

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT
[VOLUME 7]

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

15th Sitting	2 p.m.	Friday, 30th November, 1973
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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (50)

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent – on leave)

Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development and Agriculture

Senior Ministers (7)

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minster of Works and Communications

(Absent – on leave)

*The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Justice

(Absent)

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

(Absent)

***Non-elected Ministers**

*The Hon. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

*The Hon. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance

*Dr. the Hon. K.F.S. King,
Minister of Economic Development

(Absent)

*The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Housing

Ministers (6)

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture

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

*The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education

(Absent – on leave)

*Dr. the Hon. O. M. R. Harper,
Minister of Health

*The Hon. G. A. King
Minister of Trade

Ministers of State (9)

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)

(Absent)

The Hon. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

***Non-elected Ministers**

The Hon. C. A. Nascimento,
Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister

Mr. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.
Minister of State – Regional (Essequibo
Coast/West Demerara)

*The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of State for Home Affairs

*The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State – Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro) **(Absent – on leave)**

*The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of State - Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice) **(Absent)**

*The Hon. F. U. A. Carmichael,
Minister of State – Regional (North West) **(Absent)**

Parliamentary Secretaries (8)

Mr. J.R. Thomas
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works
and Communications

Miss M.M. Ackman,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister,
and Government Whip

Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Parliamentary Secretary (Agriculture),
Ministry of National Development and Agriculture **(Absent)**

Mr. K. B. Bancroft,
Parliamentary Secretary (Hinterland),
Ministry of National Development and Agriculture

Mr. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Co-operatives
And National Mobilisation **(Absent)**

***Non-elected Ministers**

Mr. J. P. Chowritmootoo,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education

Mr. R. H. O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co-operatives and National Mobilisation **(Absent)**

Other Members (18)

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Mrs. L. M. Branco
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Miss J. Gill
Mr. W. Hussain
Miss S. Jaiserrisingh **(Absent – on leave)**
Mr. K. M. E. Jonas
Mr. M. Nissar
Dr. L. E. Ramsahoye **(Absent – on leave)**
Mr. J. G. Ramson
Mrs. P. A. Rayman
Mr. E. M. Stoby, J.P. **(Absent)**
Mr. S. H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.
Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.
Mr. H. A. Taylor
Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman
Mrs. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

Liberty Party (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh, Deputy Speaker
Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F.A. Narain
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M. B. Henry, AMBIM.

30.11.73

National Assembly

2.10-2.15 p.m.

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave To Members

2.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the Hon. Minister of Works and communication, Mr. Hoyte, and to the Hon. Minister of stats – Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro), Mr. Haynes, for today's sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 5/1973

“Be it resolved that the committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 5/1973 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 31st October, 1973, totalling \$15, 976,436.” [**The Minister of Finance**]

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, yesterday when the Adjournment was taken, we had omitted the consideration of the Head, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture. We will continue with that today, and may I ask you to turn to page 17, commencing from item 109 and continuing to page 19, item 120. We proceed with page 17. Will members kindly indicate?

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 110, please, sir.

Mr. Singh: Items 109 and 112.

The Chairman: Please proceed, Hon. Member Mr. Singh

30.11.73

National Assembly

2.10-2.15 p.m.

Mr. Singh: Item 109, Telephones, under head 27 – Ministry of National Development and Agriculture. I should like the Hon. Minister to take note – he was not here yesterday when I talked of these telephones and telephone bills. I am sure he will appreciate the very serious state affairs as a result of the non-payment of the 1972 telephone bill which, up to the end of November, are not paid. I would also like him to look into the figures here.

If we look at it, \$48,000 was provided in the 1973 Estimates. We are asking for \$52,000 supplementary provision to enable the payment of the 1972 accounts and for additional telephone facilities. If we add \$48,000 provided in the 1972 Estimates, \$48,000 provided in the 1973 estimates, and \$52,000 being asked to be provided now, we get \$148,000.

