asked, as well, for the East Bank public road. Yes, work is ongoing and will continue to so do.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: There again, budgeted for the year is \$59 million but expended in the first eight months is \$91,979,000. Could the Hon. Minister explain to us what works were done and where were these works conducted?

Mr. Patterson: Hon. Member, traffic lights and highway lights - \$26.5 million; barriers and road safety works - \$55.1 million; and compounds were the works completed. Road market and those things account for the \$91.979 million over the period.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister indicate which line item benefited, where was the training done and when it was conducted?

Mr. Patterson: Training was for our engineers and other administrative staff locally, under the Ministry, and those were completed.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, if you have something else to contribute, please proceed.

Mr. Patterson: Sir, I just wanted to, for the records, under this line item, read into the records that the Hon. Minister within the Ministry never stated that we are going to restructure the Transport and Harbours Department:

“We would embark on a programme to ensure that the Transport and Harbours Department becomes a viable, well-coordinated entity, able to support the developmental thrust of this A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) Government.

This Programme, Mr. Speaker, envisages the phased development of critical infrastructure, supported by a sensible repair and maintenance team, geared towards ensuring the solvency of the Department.”

I just wanted to set that straight, Sir.

Programme: 312 – Public Works - \$1,315,351,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

8.50 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I crave your indulgence to correct the reference I made to Programme 312, Public Works. That should have been recorded because that is what I ought to have said. Now, may we proceed?

Programme: 313 – Transport – \$19,168,000

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, there is a drastic reduction of expenditure, budgeted was \$46,144,000, but only \$12,240,000 was expended. This entire programme, having been appropriated with \$66,613,000, the expenditure has only been

\$19 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Assembly what is responsible for the reduction? The real issue is: What are the works budgeted for that have not been done?

Mr. Patterson: If I get the Hon. Member's question correctly he is asking why only \$12 million were expended in the cycle from January to August. This sum is for the maintenance of aerodromes which was done. The remainder would be done by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure under the same line item, from September to December.

Programme: 313 – Transport – \$19,168,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 312 – Public Works - \$3,391,201,000

Programme: 312 – Public Works – \$3,391,201,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 313 – Transport – \$74,498,000

Programme: 313 – Transport – \$74,498,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 32 Ministry of Public Infrastructure

Current Expenditure

Programme: 321 – Policy Development and Administration - \$1,507,265,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, could you please, for the purposes of this Assembly, line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, provide a breakdown of the organisations that will be provided with subsidies?

Mr. Patterson: Under that head the organisations are Berbice Bridge Company Inc., Hinterland Electrification Company Inc., Kwakwani Utilities Inc., Lethem Power Company Inc., Linden Utility Services Coop Society Ltd. (LUSCSL), Linden Mining Enterprise Ltd. (Linmine)

Community Power, Mahdia Power Company, Matthews Ridge Power Company, Port Kaituma Power and Light and Transport and Harbours Department, totalling \$1.4 billion.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please state how much subsidy is paid to the Linden Power Company Inc. and to the Berbice Bridge Company Inc.?

Mr. Patterson: Sir, the Berbice Bridge Company Inc. under the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, for the four-month period, received \$36 million and Linmine will receive \$1 billion.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please indicate how effectively the \$1 billion will contribute to the Linden Power Company Inc. and the residents of Linden.

Could the Hon. Minister also state what activities the \$1 billion will be funding as part of the Linden Power Company Inc.?

Mr. Patterson: Sir, this sum covers the generation of power for the entire Linden community, the area under catchment. It serves a very useful purpose for the residents of Linden.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please state what will be the cost of electricity per kilowatt hour in Linden?

Mr. Patterson: I am advised the cost is about \$60 per kilowatt hour.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item 6321, there is an allocation of about \$1 billion to community power, Linmine, but under the Ministry of Finance there is an additional \$2 billion, which would be a subvention or subsidy of \$3 billion in total. The Ministry is only handling \$1 billion for the four-month period.

Mr. Patterson: Correct.

Bishop Edghill: The question to you, Sir: Are there any moves being made to ensure conservation and, secondly, to bring the charges to Linden Power Company Inc. in keeping with the rates that other parts of Guyana are paying?

Mr. Patterson: I am advised that under the previous administration there was supposed to be an agreement executed. Unfortunately, and sadly, on my taking over the office there were several

incomplete issues. There is no chairman and no work was done, so that is something that I will have to complete under my remit. Yes, we will be doing energy conservation and public awareness activities.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, just to confirm, the Hon. Minister indicated to this Assembly that it costs about \$60 to generate power. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly what power is being sold at?

Mr. Paterson: Sir, I am advised \$5 residential and \$12 business.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a follow-up, could the Hon. Minister please state what is the sale price of electricity through Guyana Power & Light Inc. (GPL), nationally?

Mr. Patterson: The sale is \$53 residential and \$58 commercial.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, did I hear correctly that the price per kilowatt hour is \$53? I could remember that last year there was a reduction to \$48 and some cents per hour. When did we increase or change this rate? Second, in relation to the subsidy for Linden, which we have no problems with, Hon. Minister, places such as Wakenaam and Leguan, which are part of my such as constituency, are facing tremendous difficulty as a result of the problems in the rice sector. Hon. Minister, would you agree that we should examine granting some level of subsidy to these areas in relation to provision of electricity? Would the Hon. Minister also agree with me that maybe a better and more level playing field is for us accomplishing power through the Amaila Hydroelectricity Project and bringing the average cost across the board for all Guyanese to a minimum of 40 cents to 20 cents per kilowatt hour?

Mr. Patterson: The Hon. Member is correct, that there is a 10% subsidy, so it is 50 cents correctly. On the question of the island of Leguan and the other islands of the Essequibo, I think this administration is on the record as saying that it is pursuing green energy. We will very shortly be asking for expressions of interest on stand-alone green energy wind farms. With those alternative schemes, we do anticipate that we can do better than the 20 cents that the Minister is mooted. Finally, Sir, and we are on record, that the Amaila Falls Hydroelectricity Project, as currently formulated by the previous administration, is not sustainable.

9.05 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, the Hon. Minister, just informed the Assembly that they are pursuing green energy through wind farm for places such as Wakenaam and Leguan. The output of that will be a cost below 20 cents per kilowatt per hour. Could the Hon. Minister be kind and good enough to share with us the feasibility study for that project and to share with us the economic justification towards this move, in terms of wind farm? On a similar note, we can exchange information with him on Amaila Falls Hydroelectricity Project.

Mr. Patterson: I would just like to correct the Hon. Member, Sir. He just plucked one alternative energy source out and went off. I said alternative energy. If the Member is particularly fond of wind farms or full with wind energy, maybe, he can share his ideas with me at an appropriate time.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, could the Hon. Minister tell this Assembly, and the nation, how soon we can expect investment in wind farm in these communities that I have identified?

Mr. Patterson: Sir, there is Vision 2020, but, as you know, alternative energy is a very high priority of this administration and we will pursue it vigorously.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you adding to what you just said? Please, let me hear you.

Mr. Ali: Could I proceed, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: Yes. Please, let me hear you.

Mr. Ali: Could I ask the Hon. Minister whether he agrees with me that while we wait on Vision 2020, there is a project in Amaila Falls that is ripe and ready to be implemented and why are we not going to go down that road?

Mr. Patterson: Obviously, the Hon. Member is of the assumption that Vision 2020 means that what we are going to complete in 2020. Vision 2020 is to tell you what will be done now and between 2020.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister confirm that in Lethem, where thousands of Amerindians live, that the cost per kilowatt per hour is over GY\$100 and with Lethem being a border frontier and soon to be a town, if there are efforts Hon. Minister to ensure that our

Amerindian people pay less for electricity as they are paying right now? Mr. Chairman, there is a resident of Lethem here and the current price that he is paying is a \$180 per kilowatt per hour.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, may I beg your leave, Sir? I would like to read into the records of the cost that are being paying in Lethem, least an injustice is done to my Ministry and the Lethem Power Company. The first 15 kilowatt, Sir, is free, the next 15 to 50 kilowatts per hour at \$60 and over that 51 kilowatt, which is heavy consumers, is \$80. Obviously, the Hon. Member has completely misinformed the Assembly.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member, who gave the chamber that information, ensures he knows what to do.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I am sitting next to a Hon. Member of this House, who is from Lethem, lives in Lethem and he has indicated to me, as I have informed the House, that he is paying up to a \$180 per kilowatt per hour.

Mr. Chairman: May I enquire what is it that the Hon. Member is saying?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I was making the point for a comparison that the people, and Amerindians of Lethem especially, are paying way above what other areas are paying especially Linden. We would like to encourage the Ministry of Public Infrastructure to relook at the rate in Lethem so that it could be reduced much further than it is.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I would hope the Member knows who he is and that he would stand without the Chairman having to call him. What you did, you said it and it is not enough to say to this House that what I have told you I do not know if it is accurate but someone told me and I am telling you. It is not a practice which the House would condone, but I think this may be a good lesson.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: One other question Hon. Member. Would you wish the inaccurate information, which you supply this House, to remain in your name?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as I said...

Mr. Chairman: My question is a simple question and I am asking you to address my question. Would you wish the inaccurate information, which you give to this House, to remain in your name? That is all I asked of you.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I have brought to the attention through my honourable colleague in the House, who is a business person in Lethem...

Mr. Chairman: It would be very good if someone advise the Hon. Member what he should do.

Mr. Dharamlall: I very well withdraw.

Mr. Chairman: Under the Standing Orders, to mislead the House is contempt. I was simply trying for us not to go there.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I said I withdraw. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I accept that.

Programme: 321 - Policy Development and Administration - \$1,507,265, 000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 322 - Public Works - \$1,121,623,000

Mr. Ali: Mr. Line item 6254, Maintenance of Sea and River Defences, \$60 million: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us which areas these works will be executed and what were the criteria of selection for these areas?

Mr. Patterson: The question is where the areas are selected. The first criterion is the protection of our citizens, livestock and their homes. Obviously the worst affected area will be higher prioritised. I just told the Hon. Member from Region 6, that Bush Lot is going to be done because that is a breach situation. That is the criterion that we would have used and then after that we move on to preventative maintenance. I do hope that answer the first question because we conduct regular condition survey along all 452 kilometres of our sea defence.

The final part of the question, the areas selected are Pouderoyen river dam, Region 2, Good Hope, Adventure, Essequibo Coast, Wakenaam Island, Leguan, Maryville, Waterloo, Leguan Island, Buxton to Melanie, East Coast Demerara, Bagotville, Land of Canaan, Mon Repos,

Foulis, Georgetown gorge to Georgetown seawall, Mosquito Hall in Supply, Weldaad and D'Edward, Eversham, Joppa, Numbers 47 and 52 Villages, Canje River in Region 6. If the Hon. Member requires I can give him the full list, or any other person.

Mr. Ali: Thank you. I need to monitor it.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, I beg to have the floor. Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: As we understand this programme is for the four months remaining in the year, a budgeted sum of \$441,229,000 for the maintenance of roads. While I do not expect the Minister to call all the roads now, I would like him to lay over which roads are to be done? For the record tonight, it is if he could indicate the major works to be done. Would this be contracted out or is this work of the force account?

Mr. Patterson: Under this line item, road maintenance, major works, will be in the Regions, 3, 4, 5, 2 and 6. Linden, Lethem and the Burma are the major roads. I am informed as well that the Amaila access road is for completion. Those are the major works and there are about 30 to 40 roads under this line item.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, the other part of the question was not answered. It is if this is contracted out, or is it being done by the force account?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, my apologies. It is both. They are contracted out and as well as executed by our Force Account Unit.

9.20 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: Would the Hon. Minister give us a listing of the vehicles and equipment which will use fuel from this allocation? With your permission, Mr. Chairman, Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, the question has two parts, Hon. Minister...

Mr. Patterson: Sir, can we address the first question first, because it will be three?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I think the Hon. Minister wants to address the question individually.

Mr. Patterson: Sir, on the questions of vehicles, it is 116 vehicles under this line item of fuel and lubricants and they range from trucks to excavators to Caterpillar rollers, pickups and weeding machines.

Mr. G. Persaud: Could I ask the Hon. Minister to please lay over that list. Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I noted that the Hon. Minister and his Ministry were able to expend some \$91 million in the first eight months of the year. I noted the allocation here. It is for \$91,568,000. I am wondering if the Minister intends to complete the work programme by 31st December, 2015. If not, is there any rollover project that he would like to share with us?

Finally, on that same line item, I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister can make available to this Assembly each scope of work and the costing for each activity for which funds would be expended on this programme.

Mr. Patterson: Thank you Hon. Member for that question. You have given me the opportunity to make a clarification to this Assembly. The sums included in our estimates for the Ministry of Public Infrastructure are to be expended in this period September to December, 2015. Of course, we will lay it over. Sir, while I am on my feet..., so that we do not have this question reoccurring. In my budget speech, I made mentioned that we had met with the Banker's Association already to talk about financing. The tenders are out for several of these current and capital projects that we obviously hope that as soon as the Appropriation Bill is passed the tires will hit the road. I hope that would explain how we intend to do our procurement strategy. The moneys here are to be completed in 2015.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line item 6272, Electricity Charges: In 2013 and 2014, respectively, there are electricity charges to the Ministry at approximately \$169 million. However, in 2015, it has amounted to over \$328 million. Could the Hon. Minister ...

Mr. Patterson: Which line item is it?

Mr. Dharamlall: Sorry. It is line item 6272, Electricity Charges, for the entire Ministry. Could the Hon. Minister please provide the cause or causes why is there this exorbitant increase?

Mr. Patterson: Thank you very much to the Hon. Member. You are correct. There is a great increase in the allocation and the reason is that we are trying to regularise everything. This \$220

million is moneys owed to the Guyana Power and Light agency, for street lights. We are trying to ensure that in 2016 not only do we have a fresh approach, but a clean slate, as well.

Programme: 322 – Public Works –\$1,121,623,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 323 – Transport – \$48,466,000

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister confirm that this is moneys allocated for maintenance of interior airstrips? If that is so, could he name the various airstrips that will be maintained in this four-month period and the sums allocated for each project?

Mr. Patterson: Yes, the Hon. Member is correct, these are several airstrips. Sir, I will attempt to quickly run through them for the Member - Anna Regina, Annai, Aishalton, Apoteri, Achiwuib, Aranaputa and Bartica.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, if I can interrupt. I did ask for the sums allocated for each project. It would be useful if it is Anna Region and it is if it is \$3 million. Please state the amounts allocated for each project. It is not just the names but the names and the sums allocated.

Mr. Patterson: Well, Sir, we have to go through a bidding process, as you know. This is the overall budget but we have to go through a bidding process. If the Hon. Member concurs, obviously, I can give him what we are going to bid and I can forward to him, at a suitable time when the bids would have return, what they would be.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you very much.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6281, Security Services: It is noted that the security services was costed at \$3,639,000 for the eight-month period and for the four remaining months, \$2,046,000. Would the Hon. Minister give us an insight into whether there was an increase in numbers, increase in location or increase in rate? It is because the average monthly is \$455,000.

Mr. Patterson: I am unclear and I need further clarification from the Hon. Member because under Programme 323, Transportation, which we are on now, there is zero allocated to security services. I think it is a slight oversight.

Mr. G. Persaud: I regret that. I was looking at Programme 322 instead. Sorry.

Programme: 323 – Transport – \$48,466,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 321 – Policy Development and Administration –\$1,221,981,000

Mr. Ali: Project 2606800, Power Utility Upgrade Programme, \$944,599,000: Could the Hon. Minister look at reference 110, Volume 3 of the profile, which states that the project includes reduction of electricity losses, and rehabilitation and upgrade of distribution network? Could I ask the Hon. Minister what target, in terms of losses, he is envisioning, that is, what is it now and what will it be at the end of this project? Which areas he is targeting in relation to the upgrading of distribution network and what would be the outcome, in terms of those upgrades, especially, as it relates to better power supply and the issue of low voltage?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, just one second, my technician is getting the report for the second part of the question. On the question of the total losses, I have been advised that it is \$28.5 million.

Mr. Ali: Is that the target?

Mr. Patterson: No. That is the current.

Mr. Ali: What is the target?

Mr. Ali: Through you, Mr. Chairman, Hon. Minister it is okay if you do not have it there. You can provide it later in the House. It is just for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation.

Mr. Patterson: My apologies, please.

Mr. Ali: You can provide it at a later stage if you do not have it now.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, may I humbly ask that I provide that at a later stage?

Bishop Edghill: It is as a follow-up to the same question, Sir. This is a multi-year project that is costing some \$13 billion plus dollars and tied to that project is the intent to reduce line losses.

We know it is now \$28.5 million but at the time of the conception of the project there was a specific target that was agreed to acquire the financing. It is not left to a subjective...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, let us have the question, please.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, as I said, I have the information that the Hon. Member would require. The target is 23% - a reduction of 5.

Bishop Edghill: The target is...

Mr. Patterson: It is 23%.

9.35 p.m.

Mr. Ali: Project 2606900, Sustainable Energy Programme: Reference is made to Volume 3, reference 111, the total project cost is \$1,040,000,000. We have here the project entails provision for procurement and installation of photovoltaic systems in hinterland and coastal locations. Would the Hon Minister be kind enough to tell us where those locations are, the number of beneficiaries and the criteria used in the selection of those areas?

If the Hon. Minister does not have the information now, I am also willing for that to be laid over.

Mr. Patterson: I do have the information, I was just trying to find it, but I will lay it over. There are seven locations under the item that deals with photovoltaic systems. The ministries where the photovoltaic systems will be installed are: The systems, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, the Ministry of Agriculture, Queens College, Bishops High School, the new wing at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, and St. Joseph's High School.

Mr. Ali: I am happy that the Hon. Minister found that information because under the profiles, reference 111, I see nothing of the city schools that the Minister has mentioned. I see here, "Procurement and Installation of photovoltaic systems in the hinterland". I have not heard of any hinterland school or community in your list and coastal locations. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to clarify?

Mr. Patterson: There is no need for the Hon. Member to have ascribed any sort of ulterior motive to us. This is a continuous roll-over project, what is listed and what I have just reported

are what we would like to finish between September and December. Obviously, in the 2016 Budget we will find a lot more areas, may be closer to home.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, I am just trying to clarify. Would the Hon. Minister then agree with me...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we are on auto-pilot now, are we not?

Mr. Ali: I said Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I would not like us to be on auto-pilot. Please proceed.

Mr. Ali: Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that reference 111, volume 3 in the profile, would require some amendment, in terms of the Description, which says “Procurement and installation of photovoltaic system in the hinterland and coastal regions”.

Mr. Patterson: Unfortunately, I cannot be so like-minded as to agree with the Hon. Member. The Legend says, “Hinterland and coastal locations”. I just read the coastal locations; for the next year’s budget, I may read some hinterland locations. I am reading it and it says “and”. It did not say exclusively one or the other.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, may I have your attention? Project code 1214800 – Government Buildings - \$60 million is identified for the rebuilding of the Umana Yana, which we are happy about. Could the Hon. Minister tell us if the Amerindians would be engaged in the reconstruction of this project?

Mr. Patterson: This project will be done by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, on behalf of the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples’ Affairs and, of course, the principal workers, builders and material suppliers will be our Indigenous people.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a follow-up on this: Volume 3 – Legend – project code 1214800 – Government Buildings, it says that the \$60 million would be spent on the rehabilitation of the Prime Minister’s Residence as well as on the reconstruction of the Umana Yana. Hon. Minister, could you please clarify, if indeed the residence of the Hon. Prime Minister will be constructed under here and what is the estimate provided for the rehabilitation of the Prime Minister’s Residence and what is the estimate for the reconstruction of the Umana Yana?

Just to inform: Last year the Wai Wai's had proposed to the Ministry of Amerindian Affairs then, about \$30 million for the construction. I would like to know if the Wai Wai's are also going to be constructing. I would love for them to reconstruct the Umana Yana.

Mr. Patterson: Hon. Member, you are absolutely correct. I just responded to who will be the contractors. Under this profile, the reconstruction of the Umana Yana, we have the sum of \$38 million budgeted and the sum of \$22 million for the rehabilitation of the Prime Minister's Residence.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you wish to speak again?

Mr. Ali: No, Mr. Chairman...

Programme: 321 – Policy Development and Administration - \$1,221,981,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 322 – Public Works - \$8,332,982,000

Bishop Edghill: Project Code 1101100 – Demerara Harbour Bridge: There is a budgeted sum of \$90 million. My question to the Hon. Minister: While we are expending moneys on the Demerara Harbour Bridge, what is the current stage, as it relates to the feasibility studies, for the new fixed bridge across the Demerara River, since we know there were pre-feasibilities studies?

Mr. Patterson: There is no item included in this 2015 Estimates for that, but as I am on my feet and the Member is anxious, we are examining all the options at the moment and I will be trying to proceed.

Bishop Edghill: The only reason I asked is because it did form part of the Budget debate.

Project Code 1403800 – East Bank - East Coast Demerara Road Linkage, \$10 million for studies funded by India. I will like to get from the Hon. Minister, if this has already been awarded, if a consultant has already been selected and what is the status of this project?

Mr. Patterson: I know that it has not been awarded and at the correct time, during this period, we will also be going out to public tendering for a suitable consultant.

Mr. Ali: Project code 1403900 – Dredging: We have a total sum allocated of \$100 million. We heard of the stated policy of the Minister in relation to a partnership approach, in relation to the dredging of the Demerara River, an approach that I would support. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say whether the allocation in relation to the Demerara River would go through that special vehicle with the public/private partnership mix in moving forward?

Mr. Patterson: I do agree that the medium-term dredging of our main port way is public/private partnership preferably. This amount here, I am advised, is for dredging in the Demerara and Essequibo Rivers.

In the remaining three months, as you would know, Sir, the festive season is fast approaching. Ninety per cent of our imports come through there, so it is imperative that while we work on a public/private arrangement, if any, we dredge these particular channels.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please provide to us the list of “miscellaneous roads” under project code 1404100? This could be provided at a later time.

Question: \$590.151 million is expected to be spent during the last third of the year. Could the Hon. Minister state whether they have enough contractors, noting that in the current programme, we are also spending approximately \$441 million?

Mr. Patterson: I do have the list here and it is quite extensive. We are going through Regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

On the second part, I would like to solicit the support of the Hon. Member and, of course, the Opposition because there has been a call by certain sectors of the country that we should have a stimulus package in the infusion of capital into the economy.

It is envisaged, with your support on that side of the House, that we can do all of these projects. Obviously, the mind-set of the Ministry is to keep the projects local. I know that there are several contracts in Regions 6 and 10 that because of the prorogation would not have been adequately utilised. Sir, with your support, collectively I think we could get all the contractors, in all the regions, up and running for 2015.

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to also state that we are in support of any stimulus package. On the issue of project code 1404200 – Urban Roads/Drainage, could the Hon. Minister confirm whether this is to conduct imminent works in the new townships in 2016?

9.50 p.m.

Mr. Patterson: I would like to reiterate once again that the moneys included under this item is for this particular year. These are the September- December urban roads and they are in all the regions. Of course, the new towns would not be there at the moment. When they are made into towns they would come under these allocations.

Bishop Edghill: Under project code 1404400 – Highway Improvement East Bank Demerara: Could the Hon. Minister tell us the anticipated completion date of this project?

Secondly, project code 1404800 – West Demerara Highway, could the Hon. Minister give us an update as it relates as to what is taking place on that project as of now?

Mr. Patterson: I would address the first part. It was divided into three lots. Lot Two, which would be from Prospect to Little Diamond, was substantially completed on 2nd June. Lot Three, which is from Little Diamond to Great Diamond, will be substantially completed on 30th August, which is about Sunday.

Lot One, as I had stated before, poses a bit of challenge, which is from Providence to Prospect. As you know, the contractor has not been as expeditious as we would like and we are now actually trying to make provisions to ensure that we can have it completed as soon as possible to bring relief to the East Bank Corridor.

The West Coast Demerara question: This is what we are slated to do in this period, which is in the last three months. It is the construction of bridges and roads under Vreed-en-Hoop to Hydronie sections, including the supervision. Sir, as you know this is Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) project and it was awarded to a local company in association with... [*Inaudible*] This is what will be done for the following three months until December. I do hope that that answers your queries.

Mr. Ali: At project code 1404100 – Miscellaneous Roads - \$590,151,000, when I turn to the profile in volume three, reference 117, I am very disappointed that Region 10 is not included as a region that would benefit from this provision. As a strong representative of Region 10, I would like for the Hon. Minister to relook at Regions 7, 8 and 10 because I have very strong interest in those regions.

Mr. Patterson: I am encouraged by the Hon. Member's new found interest in Region 10 and I do hope that he continues. As you know, Region 10 is a town; obviously it would come under project code 1404200 - Urban Roads. On the question of Regions 7 and 8, those regions come under hinterlands. This is the remainder which covers the other areas. We have catered for all regions, evenly.

Mr. G. Persaud: Under project code 1404100 - Miscellaneous Roads: Hon. Minister, I know that you would have spoken on this item on two occasions already. Forgive my ignorance, but I am looking to see where I can find the Delcanti Road on any of the roads that you have included here. That is my simple inquiry.

Mr. Patterson: I would like to note that the costs for the studies for that road alignment, I did say, were included under this line item - Miscellaneous Roads. That obviously we are reviewing but it is under this project code.

Mr. Mustapha: Just a follow-up to this project code 1404100 – Miscellaneous Roads, I know for a fact that the Minister promised that he would give a list of those roads that have been identified to be rebuilt in the country. There was a main road that was promised during the election campaign, by both the Alliance For Change (AFC) and A Partnership for National Unity (APNU), when they went to Berbice and that was the East Bank Public Road. Does that cater for the rehabilitation of the East Bank Public Road under this project code?

Mr. Patterson: My apologies for interrupting. I know that you would like to stop, but I need to have a few things on the record, least the Hon. Member misleads his constituency in Region 6. The East Bank Road is being done under the Inter-Development Bank (IDB) – this one is actually being done. There is another section under the IDB roads; it is not under this. I just wanted to make sure that Hon. Member does not mislead his consistency in Region 6 that we are not keeping our promises.

Programme: 322 – Public Works - \$8,332,982,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 323 – Transport - \$288,327,000

Bishop Edghill: Earlier in the evening, we were told that there was an item under transport for hinterland airstrips. We are also seeing under project code 1601100 – Hinterland/Coastal Airstrips an amount of \$79,514,000. Could the Hon. Member tell us what airstrips are to be rehabilitated as a capital item as to compare to those that were being maintained under the current project?

Mr. Patterson: The rehabilitation of airstrips at Eteringbang and Mahdia are catered for under this project code.

Bishop Edghill: My follow-up question for clarification is: Why was one listed as maintenance in Current Expenditure and the other one in the Capital Expenditure? I do not understand. Are these new works we are doing here?

Mr. Patterson: Yes. This is rehabilitation for those airstrips. Under the Current Expenditure the existing airstrips maintenance would include, de-brushing, weeding, cleaning, *et cetera*. That is the difference.

Mr. Ali: Under project code 1601200 – Equipment - Civil Aviation: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us whether this provision caters for both the municipal airport in Ogle and our international airport in Timehri? How close would this training and strengthening take us to category one?

Mr. Chairman: Is the Hon. Minister in a position to answer that?

Mr. Patterson: Yes, it does cater for both the municipal and international airports. On the second question, on how close it is to a category one, I am advised that it is 20%.

Mr. Ali: A follow-up question: Having said that it caters for both the airports at Ogle and, is the airport at Ogle privately managed and operated, if so, how would we treat this allocation to the airport at Ogle? Is it a subvention, subsidy or a capital transfer?

Mr. Patterson: This is strengthening in air traffic services. So obviously, both airports require that, under the administration of the Guyana Civil Aviation (GCA).

Mr. Ali: But they are private operators, would they pay for it?

Mr. Patterson: The air traffic control is done by the Guyana Civil Aviation.

Bishop Edghill: Under project code 1601300 – CJIA Modernisation Project: An allocation of \$143,813,000 in 2015, this is a \$6 billion multiyear project. Could the Hon. Minister bring to this House the renegotiated contract with the contractor, the new design, and could he indicate what works would be undertaken in this period, during the four months of the year?

Mr. Patterson: The contract remains with the contractor \$138 million as stated. What was done was obviously a rationalisation of the terminal building. We still would get the runway of 10,800ft and we will have an expanded, renovated and a modern extended renovated airport.

Bishop Edghill: What we need from the Hon. Member is if he could lay over to us the redesign and the scope for works to be undertaken in the entire project and if he can tell us now what is to be undertaken in the four months remaining for the year?

Mr. Patterson: Obviously, I do think that the Hon. Member is an shadow Minister for Public Infrastructure. I reiterate and re-extend my invitation for the monthly meeting so that he would have the full access to all these information at that time. In the next four months, there will be excavation, backfilling and construction. There will be works on the runway on both sides – the northern and southern end - in the next four months and the completion of the redesign, and initial works for the new terminal buildings.

Programme: 323 – Transport - \$288,327,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

10.05 p.m.

Sitting suspended 10.08 p.m.

Sitting resumed 10.30 p.m.

In Committee of Supply.

Agency: 41 Ministry of Education

Current Expenditure

Programme: 411 Main Office – \$371,066,000

Ms. Manickchand: Hon. Minister, could you kindly tell us, under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, if the two additional employees in 2015 were hired after you assumed office.

Minister of Education [Dr. Roopnarine]: The answer is no.

Programme: 411 Main Office – \$371,066,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 412 National Education Policy – Implementation and Supervision – \$151,405,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see an addition of two contracted employees from 2014 to 2015, could the Hon. Minister kindly say if these two additional persons were in during his term.

Dr. Roopnarine: They were not hired in my term.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6301 – Education Subventions and Grants: I see that the Hon. Minister has a sum of \$11 million, could he say who the beneficiaries are.

Dr. Roopnarine: It covers the National Accreditation Council and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Council, the former being 5667 and the latter being 5935.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): I see that the Hon. Minister has used up \$20 million for the first eight months. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what he used this money for?

Dr. Roopnarine: Health and family life education, nursery, literacy and numeracy training.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Services: I see that the Hon. Minister has spent \$200,000. Could he say how many vehicles are there?

Dr. Roopnarine: The summaries of the vehicles the Ministry has: 12 double cabs, 15 cars, 5 canters, 3 vans, a - 7-seater wagon, 2 jeeps, 1 tractor, a - 15-seater bus, a -19-seater bus, a -26-seater bus and a 30-seater bus.

Mr. Neendkumar: I am saying that the Ministry has 12 vehicles and then under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants, it could not have used \$200,000, only. It is impossible. The second point is that this \$20 million under line item 6302, I am not in agreement with the answer, but we can move on. You could give me a breakdown if you want later.

Dr. Roopnarine: I can certainly provide that.

Mr. Rohee: With respect to the information just provided by the Hon. Minister on the vehicles, are these vehicles centrally located or are they distributed across the region.

Dr. Roopnarine: They are not centrally located. They are at various locations in Georgetown.

Mr. Rohee: Permit me asking a further question. A follow-up: Hon. Minister, could you inform the honourable House what are the controls that you have over the use of vehicles in order to avoid abuse of the vehicles and of gasoline as well.

Dr. Roopnarine: We have a unit at the Ministry that monitors the use of the vehicles.

Programme: 412 National Education Policy – Implementation and Supervision – \$151,405,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 413 - Ministry Administration – \$999,724,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Hon. Minister there is an increase of about 11 contracted employees. Hon. Minister, would you be kind enough to tell us if these were hired under your watch?

Dr. Roopnarine: These were replacements.

Ms. Manickchand: With respect Sir, replacements ought not be accounted or recorded as an addition. If they were just replacing someone then we would see similar numbers. We are seeing an increase of 11 persons here. I am just wondering if you or the Ministry hired them when you were there or if these were just hired.

Mr. Roopnarine: No, they were not hired while I was there.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6292 – Dietary: I would be grateful if I could get a clarification that this \$309 million that was applied for the school feeding programme which is nationally run, where every child from nursery to grade two get either a snack or a hot meal. Would that be correct?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes, that is correct. We are catering for the feeding of about 14,460 students.

10.49 p.m.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6301 – Education Subventions and Grants: I see there is a total of \$151.227 million. Could the Minister give us a breakdown as to who the beneficiaries are?

Dr. Roopnarine: The Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) subsidies between January and August accounted for \$147,615,000 and Edexcel International between January and August accounted to \$2,160,000.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6291 - National and Other Events: I see there is a huge amount of \$309,817,000. Could you tell us what this allocation is meant for?

Dr. Roopnarine: This caters for expenditure associated with International Women’s Day, Mashramani, Independence Day and so on.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: I see that \$10,777,000 is allocated. How many vehicles are catered for here and where are those vehicles located?

Dr. Roopnarine: I thought I had just given that but it caters for the maintenance of all vehicles, including 12 new vehicles from the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA), in 2014, at the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Neendkumar: This would not be correct. Minister, if you do not have the information, I am prepared for you to submit it at a later date.

Dr. Roopnarine: I am answering you, specifically, under the Ministry of Education.

Mr. Neendkumar: Under line item 6264, you are saying that there are 12 vehicles and will spend \$10.7 million for...

Dr. Roopnarine: I am saying it includes 12 vehicles; there are more vehicles. This is under Ministry Administration.

Mr. Neendkumar: Each programme has its own vehicles. If one looks at line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants - \$13,123,000 has been spent in the first eight months.

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: There is a budgetary allocation of \$3.5 million. Could you tell us where the buildings are and, if you possibly can, the monthly rental or annual rental of the building?

Dr. Roopnarine: This provides payment of rental for the students writing examinations and for international volunteers to be accommodated.

Programme: 413 – Ministry Administration - \$999,724,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 414 - Training and Development - \$694,000,000

Ms. Manickchand: Under line item 6292 – Dietary - would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us what categories of persons will benefit from the allocation of \$70.571 million?

Dr. Roopnarine: This is for the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE).

Mr. Nandlall: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: Last year, there were 247 employees of this kind and, this year, there is a listing of only 75, a drastic reduction. Could you explain why there has been such a decline?

Dr. Roopnarine: They were used as temporary workers for the National Centre for Education Resource Development (NCERD) and part-time lecturers at CPCE.

Mr. Nandlall: Those are ongoing annual exercises.

Dr. Roopnarine: It is based on need. If there is no need for them, then they will not be hired.

Mr. Nandlall: The programmes that you have made reference to are continuing programmes annually, so one would assume that, if one needs 270 temporary employees for one year, then that need to continue would mean that that number would be the same.

Dr. Roopnarine: In fact, with the acquisition of new technology, we do not need as many binders as we once did.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to provide us with the list of buildings and the costs to maintain each building for the first eight months of the year?

Dr. Roopnarine: Hon. Member, it is a very long list which I will be very happy to provide you with.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence: The sum of \$10,459,000 is allocated for the eight months. Will the Hon. Minister share with us who the persons are who would have benefitted from this allocation?

Dr. Roopnarine: This is mostly to do with travel into the hinterland for teachers and for training.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6281 – Security Services: The budget revised for 2014 was \$47,237,000. For the first eight months of the year, less than half of the allocation for 2014 was used. Is it that the security firm has changed or was the number of security reduced or have the hours or rate been reduced? Please help us to understand.

Dr. Roopnarine: There is a new security firm being used by the Ministry and, with the adjustment of rates, that is where the savings come from.

Mr. Nandlall: Mr. Minister, a few moments ago, you indicated that the School Feeding Programme was accommodated in another programme. In this programme, I see dietary again with an allocation of \$70.571 million. Could you explain this to us?

Dr. Roopnarine: This is for CPCE.

Programme: 414 - Training and Development - \$694,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 415 - Education Delivery - \$3,826,113,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: I see an increase of almost 20 persons from 2014 to 2015. Could you kindly tell us if any of these were hired under your term?

Dr. Roopnarine: The answer is no.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6301 – Education Subventions and Grants: Would this be where the University of Guyana (UG) would receive its moneys?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes, it is.

Ms. Manickchand: From January to August, UG would have received over \$1,022,000,000. Is that correct?

Dr. Roopnarine: That sum, in actual fact, caters for more than the University of Guyana. There is the Government Technical Institute (GTI), the Guyana Industrial Training Centre, the Kuru Kuru Training Centre, the Linden Technical Institute (LTI), President's College, Queen's College and so on.

Ms. Manickchand: Could you kindly tell us how much exactly the University of Guyana, Turkeyen Campus, received under this head?

Dr. Roopnarine: It receives \$475,850,000.

Mr. Neendkumar: Under line item 6284 – Other – I see \$36.858 million allocated here. Can the Hon. Minister tell the House what will the money be spent on?

Dr. Roopnarine: It is mainly for the marking of examinations.

Mr. G. Persaud: Hon. Minister, under line item 6117 – Temporary Employees - can you help us to understand the employees under this category and the increase by 20 of such employees?

Dr. Roopnarine: These are part-time lecturers for the Technical Institutes and I have already indicated the binders at NCERD.

Programme: 415 - Education Delivery - \$3,826,113,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

11.04 p.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 414 – Training and Development - \$2,484,000

Ms. Manickchand: I apologise, sincerely, Mr. Chairman. Would you indulge any questions under this head, although Your Honour was about to put the question?

Dr. Roopnarine: I would be certainly happy to answer.

Mr. Chairman: I will then hear you.

Ms. Manickchand: Thank you, Sir. Is this under Agency: 40? Sir, just let me explain briefly, with the greatest of respect, because this Ministry of Education business has been very mixed up. There were the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport has now been collapsed and there is just one Ministry of Education. So, to an inexperienced person, it is a bit confusing. I would be grateful, deeply, if Your Honour can kindly say what precisely we are considering right now.

Mr. Chairman: We are treating the Ministry of Education. We have completed Current Expenditure of the Ministry of Education and we have moved to the consideration of Capital Expenditure, Programme: 414 – Training and Development.

Ms. Manickchand: Thank you, Sir. I see where Your Honour is at and I have no questions.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 414 – Training and Development – \$2,484,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: I beg your pardon, Hon. Members, I am running ahead and I apologise.

Programme: 415 - Education Delivery - \$579,791,000

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, project code 1206600 – University of Guyana – Turkeyen - \$10,054,000 and project code 1206700 – University of Guyana - Berbice - \$2,904,000: In the previous year, UG had a higher allocation for capital. What may have been the problem? UG was not affected by the prorogation and so UG could have spent this money which it desperately needed. This was up to August, 2014. Was there any reason why this budget was reduced? It was originally almost \$50 million before that. Was this money released or is it still to be released? In other words, therefore, UG has no capital money from the Ministry for the whole of 2015. Do I understand that correctly?

Dr. Roopnarine: The entire budget was not spent in 2014 and this is a rollover.

Ms. Teixeira: I, like you, Minister, am on the same Council and we were informed about what were the difficulties of getting through the bureaucracy to get our money released to us for the projects we did have and I hope that this kind of bureaucratic problems with the disbursement of funds to the UG through the Ministry of Education will not have the same problems this time around.

Dr. Roopnarine: With the experience we shared, I would be very surprised if that persisted.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 1205900 – Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools: I see there is an allotment of \$234,770,000. Can the Hon. Minister tell us how much of this money has been spent and a list of the schools that benefited?

Dr. Roopnarine: I can provide you with a list; it is a very long list.

Programme: 415 – Education Delivery - \$579,791,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 40 Ministry of Education

Current Expenditure

Programme: 401 – Policy Development and Administration - \$603,761,000

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, we are considering, just so that I could be clear, pages 216 to 217. May I respectfully point out here - and the Minister of Finance may wish to help out here - that this Agency: 40 would include the pages we just skipped under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. So, I believe that the persons who have questions under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport may need for those to be done so that they could conclude those questions or get conclusions to their questions under the new Ministry of Education.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member. If she turns to page 17 of the schedule, there is reference to Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport there.

Ms. Teixeira: The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport is on the schedule for our discussion tonight. It is the second to last agency before we come to Minister of Finance. What the Hon. Member is suggesting is that we have dealt with the previous Ministry of Education so let us deal with the previous Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport and then we come to the new one which is Agency: 40, which would then encapsulate the issues that are raised or the convergences of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport into the new Ministry.

Would you then consider, Sir, bringing up the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport at this point?

Mr. Chairman: I accept your suggestion, Hon. Member.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Sir.

Agency: 44 Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport

Current Expenditure

Programme: 441 – Ministry Administration – \$118,792,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I see that you had 60 employees in 2014 and in 2015 you have 57. Can you say who the three were that you have dropped and their designations?

Minister within the Ministry of Education [Ms. Henry]: In response to that question, two staff members resigned. That is the reason for the reduction in the number of employees.

Mr. Ramson: Follow-up to that question: If the Hon. Minister may have looked at the Staffing Details, she would see that, from the period of 2014 to 2015, in addition to the Contracted Employees that the Hon. Member, Mr. Neendkumar, pointed out - three members, there are four persons who would have resigned, have been removed or have been displaced for that period. So, I am sure that the question my Hon. Friend is getting at is: who were those persons that would have been replaced?

Ms. Henry: I can provide that information at a later time.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: Can you tell us which buildings were maintained and at what cost?

11.19 p.m.

Ms. Henry: The buildings would include the Carifesta Sports Complex, which includes electrical plumbing and painting at the annex building.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: Can the Minister tell me what are the buildings we rented and what are the costs for them?

Ms. Henry: We rented a property in Queenstown at \$120,000 per month and that was for the Cuban coach who was coaching swimming here.

Programme: 441 – Ministry Administration - \$118,792,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 442 – Culture - \$338,481,000

Ms. Manickchand: Mr. Chairman, I would be grateful for an answer on line item 6116 – Contracted Employees. I see an increase of seven contracted employees. I would be grateful if I could be told if these were hired in the new Administration's term?

Ms. Henry: The answer, Mr. Chairman, is no.

Ms. Manickchand: Thank you.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: The allocation for 2014 revised was \$194,181,000. What is noted is that, for the eight months, \$67,055,000 was used. One, what is the total allocation for the year 2015? We cannot pick that up in the way the Budget is constructed for the remaining four months? Two, which are the organisations that would have benefited from subsidies for the first eight months and the sum that they would have benefited from?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, the information would be provided at a later date.

Mr. Ramson: Follow-up question and, if I may be able to provide some assistance to the Hon. Minister, if you have a look at line item 6321, you have a sum of \$67 million and, on page 228, you then have a sum of \$35 million, which gives a total of about \$100 million. The question that my Hon. Member and Friend has been asking is - there is a reduction essentially of about \$100 million - can the Hon. Minister explain why there has been a reduction of that sum? In particular, since I have gone through the profile information, why is it that the Sports and Arts Development Fund deserves no money for the year? Also, why does the Castellani House deserve less money for the year?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, in response to the question, the Sports and Arts Development Fund, given that this is four months we are talking as against 12 months...

Mr. Ramson: No; it is a total aggregate. It is the whole period.

Ms. Henry: Okay. That information will be provided at a later time.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, with due respect to the Hon. Member, there is, on page 529, which relates to subventions to local organisations, line item 6321, \$67 million. The Hon. Member prior to me asked for the disbursements and whether they were disbursed. There is a list here, under culture on page 529, of a number of entities that are listed here. The other Hon. Member asked questions to do with the actual figures and the reductions. Madam Minister, with due respect, under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, between the months of January and August, 2015, did Castellani House receive the \$24.1 million? Did the National Trust receive the \$34.4 million? Did the Rupununi Weavers Society receive \$150 million? Did the Sports and Arts Development Fund receive \$7,581,000? Did the Theatre Guild of Guyana receive \$750, 000? So,

that is listed there. Did they receive those moneys or not? And, if not, as there is a new Ministry created or now the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport is absorbed into the Ministry of Education, will this money still be disbursed to these entities, although they are in a new Ministry with four months left? This is \$67 million; we would like to know the status of it, Madam?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, all those moneys will be disbursed this year, with the exception of the Sports and Arts Development Fund. And, to the second part of the question, yes, those will continue with the new merger.

Mr. Ramson: I did not get an answer to the question that I asked, Mr. Chairman, in relation to why it is, in particular, the Castellani House has received less money than the year before, considering that this is current expenditure.

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, that is the provision requested and we believe that that is adequate.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Member advise us on the Sports and Arts Development Fund. This is distinct from the National Sports Commission's allocation. One is under a board; one is an administrative body. The figure was reduced. Was there any particular reason why it was reduced in the eight-month period and so forth? The other thing, Madam Minister, I am really concerned about is that Castellani House and the National Trust, for example, particularly Castellani House, are extraordinarily important to this country. It is our National Art Gallery, the Heritage Building. So, are you saying that Castellani House has survived for eight months of this year with no subvention whatsoever? How did it pay the salaries of its staff, because it does not make revenue? It is not a revenue generating body. How did it pay its telephone bill, electricity bill and buy newspaper? I am not being disrespectful, Madam, but I really cannot comprehend how you could say or anyone could say that Castellani is awaiting the passage of this Budget before it gets any money for 2015. It has staff and bills and it does not make money. Could you please help me?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, the subventions have been provided and those payments were made.

Mr. Ramson: That is not what you said a moment ago. I mean...

Ms. Henry: I said, with the exception of the Sports and Arts Development Fund, all the other that you requested were paid.

Ms. Teixeira: You said that they will be.

Mr. Ramson: Mr. Chairman, I am happy that the Hon. Minister has been able to clarify that because that is not what was said a moment ago. My final set of questions in relation to this category: can the Hon. Minister please provide a breakdown of the \$71 million that was spent on line item 6291 – National and Other Events? And, line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): What is the nature, programme profile, persons, *et cetera*, that would have benefited from that sum?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, in response to the first question, that would have catered for the Mashramani activity and there were also events hosted at the National Stadium and the Music School.

Mr. Chairman: I shall now put the question. Is the Hon. Minister finished?

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I appeal to you...

Mr. Chairman: Is the Hon. Minister finished providing the answers she was giving?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, I wish to add that, with regards to the allocation for training and scholarships, this would have catered for music development. We conducted coaching and evaluation, and we also did some training for the synthetic track. I am finished, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira, you have the floor.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, why we are trying to position certain things is because, when we come to the new Ministry, we want to make sure that what was under the Ministry of Culture is preserved in a number of ways. Under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings, there was \$13.076 million for last year and there is \$1.769 million for this year. I am very aware that culture has a number of buildings, not only heritage buildings, but also the National Cultural Centre, the Dance School, the Music School, the museums and the archives; there are about 14

or more buildings and bodies that come under this head. Could you say, with this paltry \$1.769 million, what was done for any of the 14 buildings in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, for this amount, four buildings were maintained - the National Cultural Centre, the National School of Dance, the Music School and the Burrowes School of Arts. The details of that I can provide to you, subsequently.

Mr. Ramson: Follow-up question to the one that the Hon. Minister has provided an answer to a moment ago in relation to National and Other Events: the event at the Stadium, can you please state what it was, when it was and what sum was allocated?

Ms. Henry: What line item are you referring to?

Mr. Ramson: It is only one - National and Other Events.

Ms. Henry: I thought I concluded on that one.

Mr. Ramson: It was a follow-up question.

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, there were two events at the National Stadium - the Inauguration and the Twenty20 (T20) Cricket.

Mr. Ramson: Can you please provide the honourable House with the costings for both events?

Ms. Henry: I will be happy to provide that type of information, subsequently.

11.34 p.m.

Mr. Ramson: Sorry Mr. Chairman this is my final question. It is whether the statement initially provided by the Government that no Government sums or moneys were provided for the inauguration was not true and the sums were paid by the Ministry.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member is bordering on abusing the privilege of speaking. There must be a time when we should call it quits and let us concentrate on the issue on hand.

Mr. Ramson: This is certainly my last question.

Mr. Chairman: The Speaker does not find it as a matter for amusement.

Mr. Ramson: This is a very serious matter. There was a statement made...

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member will listen to me and then he will speak afterwards.

Mr. Ramson: Yes Sir.

Mr. Chairman: If you have a question to put please put it.

Mr. Ramson: That is the question Sir. One question is the actual sums spent on the specific events, which was mentioned, and whether it was indeed a true representation of facts.

Mr. Chairman: Your question is out of order, Sir. I will not permit it.

Programme: 442 - Culture - \$338,481,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

I think we need to be guided by our rules by which we operate here. I do not believe we can selective, we can cherry-pick, we take some when convenient and when they are not we do not take them. I really do believe that we are pushing it a bit.

Programme: 443 – Youth - \$342,785, 000

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, I have a question under this programme and was waiting for it. However, you have ruled and warned us consistently, throughout this House, to do with language and deportment. An Hon. Member, on the other side, at a very senior level, used an absolute curse word to us. It was done a few minutes ago. I am not speaking to the Comrade who is heckling me. I am saying that the Hon. Member and Minister of Public Security used a four-letter word and cursed us. He said so-so you. I will not repeat the word here because it is inappropriate in this House. This is a Minister and a Vice President of this country. I do not appreciate that.

Mr. Ramjattan rose to his feet.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Minister should sit and let the Hon. Member who has the floor speak. Please proceed Hon. Member.

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisation, the youth programmes are listed in terms of contributions. The Hon. Minister must forgive me, but I am looking for the allocations in the budget. I will repeat the question when I come to the new Ministry to do with where are such youth programmes as to the training programmes. Is it under line item 6302 or is it under another heading which has to do with the Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training (YEST) Programme, which is called the President's Youth Award, Republic of Guyana Programme. Could the Minister help me because I am looking for the figures and not finding them under this Programme 443. Under the line item of Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations a similar question is before Madam Minister, and that is on the non-governmental organization (NGO) listed here under Youth. Have they received their allocations as yet? If not, could you say how soon that will happen?

Ms. Henry: They have received.

Ms. Teixeira: My question of where is money for the Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training Programme and the President's Youth Award Republic of Guyana (PYARG) Programme which is an international programme Guyana is licensed to operate. Could say where there are those funds, under what heads? When it comes back in the new Ministry I can ask about it under the correct head.

Ms. Henry: Is it the new programme structure you are enquiring?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes. It is Youth Entrepreneurial Skills Training Programme.

Ms. Henry: It is under Technical and Vocational Skills Training, Programme 406.

Ms. Teixeira: That is the new Ministry. In the old Ministry, could you just tell me where it is so that I can do a comparison with figures? What heading would it be under in this?

Ms. Henry: It is Programme 3.

Ms. Teixeira: That is Youth. That is why I am asking. Under which line item would I find resources for those two youth programmes – YEST and PYARG.

Ms. Henry: It is shared right through so it does not have a specific line item. That is how it was inherited.

Ms. Teixeira: Maybe I can help the Hon. Member, or maybe not. Line item 6292 under Programme 443, Youth, there is dietary and \$60 million for 2015, January to August. Is this money for dietary for the students who are residential, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) students, under the YEST programme staying at Kurukuru and the New Opportunity Corps (NOC), for example? Could you advise us?

Ms. Henry: The answer is yes.

Ms. Teixeira: That is where part of the programme is.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Teixeira, are you through with your questions now?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes. Thank you very much.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, \$5,657,000: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to let us know the number of vehicles and equipment which would have benefited from this allocation. I have one more after that.

Mr. Chairman: If it is at all possible to link them, perhaps, the Minister might be able to answer both questions.

Mr. G. Persaud: Do you want me to share it, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Yes please.

Mr. G. Persaud: The Chairman has given permission for me to share the next question and that is line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to share with us the buildings and the sums that were expended from the \$7,808,000?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the first question the list of vehicles will be for Kurukuru there are a 26-seater minibus, a tractor and a car. For the New Opportunity Corps there are a 9-seater bus and a tractor. For New Opportunity Corps, continued, there are a minibus and a Prado jeep. For the President Youth Award Republic of Guyana Programme, there are a minibus and a 4 x 4 pickup. That would be the list of vehicles.

With regard to the second question, the buildings that were maintained would be the Kurukuru Training Centre - \$500,000, New Opportunity Corps - \$800,000, Sophia Training Centre - \$1 million and Vrymens Erven - \$500,000. That concludes the list.

Mr. Ramson: Could the Hon. Minister please provide information about the 22 persons who have been added to the employment payroll and have any of those persons been employed since May, 2015? If yes, please provide the information to the Assembly. The Minister does not have to share the information on the floor but at least share with us, at some point, the names of the persons, their profiles, their emoluments and benefit packages. That is the first part of the question.

The second part of the question is under National and Other Events, line item 6291. Please provide the breakdown of events that have been paid for under that subhead, when they were held and their specific breakdown in allocation.

Ms. Henry: The list of the new staff will be provided subsequently. I have it here.

For the second question, the response will be for the observation and celebration of national holidays which was done at the New Opportunity Corps to the tune of \$300,000, Kurukuru Training Centre to the tune of \$400,000, Sophia Training Centre - \$100,000, Vrymens Erven - \$1.6 million and Sophia Training Centre - \$1.2 million. That concludes the response to that question.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarship): I see a total of \$15 million was spent here. Could the Minister give us a breakdown of how the money was spent and who are the beneficiaries of the scholarship?

Ms. Henry: I will make that available subsequently.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6294, Other: I see a total of \$32.5 million was spent. Can the Hon Minister tell us what it was spent on?

11.49 p.m.

Ms. Henry: That money was spent for payment of stipend to student instructor and the purchase of feed for livestock at New Opportunity Corps, Kurukuru Training Centre, Sophia Training Centre and Vrymens Erven Training Centre.

Mr. Ramson: I did not get the opportunity to do a follow-up on the question that the Minister answered a moment ago, in relation to the National and Other Events. I respectfully take the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I have not given you the floor.

Mr. Ramson: May I Sir? It is the last question on this...

Mr. Chairman: We really must do this right.

Mr. Ramson: Yes Sir.

Mr. Chairman: You may proceed.

Mr. Ramson: Please forgive me if I am mistaken, and if I am, I beg your pardon, Hon. Minister. The sums that you outlined a moment ago, and forgive my math if it is not correct, it did not as mental computation add up to \$9.x million. If it is not so, could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown in its entirety to cover the entire sum?

Ms. Henry: That will be provided subsequently.

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6322, Subsidies and Contributions to International Organisations, \$7,580,000, this may be a mistake in that when one turns to page 536, under international subventions it has Commonwealth Youth Programme - \$2,580,000 and President's Award - \$5 million. Now it may be just a mistake because I am not sure if this is relating to the President's Youth Award Republic of Guyana Programme, which is run locally in Guyana but internationally licensed with the Duke of Edinburg International Youth Award Scheme or whether this \$5 million is for the yearly fee that is paid to the International Youth Award Scheme headed under the name of Duke of Edinburg. If the latter is the case, then the description should be corrected for the future. There is no international body. We are licensed to call it the President's Award. It is called the Duke of Edinburg or the International Youth Award Scheme, or whatever is the correct name, but it is not the President's Award. Could that just be clarified? I

think what I am reading is that it is just a fee that we spend once a year because there are a 1,000 children who go through the programme and it is to get the badges, certificates and stuff such as those. For the legend, in future, it should be corrected and reflect that the actual agency will be paying the money to through the international level.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member.

Programme: 443 - Youth - \$342,785,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 444 – Sport - \$182,951,000

Mr. Ramson: Mr Chairman, could you give me an opportunity? I was wondering if the Hon. Minister would agree that sport forms an important part of the youth development programme, and if so, then why is it that the National Sports Commission had a reduction of \$50 million under line item 6321?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have abandoned the Speaker, you are helping yourself now.

Mr. Ramson: Sir, that was the first of the question. I was waiting for a response from the Hon. Minister.

Ms. Henry: There is actually no reduction. I am advised that the allocations for Sport remain the same.

Mr. Ramson: A follow-up question, Sir, with your leave. If the Hon. Minister would have a glean at the second part of the allocation, the Minister would find at number 1 that no allocation would be made to the National Sports Commission, so it is not true to say that there is no reduction. That is the first question. Second, since we know that sport plays an important part, then why is it that there is no allocation for current expenditure for the Ministry of Sport for the entire period from August 2015 for the remainder of the year. There is no allocation for sport for the period of August to December 2015. Could the Hon. Minister please explain?

Ms. Henry: If the Member is familiar with the new structure, it is allocated there. I can provide details later.

Mr. Neendkumar: I see, under staffing details, that in 2014 there were 13 employees and in 2015 there is 13. Is this a true reflection of what is happening in the department? I am asking the Hon. Minister if this is a true reflection of what is happening.

Mr. Chairman: What are you asking the Minister?

Mr. Neendkumar: What am I asking her?

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Neendkumar: I am saying that under staffing details, there are 13 persons in 2014 and in 2015 there are 13. I am asking, Hon Minister, if it is a true reflection of what is taking place in the department presently. Mr. Chairman, since this question is posing some problem, I would like to ask under...If the Minister would answer, I am waiting, if not, I am prone to continue because I know this sector well.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have to be patient. You certainly have confidence in the question you asked, so just wait for the answer.

Ms. Henry: In response to that question, the number of staff that you are speaking about here is in relation to the stadium and that has nothing to do with the National Sports Commission and the number remains the same.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Hon. Minister tell us which organisations were beneficiaries?

Ms. Henry: Could you please repeat your question?

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I noticed that a \$110 million was given out. Could the Minister tell us which are the organisations?

Ms. Henry: The National Sports Commission would be the organisation.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, I would like to say that I have seen it here but I would like to tell the Hon. Minister that this money is far too small to really do the work to the National Sports Commission.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member, for his contribution. I understand him to say that the National Sports Commission is reflected, though not in those terms. Is that correct? It is reflected there.

Mr. Neendkumar: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Very well and thank you.

Mr. Neendkumar: I noticed that under line item 6272, Electricity Charges, \$15 million is spent in 2014 and only \$6 million was spent for the first eight months. When I look at the facility, which has to pay electricity for, honestly, Madam Minister, this is impossible and the Ministry will have to get more money for the running of the facilities.

Mr. Ramson: Mr. Chairman, final question with your leave. Could the Hon. Minister state, under line item 6291, National and Other Events, whether - with the sum of \$3 million whether that sum was used for the hosting of the National Youth Conference as was promised in the 100-day plan for the Government?

Ms. Henry: The response is no.

Programme: 444- Sport - \$182,951,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 443 – Youth - \$16,732,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project 1800100, Youth: I see that \$16,732,000 was spent on payment for the completion of fence, and so on. Could the Minister tell me where this fence is?

Ms. Henry: The answer is at the New Opportunity Corps.

Programme: 443 – Youth - \$16,732,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of stand part of the Estimates

12.04 a.m.

Programme: 444 – Sport - \$77,730,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project 4501800, National Sport Commission: “Provisions for National Synthetic Track and National Aquatic Centre”, there is a total of \$77,700,000. I see here a description of project, which entails payment for the National Synthetic Track and the National Aquatic Centre facilities. I would like to know how much money was allocated for the track and the aquatic centre.

Ms. Henry: I have it in writing and I will prefer to give it to the Member in writing. It is a lengthy list.

Mr. Neendkumar: I would like to say that the athletic track is a work in process and I hope that the Government will continue it. The aquatic centre also needs a lot more money than this.

Programme: 444 - Sport - \$77,730,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 40 Ministry of Education

Current Expenditure

Programme: 401 – Policy Development and Administration - \$603,761,000

Ms. Manickchand: Mr. Chairman, I would be grateful, if the Hon. Minister could tell us, of these 211 contracted employees, how many were hired in the second half of the year, from June to now?

Dr. Roopnarine: The answer is none.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6301, Education Subventions and Grants: Would the Hon. Minister, be kind enough to tell us what is included here? This is the new Ministry, so we have no clue, what is included under these lines. I know the Hon. Minister, earlier said that it can be taken from everywhere and it is shared, but I do not understand it to be that way. I would like to know what is included...

Mr. Chairman: Is the Hon. Member, still asking her question?

Ms. Manickchand: Yes Mr. Chairman. The question is what is ...

Mr. Chairman: The Chairman would like to hear the question too. You leave him out of it.

Ms. Manickchand: Under Line item 6301, Education Subventions and Grants, I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could tell us what is included in this provision?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes. I would be very happy to do so. It is the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC), the Guyana Teachers Union, the National Accreditation Council and Walter Rodney Chair of History

Mr. Chairman: Is the Hon. Member through with questions?

Ms. Manickchand: I am Sir. I am not sure about what is happening.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 401 - Policy Development and Administration - \$603,761,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 402 – Training and Development - \$815,561,000

Ms. Manickchand: I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could kindly tell us if anyone was hired under line item 6116, Contracted Employees, from June to now.

Dr. Roopnarine: It is not under line item 6116.

Ms. Manickchand: Could the Hon. Minister kindly tell us, Sir, if anyone was hired from June to now under line item 6116, Contracted Employees to 6117, Temporary Employees?

Dr. Roopnarine: There were two individuals under line item 6112, Senior Technical. They were two lecturers.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6292, Dietary: I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could tell us what is included or what is this money used for.

Dr. Roopnarine: The increase caters for the provision of meals for approximately 250 dormitory students at Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE).

Programme: 402 –Training and Development- \$815,561,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 403 – Nursery Education - \$789,274,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6292, Dietary: I see a provision here for \$470,095,000 and I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could tell us if this is where the School Feeding Programme is catered for?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes. The allocation caters for the provision of hot meals for schools in Regions 1, 7, 8 and 9. There is cassava bread and peanut butter in Region 9 and juice and biscuits for schools in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 10.

Ms. Manickchand: That will be all ten regions under this line for the programme of Nursery Education.

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes.

Ms. Manickchand: How many students would this be Minister?

Dr. Roopnarine: Combined it would be 76,544 students for nursery and primary schools.

Ms. Manickchand: I am very pleased to see that the Ministry of Finance has accepted the proposal to programme by levels. We are seeing this new programming now. That could not be the number of nursery school students though.

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes. It is about 35% of the number, I gave you, will be for nursery school students.

Ms. Manickchand: Through the Chairman, Minister, just to be clear, does this \$470,095,000 cater for any expanded school feeding that has been promised by the administration in place of the Because We Care cash grant?

Dr. Roopnarine: It is not a replacement for the cash grant, but it does involve and attempts to cater for additional students. The School Feeding Programme has expanded. Currently, an additional four schools were included in the Hot Meal Programme at Bartica, namely Beach View, Precious Gem, Future Builders and Hill View. We are continuing to roll out the Hot Meal Programme.

Programme: 403 – Nursery Education - \$789,274,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

12.19 a.m.

Programme: 404 – Primary Education - \$1,252,538,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6292 – Dietary: I see an allocation of \$500,630,000. Could the Hon. Minister kindly say if this is to cater for school feeding which is normal right now, for all children up to grade 2, ages one to 10, either hot meals or snacks?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes it is.

Ms. Manickchand: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell me how many students that amounts to?

Dr. Roopnarine: It is 65% of the 76,544 students.

Ms. Manickchand: Just to be clear because we have to do this line by line for us to try to find where the money is. I am trying to find \$1.9 billion. We were told by the Administration that the \$10,000 Grant would not be given, but that it would be applied towards an improved amount in the School Uniform Grant, which we have gotten at \$83 million, but there is still \$1.9 billion that I need to find and I am not sure how to find it.

Is this \$500 million catering for any expansion of the School Feeding Programme as we presently enjoy it in the country?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes it is.

Ms. Manickchand: How, if your Honour does not mind?

Dr. Roopnarine: One hundred and nine million, six hundred and sixty two thousand caters for four additional new schools as well as the 120 additional students with a proposed increase in the unit price for juice and biscuits.

Ms. Manickchand: Would those students receiving in the new school, be students in grades one and two? Hon. Minister, I am trying to find out where the expansion is. Are we going beyond grades; are we adding meals; what is the expansion?

Dr. Roopnarine: What we are doing in the Ministry is exploring some other targeted initiatives where we are going to bring benefits.

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6301 – Education Subventions and Grants: What would this be too, in primary - \$146 million?

Dr. Roopnarine: It is for the School Uniform Voucher. There has been an increase in the vouchers.

Ms. Manickchand: This is new because it is now being put under this Programme. This was never done before. One hundred and forty six million, eight hundred and ninety two thousand divided by 2000 would give us how many students, Sir?

Dr. Roopnarine: Seventy-three thousand, four hundred and forty-six students.

Ms. Manickchand: Are the hinterland students catered for under this Programme?

Dr. Roopnarine: Only in Bartica, for the hinterland, the others are for the coastal areas.

Ms. Manickchand: I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister could advise if the Minister of Finance has advised him where the money is for the students of the hinterland for their School Uniform Vouchers because it is not here.

Dr. Roopnarine: It is under the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs.

Mr. Chairman: Is the Hon. Member finished with her questions?

Ms. Manickchand: I see an addition of one contracted employee. I would be grateful if the Hon. Minister can say if this person was hired after June?

Dr. Roopnarine: No, he was not.

Ms. Manickchand: As we are on this line item, the Minister of Finance invited this House, I think last night or two nights ago, to look at Programmes rather than line items. I was wondering

if I would be allowed to ask the Hon. Member, either to tell us now or within the course of the next two days, how many were hired from June to now, who were the contracted employees and what are their emoluments – salary as well as benefits? The Minister had invited us not to limit ourselves to line items. I am talking about the Programme of Contracted Employees.

Dr. Roopnarine: I will be very happy to provide that information.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you through with your questions?

Ms. Manickchand: Yes Sir, I am.

Programme: 404 – Primary Education - \$1,252,538,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 405 – Secondary Education - \$1,349,988,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6292: I see an allocation here of \$1,199,000. Could the Hon. Minister kindly advise what this \$1,199,000 will do?

Dr. Roopnarine: This is for dietary for students attached to the Practical Instructional Centre.

Ms. Manickchand: Would it be fair to say then that under this line item that all the students of the secondary schools or I should say that differently, no secondary school student will benefit from any expanded school feeding programme.

Dr. Roopnarine: There was no expansion.

Ms. Manickchand: Was there no expansion of the School Feeding Programme?

Dr. Roopnarine: Under secondary education.

Ms. Manickchand: Just to be clear again; I am not absolutely sure. Let me finish the question, please Sir. The students last year, who received in the secondary schools \$10,000 each, are not receiving anything in place of that \$10,000 this year, under this line.

Dr. Roopnarine: We have tried to explain, previously, that the \$10,000 Cash Grant we attempted to, in effect, take a more strategic approach in relation to that. We have increased the School Uniform Voucher and have done some other things.

Ms. Manickchand: Hon. Minister, with the greatest of respect, there were written statements issued to the press and, therefore, to the nation, and verbal commitments given that, the collapsing of the Cash Grant would result in two things – an increase in the School Uniform Vouchers of \$500,000 which we have seen, which amounts to \$83 million nationally...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, is there a question?

Ms. Manickchand: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Then please do not keep us in suspense. Let us have the question.

Ms. Manickchand: Is it fair to say that the statements that were issued would now not be true, having the consideration of these Estimates?

Programme: 405 – Secondary Education - \$1,349,988,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 406 – Post Secondary/Tertiary Education- \$1,141,559,000

Ms. Manickchand: Line item 6301 – Education Subventions and Grants - \$684,805,000: Would this be where the University of Guyana gets its subvention from?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes, it would.

Ms. Manickchand: Would it be fair to say that this, added to what was given earlier in the year, would amount to just about \$852 million?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes.

Ms. Manickchand: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us if this is going to allow the students or any student at the University of Guyana to cease paying fees, as promised by the Administration?

Dr. Roopnarine: I think that is a direction the Ministry wants to proceed in.

Ms. Manickchand: We are talking about the Estimates that are here right now. This subvention is not going to allow you to do that, is it?

Dr. Roopnarine: No, it will not.

Programme: 406 – Post-Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$1,141,559,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

12.34 a.m.

Programme: 407 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation - \$210,191,000

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister say, at line item 6291 – National and Other Events, what are those events and the sums to be spent on each of them?

Ms. Henry: In response to the question, allocations catered for activities such as outreach and cultural programmes, for example Mashramani - \$57 million; Emancipation - \$8.5 million; International Day of Monuments - \$2 million; Indian Arrival Day - \$63 million; Philip Moore Lecture Series - \$11 million; Observation of religious holidays - \$2 million; and 50th Independence Anniversary \$65 million.

Mr. Hamilton: The total sum under the line item is it for the last four months of the year. Is that correct?

Ms. Henry: Yes, you are correct.

Mr. Hamilton: I noted, when you outlined the list of activities you would have indicated many activities that had already passed, Indian Arrival Day, Mashramani, and Emancipation Day. And, secondly, we are dealing with a 2015 Budget and you have indicated also that part of the allotment would be for the 50th Anniversary, which will be held in May, 2016.

Ms. Henry: Yes. In response for the question, as you would recognised, we have to do preparatory work so that we can observe it next year May.

Mr. Hamilton: Minister, you still did not clarify Indian Arrival Day, Emancipation Day, Mashramani, and many of the activities that have already gone.

Ms. Henry: That represents the accumulation of all activities that occurred so far for the year. So, if I can break it down for you...

Mr. Hamilton: With all due respect it could not be. We have just dealt with, earlier, allocations from the months of January to August for all the programmes that come under Ministry of Education and Ministry of Culture Youth and Sport. We are now dealing with the collapsed Ministry into the Ministry of Education, and we are dealing, specifically, with the last four months of the year. So, anything that had happened from January to August should not be in the budgetary allocations we are dealing with.

Ms. Henry: The activities remaining for the period of September to December of this year are the Phillip Moore Lecture Series, observance of religious holidays and preparatory work for the 50th Independence Anniversary. So...

Mr. Hamilton: Could the Hon. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, let the Minister finish.

Mr. Hamilton: She is finish, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Are you through Minister?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, yes I am.

Mr. Hamilton: Just for the record: The fact that many of the activities that were budgeted for and allocation presented, they have already pass. Is it fair to say that the allocation under that line item is over stated?

Ms. Henry: I would want to comment on that; certainly not.

Mr. Ramson: A follow-up question: The list of events that the Hon. Minister has outlined a moment ago, included more than the last three she mentioned - the Phillip Moore Lecture Series and the preparation for the Inauguration. You have listed about seven other items which you had previously stated, that this allocation was for the period of August to the remainder of the year. Is it fair to say that from the original statement of the list of events that you said this allocation was for is incorrect?

Mr. Chairman: It is clear that the Hon. Member wants to know whether something is correct or not correct. I do not know whether that is the focus of what we should be doing here. I do not think that the Minister needs to answer that question.

Mr. Neendkumar: At line item 6291- National and Other Events: We have remaining here \$72.2 million to spend for this year. Can the Hon. Minister provide us with a list of the events and the cost for each event?

Ms. Henry: That question was answered before.

Mr. Ramson: With respect Sir, the question was not answered. The Hon. Minister did not provide the quantum of the breakdown of the events that the Hon. Minister had mentioned. That is what we are respectfully requesting and I believe that we are entitled to know and the nation is entitled to know.

Ms. Henry: I will lay it over next Friday.

Ms. Teixeira: With all due respect to the Hon. Minister, we have been promised a lot of additional information through the last three days. Regrettably, we have gotten tiny bits of paper, little information on which we are expected to vote for on an Appropriation Bill, sometime before the sunlight comes up this morning. I appreciate that this is a new Minister and so on, but certainly, she gave us, under line item 6291- National and Other Events, some figures for the \$72.257 million. But, having pointed out that many of these came before August, could the Minister use the same list to give us right here on the floor - the corrected list from September to December because she read out some figures. Let us have the total. If you extract some of those you did read out then you would have additional funds. We would be interested in knowing what you are going use those on.

I would appeal to the Minister that you give partial information, could you now correct or update your information on the floor? So, that we do not have to wait until Friday and next Friday. By the way Mdm. Minister and all the Members on the other side, there is a motion on the floor for Friday to go into recess. I am just also asking, rather academically, what is happening with all the promises that were made to give us information that we asked for as Members on this side of the House?

Mr. Chairman: Is the Hon. Member through with the question she addressed to the Minister?

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, Mdm. Minister is not responding. Can I seek your help? I cannot force her to say it, but I would say that this is now the end hour and we have not gotten information. Maybe the Members on the other side need to have the time.

Therefore, I am suggesting, if the Members who have not complied with the promises they have made in this House on Monday, Tuesday, this morning and up to tonight, maybe what we should do, is that we postpone the Appropriation Bill being voted on and confirmed on Friday as well, but we have a Sitting already on Friday booked for with an agenda. That will give all the Members on the other side who made promises, Ministers in the front row, Minister Bulkan, Minister Harmon, Minister this, Minister that, all the 26 Ministers, to provide for the information before the Sitting on Friday so that we can vote. We cannot go on endlessly like this.

Dr. Anthony: I have another question, not under the same line item. At line item 6321—Subsides and Contributions to Local Organisations, I think there are two organisations that this money is going to. Can the Hon. Minister say whether the 1838 Monument at Palmyra in Berbice would be completed from these sums of money?

Ms. Henry: That project is off.

Ms. Teixeira: Can I ask the Hon. Member, under Staffing Details, I found that you have hired 57 people under Cultural Preservation and Conservation – Programme 407, but when I go back to the original Ministry of Culture Youth and Sport – Culture, there were 124 people there.

12.49 p.m.

I would like to ask the Hon. Minister what happened to the rest of the people. Where did the 80 odd people disappear to that were originally under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport's Cultural Section – Guyana Archives of Guyana, the National Museums, theatre, dance, E. R. Burrowes School of Art, *et cetera*? The Ministry had a 124 people under that heading and now there are 57 people, so could you say where all those people are; where have they gone missing?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, with the merging of the two Ministries, some of the persons who were under the Kuru Kuru Training Centre and that is no longer reflected under Cultural

Preservation, it is now Post-Secondary/Tertiary Education. Some of them are accounted for under Training and Development.

Ms. Teixeira: At page 205 – Staffing Details - Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, under Culture programme, there were a 124 people. At no point in that discussion, under that head, we were dealing with the Kuru Kuru Training College or those. These are Culture’s entities and staffs. When we come to the new Ministry, Programme 407, which deals with Cultural Preservation and Conservation, which includes all the archives and the museums, how could you jump from a 124 staffs to 57? The Kuru Kuru Training Centre staffs were never under the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport’s Culture budget or programme; they were under the Youth programme. I am saying, where are the archivist, the museum people, the dance people, the art school people, the National Cultural Centre people, *et cetera*.

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that they were spread across the various programmes. As I indicated before, they are under Programme 2, which is Training and Development, I am so advised, and, also, under Post-Secondary and Tertiary Education.

Dr. Anthony: Mr. Chairman, I just want a clarification from the Hon. Minister. Going back to line item 6321, and that is the construction of the 1832 Monument at Palmyra. For this project we had received one acre of land from GuySuCo to locate the Monument. We have had an agreement with the Government of India, who, as I understand, earlier this year we sent the macket for the construction of six bronze figures for this Monument. So, am I being told now that with this, being in construction in India, when it arrives here, we have not allocated any money to the plinth so that we could install this Monument at Palmyra?

Mr. Nandlall: The last question is very important, Sir, if I may crave your indulgence to permit the Minister to answer.

Mr. Chairman: I thought there was no longer any interest in the answer. Everyone seems to be...

Mr. Nandlall: If I conveyed that impression Sir, I apology, but...

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman the cost of that project was in the vicinity of \$110 million. At this point in time, we are currently re-evaluating to determine if we are going to continue with the

same amount. So, that will not appear in this year's budget, for the next four months. Having relooked at it, there is a possibility, perhaps, that we can see it subsequently, but not in this budget.

Programme: 407 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation – \$210,191,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 408 – Youth - \$63,408,000

Mr. Ramson: Mr. Chairman, can the Hon. Minister clarify whether the National Youth Conference, as promised, in the 100-day plan is included in the... *[interruption]* I am getting to it, hold on. I do not have to start with the line item. The line item, for clarity, is 6291. I am trying to clarify whether the National Youth Conference is budgeted for in that sum, in the period that is remaining in the rest of the year, as was promised in the 100-day plan.

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, in response to that question, I would like to say that we did not have a conference in the 100-day plan, so I am not sure what the Hon. Member is referring to.

Mr. Ramson: A follow up: Even though there was a reference in there to the 100-day plan, I just wanted to clarify whether it is budgeted for within that period. So that is the only question that I really have on the floor.

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, yes.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what will this \$4.4 million be used for?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, the sum allocated will be used to offset expenses such as payment of stipends to students, camps and unit leaders' training. It will also be used for expeditions.

Mr. Ramson: I thank the Hon. Minister for the confirmation that the National Youth Conference is going to be held. Could the Hon. Minister please itemise the breakdown of the sum allocated under line item 6291 and the sums allocated for each event, if there is more than one?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, the sum allocated here for National and Other Events is intended to take care of the Volunteer Programme Award ceremony and graduation.

Mr. Ramson: A follow-up question: The Hon. Minister just said a moment ago that the National Youth Conference was budgeted for in that specific sum and a moment ago you listed two events. Those two events were not identified as the National Youth Conference. Could the Hon. Minister please, state what is the sum allocated under that line item for the National Youth Conference.

Ms. Henry: The National Youth Conference is not budgeted for under that line item, it is under line item 6302, which is Training.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not believe that we can continue to have just a dialogue with the Minister.

Mr. Ramson: I just have one more question for Hon. Minister and if I may have some degree of latitude.

Mr. Chairman: Please go ahead with the question.

Mr. Ramson: There was no sum under the Ministry of Education in respect of Sport; no allocations there. I know that there has been the sum of \$110 million, as you had previously confirmed, for the National Sports Commission. I am seeking clarity on whether the Hon. Minister believes that \$265 million in 2014, the budgeted sum, verses \$110 million is an adequate sum for sport. It is the entire period of 2015 and not four months.

1.04 a.m.

Ms. Henry: Yes.

Mr. Ramson: In relation to utility charges, when a comparison is done with the same utility charges from the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, from the previous programme, would it not be reasonable to expect that there would a significant and commensurate reduction since it has collapsed into the Ministry of Education and, since there is not, can the Hon. Minister please explain why there is not?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, do I have to answer that question? I would prefer not to.

Mr. Chairman: If the Minister can answer the question, then it would be helpful to do so.

Ms. Henry: The cost remains the same.

Ms. Manickchand: Mr. Chairman, we had established earlier that these were two Ministries that have now collapsed into one and they are divided into different programmes, so we have had about seven or eight pages.

I was looking for sport and I do not see a programme for sport. There was the Ministry of Education...

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

Ms. Manickchand: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Please do that.

Ms. Manickchand: Where is the programme for sport, Hon. Ministers?

Ms. Henry: It is under Programme: 402 - Training and Development.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, we are experiencing a difficulty in knowing where to ask the question because an entire programme has disappeared. The terrible thing about merging these two Ministries is about turning a youth focus, which is complex, into an educational vertical programme which is completely different. Again, some of the youth and sport programmes have disappeared and that is sad.

Mr. Ramson: This is my final question, Sir. I just want to ask a quick follow-up to the statement.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I will not permit another question from you.

Mr. Ramson: Sir, I must press on this last question as a follow-up.

Programme: 408 – Youth - \$63,408,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 401 – Policy Development and Administration - \$17,000,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 4503500 – National Sports Commission: I see that there is \$211.656 million allocation for the provision of sports facilities, purchase of sports gear, equipment and payment of retention. Can the Hon. Minister give a breakdown as to what specific amounts will be spent on each event?

Ms. Henry: The sum will be used for the construction of a club house pavilion phase, Lot 1; installation of lighting system phase three, Lot five; construction of tower and fountain, electrical building and transformer; construction of eastern boundary fence; construction of northern and western boundary; powering of the booth; and ground enhancement projects.

I can give you a list of the names of the grounds that the Ministry has received applications for for 2015. I do not know if that answers your question.

Mr. Neendkumar: Sorry, Mr. Chairman, we were considering Programme: 401 and I asked a question under Programme: 402. When you are finished with Programme: 401, I will follow-up with Programme: 402.

Mr. Ramson: May I seek some guidance, please? Are we on page 586 of considering the capital expenditure?

Hon. Member: We are on page 582.

Ms. Manickchand: May I respectfully suggest that we consider this page by page, the way Your Honour has been doing it for the entire night. I just realised that the Hon. Member, on this side, skipped all the way to the bottom and the Hon. Minister actually answered the question. They are way ahead of us. If we are to continue to follow the pattern Your Honour has set for the rest of the night...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the pattern which is being used now is no different from the pattern used yesterday and the day before. I called the page from the schedule and I would have thought that everyone would have heard that.

Ms. Manickchand: I think they were ahead of us. Maybe we could go back to page 582. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: I did announce Programme: 401 – Policy Development and Administration.

Ms. Manickchand: I know. I think the two Members are ahead of themselves.

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, I wish to bring to your attention an article that was just posted online, which reflects that State funds were spent for the Inauguration for President Granger in the sum of \$35.69 billion. That is inaccurate. I never said that and I would like for the record to reflect that. To the reporters in this House right now, I would like, for the purpose of the record, to state very clearly that, under National and Other Events, \$1 million was used for the purpose of maintenance of the Stadium, which coincided with the time the Inauguration was held. I never said \$36.5 billion.

Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I think the Hon. Members know that the Minister did not say that. I, at least, would have heard it.

1.19 a.m.

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, if I may, I would like to ask that the reporter responsible withdraws that statement and be made to apologise because \$36.5 billion was not spent.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, do you know who has put that on?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, yes, I do.

Mr. Chairman: I would be surprised.

Ms. Henry: It is in the form of an article by Citizen's Report and so that is not difficult to determine.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, in this House, we have, as Parliamentarians, immunities for many things in what we do and say but we are also judged by the public and the media, which is the fourth estate, and so, whatever is written on the internet and the newspapers, as Members of Parliament, we have to live with it.

Hon. Members: No.

Ms. Teixeira: I do not believe that this House should become a guillotine force. The freedom of the press of this country is sacrosanct, whether we like it or not and whether we are happy with what they say about us or not. The Hon. Member has a right to put out her own statement of what she said. I want to remind the Members of this House that this and, as the Chairman has reminded us over the period, is being live-streamed. So the statements that all of us make can be checked by the live-stream and the videos that are posted afterwards.

I know what I heard and it quite differs from what I heard the Member said but I do not wish to get into a debate now. I am just saying that we will not, on this side, tolerate what appears to be muzzling of a report. Let the Minister do what she has a right to do; she has a right to put out a statement tomorrow or go to the media when the House is finished and say what she has to say.

Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, may I make, with your permission, two points, please? The first point is that it is a custom of this House that, if there is a disagreement about what an Hon. Member has said, the Hansard is requested and verified by His Honour the Speaker.

The second statement I wish to make is that, in the past, a statement was made or attributed to the Hon. Member, Mr. Keith Scott, which was erroneous, by a certain media house, the name of which I will not mention. As Speaker, I cited that media house for contempt of Parliament and the media house did the right thing by apologising and withdrew the statement because it knew it was in error.

In this case, Mr. Chairman, the request is not made for any such drastic action. The request is simply for a statement which the Minister did not make to be acknowledged and withdrawn but it is contempt of Parliament, not only in this Parliament but in every Commonwealth Parliament in the world. You cannot impugn the character of a Member of this House by attributing statements which are false and just say that it is the freedom of the press. That is false. That is governance; it is good governance.

Mr. Nandlall: I just want to endorse the proposal made by the Hon. Member that we should refer to the record because I heard also what the Hon. Member said.

Mr. Chairman: I would only add, without injury into [*inaudible*], that sometimes the way it works... In my village, there is a saying: “Today for me, tomorrow for you.” And when we exalt at anything which is improperly done and we exalt at the fact that someone is discomforted by it, then watch out; maybe our turn is next. I say only that and nothing more.

Hon. Members, when the Hansard becomes available, then the Speaker would undertake to examine the records.

Programme: 401 – Policy Development and Administration – \$17,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 402 – Training and Development – \$256,120,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 2607200 - Resource Development Centre: I see that we have \$17.892 million, provision for building and purchase of furniture and equipment. I would like to know if I could get the list of the various things that would be purchased and the costs for them. Can the Hon. Minister provide that for us?

Mr. Roopnarine: I presume that you would like me to send it to you, rather than read it. It is a long list.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, project code 4503500 - National Sports Commission: I see that there is \$211,656,000 but I know that, in the legend, there is \$77 million which is put for the further development of the National Aquatic Centre and the synthetic track. However, I see here provision of sports facilities. I know that, in 2014, there was \$300 million provided for sports grounds around the country. Can the Hon. Minister provide us with the list of provisions for sports facilities that will be upgraded and how much would be spent on sports gears and equipment? Can he provide that list for us?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, I have a three-page list which I can share with the Hon. Member. I prefer not to read the entire list.

Mr. Neendkumar: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Minister.

Programme: 402 – Training and Development – \$256,120,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 403 – Nursery Education – \$102,000,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, project code 1215300 - Nursery Schools - Construction of buildings - \$18 million: Could the Hon. Minister give us a list of the schools and how much money will be placed for each school?

Dr. Roopnarine: In point of fact, it is one school, the Smyth Street Nursery School and it will be a rollover of \$18 million to 2016.

1.34 a.m.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 2607300 – Early Childhood Education Project: This is an exciting one, \$72 million provision for improving literacy and numeracy in hinterland regions and remote riverain areas. I would like to know a breakdown of how this money would be spent, what the proposal is and who are the stakeholders and beneficiaries in this. How will it be done?

Dr. Roopnarine: We are really sustaining a project that was initiated, I believe, by my predecessor and negotiated on behalf of the Ministry. The objective is to improve emergent literacy and numeracy outcomes to children at nursery level and primary grade one in hinterland regions and targeted remote riverain areas. Does that sound familiar?

Ms. Manickchand: Quick question, Mr. Chairman: \$12 million for the purchase of furniture and equipment. We have over 400 nursery schools. Mr. Minister, through the Chair, we have saturated the needs of furniture in the nursery schools, so this would be more for replacing those broken and damaged furniture.

Dr. Roopnarine: This will be only in Georgetown.

Programme: 403 – Nursery Education - \$102,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 404 – Primary Education – \$97,974,000

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 1215400 – Primary Schools – Construction and rehabilitation of buildings and payment of retention: Would this include the One Mile Primary School?

Dr. Roopnarine: It does, yes.

Ms. Manickchand: Is that in Linden?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes, it does.

Ms. Manickchand: Could the Hon. Minister tell us when this school is going to be operational? When will we have children sitting there and instruction happening in the school, because it was finished?

Dr. Roopnarine: We anticipate it will be ready by next week.

Ms. Manickchand: Is that Monday for the opening of school?

Dr. Roopnarine: Yes.

Programme: 404 – Primary Education - \$97,974,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 405 – Secondary Education – \$412,694,000

Ms. Manickchand: Project code 1215500 – Secondary Schools: Would this include the construction of Kato Secondary School and Zeeburg Secondary School? And, would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us where we are in terms of completion and possible occupation of the two schools?

Dr. Roopnarine: Zeeburg Secondary School will be completed in October and Kato Secondary School is 98% complete and will be opened in January, 2016.

Programme: 405 – Secondary Education - \$412,694,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 406 – Post Secondary/Tertiary Education – \$689,537,000

Programme: 406 – Post Secondary/Tertiary Education - \$689,537,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 407 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation - \$22,800,000

Programme: 407 – Cultural Preservation and Conservation - \$22,800,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 408 – Youth - \$50,235,000

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 4504000 – Youth Initiative Programme - \$50 million: When you look at the profile, it has:

“The project entails provision for construction and rehabilitation of small community driven infrastructure projects.

BENEFITS OF PROJECT

1. Increased job opportunities for youths.
2. Improved recreational facilities...”

And so this appears to be something quite new, not what had been the youth programmes in the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport. Is this a work creation project? In other words, is it getting young people in the community to clean up the playground and have activities? It states, “...rehabilitation of small community driven infrastructure projects”. I must confess that I have not heard some of the Ministers speak on this programme that I am reading about. But I am deeply concerned and I look very anxiously in the capital budget under the different heads. I am at the end and I have not found it. There is no capital for the New Opportunity Corps, for the young people who are juvenile offenders in this country. Although there are four months gone, I am familiar with the institutions. There are always things to be done there for the young people. There is no programme for youth. I sincerely hope and use the opportunity to say, Mr. Chairman, that, in the 2016 Budget, I look forward to the Ministry seriously considering investing in capital programmes, whether equipment or physical infrastructure, for our young offenders and juvenile offenders in the New Opportunity Corps as well as investing in additional capital investments in the President’s Youth Award Republic of Guyana Programme which, as I mentioned, was an

internationally licensed programme which I know always needs equipment for the young people in skills training and on expeditions. So, I am disappointed. But could the Minister explain, to me, this \$50 million initiative?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, the sum allocated will be used for rehabilitating and fencing of community grounds at Farm, Annandale, Mocha, at No.5 Village, Black Bush Polder and Christiansburg.

Ms. Teixeira: Does that mean that you are going out to tender to do these works or are you going to have young people groups do the work and pay them for it? It states that it is for job opportunities. Could you say how this will work?

Ms. Henry: Mr. Chairman, it will include a combination of both.

Mr. Ramson: Mr. Chairman, I am sure the Hon. Minister would not mind sharing the programme information for the capital work that is going to be done for each outlined ground.

1.49 a.m.

Programme: 408 – Youth - \$50,235,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I think this brings us to the end of our consideration of the Ministry of Education.

Ms. Manickchand: Sir, would you allow me please to record our gratitude to the staff who are here at 2 o'clock in the morning, so that they can help to do the people's business. Thank you very much.

Agency: 03 Ministry of Finance

Current Expenditure

Programme: 031 – Policy and Administration - \$13,414,214,000

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: I am interested in two of these organisations. It is if the Hon. Minister indicate to us the Chairman, an expertise of individual, of the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board

(NPTAB). It is if he also indicate who the Chairman is of the Guyana Revenue Authority Board. Who are the top five executives of the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA) and if there has been the engagement of a consultancy of recent at the Guyana Revenue Authority?

Minister of Finance [Mr. Jordan]: The Chairman of GRA is Mr. Rawl Lucas who, I believe, is well known. He writes in the Sunday newspaper, lectures at the University of Guyana, has years of experience in the financial and economic field. The Chairman of the NPTAB is Mr. Berkley Wickham who has over 40 years of experience of work and ended his service at GT&T. Lately he was working with one of the insurance companies and we were lucky to get him over.

The top people in GRA are Mr. Sattaur, Ms. Griffith, Mr. Corlette, Ms. Matthias, Ms. Hemma Khan and Mr. Baksh. Those are the six.

Bishop Edghill: I thought the Minister would have given the designations of the various persons.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Sattaur is the Commissioner General, Ms. Griffith is the acting Deputy Commissioner General, Mr. Corlette, Ms. Matthias, Ms. Hemma Khan and Mr. Baksh are all heads of departments.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6284, Other: There is a significant increase to \$111,628,000. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what the expenses to be incurred are under this line item? Is the payment for the various commission of inquiry, which has been announced, under this line item?

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, \$59.2 million is for legal fees of various sorts; \$62 million is to run a four-page advertisement on Guyana in *Forbes Magazine* and just about half of a million dollars is for bank charges.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, line item 6141, Other Employment Costs: There is a decrease of a \$1 billion. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the items are under this line item and what would have led to the reduction?

Mr. Jordan: Here we are comparing apples and oranges. The 2014 amount is the amount for the whole year. The 2015 amount is the amount for half of the year, from 1st July to 31st December.

What the Member is thinking as a decrease it is not really so. If you annualise that it will come to about six-point something billion dollars, so it is not a decrease.

Bishop Edghill: To follow through, the Ministry of Finance's budget, as presented here, is for the entire year 2015.

Mr. Jordan: This is increase. you wanted line item 6141, Other Employment Cost projections.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6141, under Employment Costs, for 2015, is \$3.4 billion.
[*Interruption*] Could I finish the question, Sir?

Mr. Jordan: I understand the question and you do not need to finish it. You are repeating the same thing. I understood the question the first time.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Hon. Minister, do not leave the Chairman out.

Mr. Jordan: I was on the floor.

Bishop Edghill: I did not get that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Direct the remarks to the Chairman, then you would not be hurling at one to the other.

Bishop Edghill: Thanks for your guidance. Under line item 6141 the question is: What would have led to the reduction of \$1 billion under this item and what are the expenses to be incurred under this item? There is a reduction of \$1 billion over the year 2014. The Hon. Minister was indicating that this is only for a couple of months, but this budget is for 12 months unlike the other agencies.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, I think I am going to use my "abc" cap instead of the other one. The components making up this category are salary increase - \$2.2 billion, new recruits - \$925 million, salary in lieu of leave - \$100 million, gratuity - \$50 million, other employment cost related to salary increases announced another \$200 million making up \$3.475 billion for July to December.

The 2014 salary increase was \$2.1 billion for the whole year; pension increase was \$547 million; new recruits - \$1.2 billion, there was a bonus paid to the disciplined services - \$501 million; salary in lieu of leave - \$92 million, total \$4.4 billion. I hope the Hon. Member understands.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, line item 6321, could the Hon. Minister state whether any resource here is earmarked for any organisation or agency connected to the rice sector?

Mr. Jordan: No.

Mr. Ali: Through you, Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister clarify, in public debt, external principal, in detail, whether the PetroCaribe Fund is captured there.

Mr. Jordan: As the Hon. Member well knows statutory debt cannot be enquired into by the House.

Mr. Ali: I thank you Hon. Minister. Could the Hon. Minister direct me to the specific provision of \$23 billion for the rice farmers?

Mr. Jordan: It is if the Hon. Member would point me to the specific line item he is referring to I might be able to answer him.

Mr. Ali: Could I enquire from the Hon. Minister whether that amount is captured in public debt?

Mr. Jordan: As I said, Mr. Chairman, the House cannot enquire into statutory expenses.

2.04 p.m.

Bishop Edghill: Under line item 6272, Electricity Charges, there is a significant reduction of \$2.5 billion, which seems to be good, in terms of savings, but could the Hon. Minister explain to this Assembly what would have led to the reduction?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister.

Mr. Jordan: Yes Sir. Sorry Mr. Chairman. I was just trying to make the facts correct. Four billion dollars was released to the GPL in 2014. I think that money was released to defray against

electricity used by the governmental system. Of this \$2.5 billion was released to it on the 17th of December, leaving \$1.5 billion, together with another \$1.5 billion that is being budgeted for this year, which will make it roughly \$3 billion that it has to defray electricity charges against the Ministries, departments or agencies.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, Sir, in Appendix R(a) the table shows public service minimum wage as of the 1st January, 2014 at \$42,703. In the budget speech reference is made to the 2013 minimum wage of \$39, 540. Would the Hon. Minister agreed with me that this would have misled the public as to the actual amount of salary increase announced?

Mr. Jordan: Though my honourable friend and Member have not referred to a line item, I can answer him. Although it seems to have been the practice of the past Government, that even though a new minimum wage was announced apparently it only applied to employees employed at the time. Any employee who was coming after the minimum wage was announced was paid at the old minimum wage and this was apparently to avoid bunching. There are several employees who are still being paid at \$39,540 which is the 2013 minimum wage. What we did was to forget all of that and let everyone move up to \$50,000.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, could I ask the Hon. Minister how many persons within the public service were paid at the \$42,000 as against how many were paid at the \$39,540?

Mr. Jordan: I could certainly get that number for him.

Mr. Ali: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: The Hon. Minister would see that in 2015 the budget is allocating \$10.850 billion which is an increase of \$1.4 billion, in terms of contract employees. Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that this is running contrary to the policy position of a new Government of moving away from contract employment?

Mr. Jordan: What is the question?

Mr. Ali: Would the Hon Minister look at the Budget 2015 under contract employment is budgeted at \$10.850 billion which is an increase of \$1.4 billion. Would the Hon. Minister agree with me that this running contrary to the new Government policy position of moving away from contract employment?

Mr. Jordan: I cannot comment on what might be your views, but what I can say is the 99.999% of these people here, I came and I met. I have been there about only three months.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, I am very happy that the Hon. Minister of Finance would have provided some information. However, there is still that increase of \$1.4 billion. It is just to ensure that we have the facts right, would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to provide the list of the contracted workers recruited after 11th May, 2015 by Ministry, department, designation, salary, benefits, allowances and method of recruitment?

Mr. Jordan: I am loath to make such a commitment because it requires a lot of time and they will be looking forward to some number on Friday as requires to all the regions, and so forth. I am loath to make that commitment I will get it but I cannot pin down a time.

Mr. Ali: I am very happy that the Hon. Minister has commitment but I am sure such a shortlist would be easy to develop by agency.

Mr. Jordan: I have one for the Ministry of Finance and I could give you that.

Mr. Ali: Thank you Sir. However, we can move on. I would like to take us to table 6 again, 5952, there is a projected increase in Excise Tax of \$2.3 billion....

Mr. Jordan: Sir, I thought we are dealing with appropriation expenditure.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, I agree with you, but I was just following the Hon. Minister earlier direction...

Mr. Jordan: I think to there is an Appropriation Bill to be passed tonight and it has nothing to do with the tax.

Mr. Ali: We can go back to the appropriation. Programme 031, Policy and Administration, line item 6272, Electricity Charges, \$1,546, 832,000, is it that the Ministry of Finance would be transferring *en bloc* this amount to the Guyana Power and Light Inc. or would the Ministry be transferring by agency? For example, the Guyana Water Incorporated (GWI) and then it would then pay from a month to month basis their commitment to the Guyana Power and Light Inc.

Mr. Jordan: It is the former, we will be transferring *en bloc* and then we provide a list of agencies, what electricity charges are being billed and they would be written off against the block ones.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations, the Minister in his budget speech did allude to the transfers that are to be made to both Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) and to the Guyana Rice Development Board (GRDB) and neither of them are mentioned under this budget line item. I would like the Hon. Minister to indicate to this Assembly where is that represented in the budget and to address this particular matter.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, I think the Hon. Member should restrict his questioning to what is here at line item 6321. There are about 18 different semi-autonomous subvention agencies here and if he wishes he could ask me a question on this. He cannot ask me a question of something that is not here.

Bishop Edghill: I admire the exuberance of the Minister but it would appear... I am asking the question under this line item, if it is not listed here where is it listed for the transfers to GuySuCo and to the GRDB?

Mr. Jordan: I repeat, again, I could only answer for what is here.

Bishop Edghill: Could I confirm that the Hon. Minister is refusing to indicate to this Assembly and disclose where the transfers to GuySuCo and the GRDB is coming from?

Mr. Jordan: Do I have to answer that?

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, could I ask the Hon. Minister of Finance whether the allocation announced for rice farmers would be released *en bloc* and if so when and to whom we can expect such a transfer?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, are you in a position to respond to the question put?

Mr. Jordan: Sir, my response remains that I can only be asked questions in relation to the Appropriation Bill and what is here. The Member cannot ask me for things that are not here or what has somewhere else or something. I think that is the practice in the House.

Bishop Edghill: It is you who said it, nobody else did. It was your budget speech which was read in the House.

Programme: 031- Policy and Administration - \$13,414,214, 000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

2.19 a.m.

Programme: 032 – Public Financial Management – \$4,303,621,000

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6284, Other: There is a significant increase to \$310,255,000. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Assembly what are the items to be procured under this line item and if he can list the amounts allocated to each expenditure item?

Mr. Jordan: Yes. There are several of them. The Free Balance Licence and maintenance support, that is \$30.2 million; then there is Free Balance Sequential Order to the Budget 2015 - \$7 million; then there is smart stream merging of payroll due to the changes of Ministries - \$11.2 million; then there is additional annual maintenance licence for free balance - \$1.6 million; forms interface for users - \$412,000; pay station - \$2 million, performance budgeting - \$20.6 million, Smart Stream Licence fee for payroll - \$9.1 million, Smart Stream Licence fee for human resource development - \$8.9 million, forensic audit of state's entities - \$150 million, connectivity and maintenance of the wireless network - \$17.6 million, connectivity for Regions 1, 4, 8, and 9, broadband - \$ 18.6 million, internet bandwidth, Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) - \$13.5 million, antivirus semantic - \$1.4 million, website email hosting - \$480,000 and DSL cost at 11 locations - \$8 million, annual support fees - \$620,000, off site backup at Bank of Guyana - \$6.1 million, Sanitact services to the office - \$97,000, binding of reports and other documents - \$200,000, binding of Estimates of Expenditure, current and capital, 2015 - \$1 million and for 2016 - \$1.5 million, and internet fees for residence - \$240,000. That is all.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, through you, for the same head and in relation to the answer that was given, the Hon. Minister made some reference to expenditure that relates to new Ministries in his answer. Am I correct?

Mr. Jordan: Yes.

Mr. Ali: Is the Hon. Minister aware, as with respect to new Ministries, that there should be no spending until and after a budget is approved?

Mr. Jordan: The spending is not for the Ministries. It is in relation to getting the owners of the Integrated Financial Management and Accounting System (IFMAS) Licence to come and make the changes on the IFMAS to put in the new Ministries. It is not spending by the new Ministries.

Mr. Ali: Thank you Hon. Minister for that very prompt clarification. Could the Hon. Minister say whether there actually any spending in the new Ministry, prior to today?

Mr. Jordan: There was none whatsoever. Even up to today, there is no spending in the new Ministries.

Mr. Ali: Thank you. Was there any transfer to any...?

Mr. Jordan: There are **no** transfers. All the old Ministries will operate until the end of the 31st.

Mr. Ali: Mr. Chairman, may I indulge you and the Hon. Minister? Was there any transfer to the Guyana Rice Development Board or Guyana Sugar Corporation from the Consolidated Fund?

Mr. Jordan: Asked and answered, Mr. Chairman. I already answered that. No matter how many times he goes around and comes around, I have answered that question.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, on the same line item which I asked the Hon. Minister that he gave us the list, he did indicate that on the forensic audits a sum of \$150 million has been allocated for the forensic audits. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Assembly, the firms that have been engaged, the process that lead to the engagement, the terms of reference for the engagement and the expertise of the persons who are or to be engaged in these forensic audits?

Mr. Jordan: The firms, which have been engaged and the amounts that they are going to get, are:

- Nigel Hinds Financial Service which is doing audits at Guyana Oil Company (GUYOIL), Guyana Energy Agency (GEA), Guyana Office of Investment, Guyana Rice Development Board, PetroCaribe Development Fund and National Drainage and Irrigation Authority - \$23 million, for all of those.

- Ram and McRae – Central Housing and Planning Authority, Ministry of Health Drug Procurement Operation, Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, Guyana Gold Board, National Frequency Management Unit, E-Government Project Information Communication Technology (ICT), Scrap Metal Unit, Speciality Hospital. This firm will get \$40.2 million.
- HLB R. Seebarran and Company – Student Loans Agency and National Insurance Scheme (NIS). He will get \$7.2 million.
- Harryram Parmesar – Guyana National Newspapers Limited, Guyana Information News Agency, National Communications Network. He will get \$5.5 million.
- John Henry Barnes will be investigating Caribbean Festival of Arts (CARIFESTA) and Guyana World Cup Inc. He will get \$1.5 million
- Donna Ellis is doing the Dependence Pension Fund. She will get \$1.5 million.
- Dr. Anand Goolsarran is doing National Industrial and Commercial Investments Ltd. (NICIL), Atlantic Hotel, Marriot Hotel, Guyana Forestry Commission and Environmental Protection Agency. He will get \$8.7 million.
- Thomas Nestor – Transport and Harbour Department, National Sports Commission and Demerara Harbour Bridge. He will get \$4.7 million.
- Azurdeen Hanif is doing the Lotto Funds. He will get \$530,000.
- D. Bahadur and Co. is doing the Deeds Registry. He will get \$4.2 million.
- Lester Bowen – Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and Sport and Art Development Fund. He will get \$1.5 million.
- Nizam Ali and Company – the water cannon and Old Age Pension - \$2.7 million.
- Goorwantie Kaladeen – Cheddi Jagan International Airport (CJIA) - \$1.2 million
- Maurice Solomon and Co. – passport office and Sugar Industry Welfare Fund. He will get \$13.8 million.

- PKF, Barcellos, Narine and Co. – these two are still to be awarded - Guyana Post Office and Guyana National Printers - and it will get \$4 million.
- TSD Lal and Company – Hydromet Department, Pesticides and Toxic Chemicals Control Board and Mahaica Mahaicony Abary/Agriculture Development Authority (MMA/ADA) - \$7 million.
- Saykar A. Boodhoo – New Guyana Marketing Corporation - \$2.8 million.
- Charles Sugrim – Guyana National Co-operative Bank (GNCB), Guyana Co-operative Financial Services, Hope Coconut Estates Ltd. and Property Holdings Inc. - \$7.7 million.

Bishop Edghill: Thank you for the information shared by the Minister but there was another part to the question. Could he indicate what was the process used for the procuring of the services of these individuals? Was it direct...?

Mr. Jordan: The procurement...

Bishop Edghill: Could I finish the question, Sir?

Mr. Jordan: I thought you were just reminding me.

Bishop Edghill: I admire your exuberance but it is early in the morning. Were any of these audits advertised? What was the process used to procure them? I will take that for now. Let me get the answer for the two.

Mr. Jordan: There was no advertising. Sole sourcing and detailed terms of reference had been developed. I can give you that.

Bishop Edghill: I did ask earlier, Sir. A part of the question the Minister did not answer and that is the expertise. Mr. Chairman, there was a part of the question...

Mr. Jordan: Are you going to allow me to answer?

Bishop Edghill: There is a part of the question that is still unanswered - the expertise of the persons engaged to conduct forensic audits.

Mr. Jordan: Every one of the persons engaged got the relevant and requisite expertise in the required fields.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item, I did note that the Hon. Minister did indicate that there is expenditure for free balance and a number of other items but there was no indication that there was an expenditure to operationalise the two unused modules of IFMAS, as was announced by him in his budget speech.

Mr. Jordan: First of all, I think, if the Hon. Member goes back to the budget speech and read the section on that particular matter, which he is rising, I think he will like to withdraw the last part of his statement. Anyway, just to recap, we said that the existing IFMAS is operating sub optimally and we will undertake a review of the entire system before we move to adding anymore modules. We have to bring these modules here up to the required level of efficiency that we had expected of them.

Every time you want to do a simple change to any one of these documents you have to be calling these people to come in to do the changes. It cannot be a system that is user-friendly, and so on. We have to review that and then we are going to deal with the other modules, if they can be held on the platform that we are using.

Programme: 032 – Public Financial Management – \$4,303,621,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 031 – Policy and Administration– \$3,954,895,000

Mr. Ali: Project 3401000, Low Carbon Development Programme, \$1,060,000,000, “Provision for low carbon development initiatives – NORWAY.” Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say to us whether the Ministry will be pursuing all the initiatives under the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS), including that of Amaila’s Fall Hydroelectricity Project?

Mr. Jordan: No Sir.

Bishop Edghill: Under the project, could the Hon. Minister indicate to us the amount that will be allocated to the small micro enterprise project?

Mr. Jordan: Yes. It is \$136.2 million.

Bishop Edghill: Would this be a direct transfer to the Small Business Bureau? Or is it being expended otherwise?

Mr. Jordan: It has never been a direct transfer, Sir.

Programme: 031 – Policy and Administration – \$3,954,895,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

2.34 a.m.

Programme 032 – Public Financial Management - \$18,000,000

Bishop Edghill: Project code 4503100 – Contribution to Local Organisations (Linden Enterprise Network (LEN)) - \$155 million: Could I ask the Hon. Minister when was the last time LEN was audited and if he is in receipt of an Annual Report of LEN?

Mr. Jordan: I know it is a late hour and some of us might be asleep, but this part of the Estimates has already been approved.

Bishop Edghill: Which part?

Mr. Jordan: The part with LEN. We are now on to Programme 032 – Public Financial Management.

Bishop Edghill: So you would not answer the question on a technicality?

Mr. Jordan: No, not on a technicality.

Bishop Edghill: Okay. Mr. Chairman, I noted that the Hon. Minister indicated that it is late in the night and if you would see that the item is close to Programme 032 and I did not recognise that, but I am wondering if he would not answer the question based on a technicality?

Mr. Jordan: No Sir, you have already called Programme 032 and I am prepared to answer on Programme 032.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the matter has already been passed. I do not believe there is room for a comment on it, except to satisfy your request for a comment. It can have no effect on what has gone before.

Programme: 032 – Public Financial Management - \$18,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members would recall that on Monday, we had set down, for later treatment, the constitutional agencies. We will do this in a few minutes.

Hon. Members, I have been advised that there is an agreement between Members of the Government benches and Members of the Opposition benches, in relation to the treatment of the constitutional agencies. A suggestion has been made that, to save time, we will present all the agencies, that is, the constitutional agencies *en bloc* and that the Opposition will not challenge, vote or issue a question on any one of the constitutional agencies. I hope this is a correct representation of the agreement reached. If it is, if it is not, I could benefit from any view that is contrary to this. If it is, then we will proceed.

The items voted on Monday: Office of the President; Parliament Office; Guyana Elections Commission; Office of the Ombudsman; Public Service Appellate Tribunal; Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs; Supreme Court, and an item termed Public Prosecutions. I propose, with the House's consent, to list these items and to put them for acceptance by the House.

2.49 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: The Rights Commission, Ethnic Relations Commission, Women and Gender Quality Commission, Indigenous Peoples' Commission, Rights of the Child Commission, the Human Rights Commission and the Public Procurement Commission were all omitted. I think that we have everything now.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I crave your indulgence while we have this matter arranged in an acceptable order.

The Hon. Minister of Finance has something to say, but I will lead off with the reference to the constitutional institutions. I would call the agency code first, the name of the agency and the

budgeted figure until the end. I will make sure that all have been captured on this paper from which I should read. These are the details for the subventions for the constitutional entities:

Constitutional Entities - \$5,116,254,000

Agency: 07 – Parliament Office - \$568,180,000;

Agency: 08 - Office of the Auditor General - \$649,308,000;

Agency: 09 - Public and Police Service Commission - \$28,436,000;

Agency: 10 - Teaching Service Commission \$35,543,000;

Agency: 11 - Guyana Elections Commission - \$2,258,040,000;

Agency: 55 - Supreme Court - \$1,413,646,000;

Agency: 56 - Public Prosecutions - \$61,135,000;

Agency: 57 - Office of the Ombudsman - \$21,728,000;

Agency: 58 – Public Service Appellate Tribunal Union - \$14,631,000;

Agency: 59 – Ethnic Relation Commission - \$27,596,000;

Agency: 60 - Judicial Service Commission - \$2,340,000,

Agency: 61- Rights Commissions of Guyana - \$35,670,000;

Agency: 61 - Indigenous Peoples’ Commission - \$6,746,000;

Agency: 61 - Human Rights Commission -\$9,167,000;

Agency: 61 - Rights of the Child Commission - \$8,923,000;

Agency: 61 - Women and Gender Equality Commission - \$10, 834,000;

Agency: 62 - Public Procurement Commission - \$1,000

Total constitutional entities - \$5,116,254,000

3.04 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: That represents the list of constitutional entities which was not voted upon on Monday, 24th August, 2015. We will now take them *en bloc*. I hope that was the understanding that I was given.

Constitutional Entities – \$5,116,254,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Jordan: Amendments to be moved to the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2015 in the Committee of Supply of the National Assembly in keeping with the announcement made by the Speaker on 24th August, 2015, regarding the treatment of all constitutional entities within the Estimates. The placement of the constitutional bodies in accordance with the Third Schedule of Article 222 (A) of the Constitution, as amended by the Constitution (Amendment) Act 2015 and the Fiscal Management and Accountability (Amendment) Act 2015 has been addressed by a new Table, as attached, titled *Details of Subventions to Constitutional Entities*. The amendments are as follows, and these are read into the record: The amount shown in column 4 of the Table for the agencies, chart of accounts and descriptions, listed above, are reduced by the amounts shown in column 5 and/or increased by the amounts shown in column 6.

I now wish to move that, the motion circulated in my name, making reductions and/or additions to relevant charts of account under the agencies and descriptions found in column 2 in an amount approximately equivalent to the financing needs of the last four months, and placing those allocations in a simple lump sum under the said agency, within the chart of accounts – 6321 as for tables above.

The exception is the case of the Supreme Court, which was an amendment to the Estimates in April 2014, and thus the amounts reflect the financing needs for 12 months of the financial year 2015.

The aggregates of the amounts being moved from the various charts of account for each agency are as stated in the tables above. The amounts being moved to chart of account – 6321, which shall be renamed Subventions to Local Organisations and Constitutional Bodies under the respective agencies, are being done as a single lump sum for the period September to December 2015 and in the case of the Supreme Court for the full financial year 2015.

Bishop Edghill: Just for clarification, we on this side of the House would like to have the assurance from the Hon. Minister, that in keeping with the law and what is being said, this transfer would be done expeditiously in keeping with the law which says within one month and since we have just four months remaining for the year, if this could be done expeditiously.

Mr. Chairman: I thank the Hon. Member, but did the Minister undertake to do? That is my question.

Bishop Edghill: My understanding is that the Hon. Minister indicated that it would be done by in a way of a lump sum, but the time was not addressed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion Carried.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members this completes consideration by the Committee of Supply of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2015.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Jordan: I have to report that the Committee of Supply considered the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2015 and approved of them as amended.

Mr. Speaker: I will now put the motion that the National Assembly approves of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2015 of a total sum of \$181,697,993,000, excluding \$39,380,613,000, which is chargeable by law, as detailed herein and summarised in the Schedule and agreed that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provisions in respect to finance.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the draft Appropriation Bill before us today was done before the discussions were held with both sides of this honourable House regarding the treatment of constitutional agencies. Resulting from those discussions, there has been some amendments to

the Estimates which addressed the new treatment of constitutional agencies to the satisfaction of both sides and for which an amended Appropriation Bill was submitted.

The Clerk of the National Assembly will make the appropriate changes, as submitted, and the sum to be voted will reflect the required amendments in the Appropriation Act.

Suspension of Standing Orders No. 13(n) and 54

First Vice-President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]: Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I move that Standing Orders No. 13(n) and 54 be suspended to enable the Appropriation Bill 2015, as an amendment, to be introduced at this stage.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Orders suspended.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL AND FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read for the first time:

APPROPRIATION BILL 2015, BILL NO. 7 OF 2015

A Bill Intituled:

“AN ACT to provide for the use from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the fiscal year ending 31st December, 2015, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” *[Minister of Finance]*

Mr. Jordan: In accordance with paragraph two of Article 171 of the Constitution, I signified that Cabinet has recommended the Appropriation Bill 2015, Bill No. 7 of 2015, as amended, for consideration by the National Assembly and I now presented the Bill to the Assembly and moved that it be read the first time.

SECOND AND THIRD READINGS

APPROPRIATION BILL 2015, BILL NO. 7 OF 2015

A Bill Intituled:

“AN ACT to provide for the use from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the fiscal year ending 31st December, 2015, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” *[Minister of Finance]*

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Speaker, I move that the Appropriation Bill 2015, Bill No. 7 of 2015, be read a second time, as amended.

Question put, and carried.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. Jordan: I move that the Appropriation Bill 2015, Bill No. 7 2015 be read the third time and passed, as amended.

Bill read a third time and passed, as amended.

3.19 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, this completes our work on the Budget. I trust that the outcome is satisfactory to all.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: I will now ask the First Vice-President and Prime Minister to move the motion.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I move that the House be adjourned to Friday, 28th August, 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: The Assembly stands adjourned to Friday, 28th August, 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 3.21 a.m.