I am still of the opinion that it will be necessary to ask for more money to meet the 1973 accounts. We will now know what the entire accounts are until the end of the year but from the trend of things yesterday – we have the financial experts all around – it would appear that this \$48,000 provided for 1973 will not be enough. It may well be necessary to ask for supplementary provision. Could I exhort the Minister to do so early so that the Telecommunication Corporation can be paid early and thus operate properly and efficiently? They are far from being efficient at the present moment. We know and we appreciate the Technical Difficulties, because they have embarked on a very great expansion programme. Let us not put more obstacles in their way. If they have obstacles as a result of their expansion programme, at least let us pay our bills and give them an opportunity to have available money, without having to run to the banks for extra financing for which they will have to pay exorbitant bank rates.

2.15 p.m.

Item 112, head 27, “Ministry of Nation Development and Agriculture, subhead 9 – National Insurance” Something is radically wrong here, and I am inviting the Hon. Minister to look at it carefully. If we had provided \$40,000 to meet National Insurance and we are now asking for \$55,000. The legend states, “Voted provision inadequate due to revision of wages and salaries” If you are asking for an additional amount as a result of “Revision of wages and salaries” and not as a result of an increase in staff then how come the amount you are asking for is more than the

original amount provided? If your normal amount for National Insurance Scheme is \$40,000 how could a revision result in a request for \$55,000? This is something that is wrong.

Let us look at the trend. Let us look, for example, at page 10. Hon. Members feel annoyed because I am pointing out something that is wrong but, you have to be exposed; we have to tell them when they are wrong. If they are wrong they must admit they are wrong. If the Hon. Minister indicates to me he is wrong I will take my seat but he has not done so. I will give him an opportunity to do so.

Let me look at page 10, item 69. You will see that the voted provision is for \$6,500, for National Insurance under Ministry of Home Affairs and the supplementary provision asked for is only \$1,000. Let us follow the trend. If we look on page 14 we will see the same trend is there. For item 98, National Insurance, \$33,000 was provided the supplementary provision is only \$13,500. The same reason is given – revision of wages and salaries. Page 16, National Insurance \$33,000 was provided; the supplementary provision is only \$13,500. The same reason is given – revision of wages and salaries. Pages 16, National Insurance again. It goes on all the time. For item 105, \$7,600 was provided: the supplementary amount is only \$2,000. Page 20, item 127, National Insurance - \$62,000 provided in the estimates; the amount asked for is only \$12,000, as the result of increase in salaries and wages. So we can go on but the trend is consistent throughout. We can go on and show a very consistent trend where in no case is the supplementary provision more than the original amount asked for. Page 29.

[Interruption]

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh, I do not want you to stop but have you not made your point? The Hon. Minister says he will reply. You have the right of querying his reply.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Thank you, sir but one has to make assurance doubly sure because there is such vociferous opposition to what I am saying that one wanted to hammer the nail in. If the Hon. Members on the other side and, sometimes one is tempted to put the word “Honourable” between inverted commas, would perhaps be quiet and listen to some good sense from this side maybe we could get on much faster. So this obviously is in need of an explanation.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: With Respect to Guyana Marketing Corporation, at item 110. I think it was that, we were given a little pamphlet called “The Fax” published by the ministry of Information and Culture in September, 1973. “The Fax” showed us, what great strides we had made in the field of agriculture and quoted some figures, the point raised that we had increased production since 1964 is quite correct. When you read figures with six naughts behind a one and things like that, it sounds as if the amounts are terrific. I would like to quote two paragraphs and then prove that really the quantity is not as much per head as they tried to make out. I quote from “the Fax”

“ . . . Since 1964, Guyana has made tremendous strides in the field of agriculture, so much so that we have attained self-sufficiency in commodities such as cabbage, table eggs and black-eye peas. The figures speak for themselves”

Yes sir, figures do speak for themselves.

Let us first of all take cabbages – **[Interruption]**

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, if you look at the item, very clearly it states in the notes to provide for an additional subsidy advances to the Corporation in 1967 in respect of edible oil. We are not dealing with a Subsidy to the Guyana Marketing Corporation as a whole but only in relation to that specific item.

Mrs. DaSilva: Yes, sir, but edible oil, I admit, sir, is part and parcel of what Guyana Marketing Corporation is responsible for.

The Chairman: With all due respect, it is part and parcel yes, but we are only dealing the parcel.

Mrs. DaSilva: Surely it should deal with other items in the Guyana Marketing Corporation as well as the edible oil. I am stating a fact. The Cabbage production rose from 320,850 pounds in 1964 to 1,650,000 pounds. Sir, with a population – **[Interruption]**

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National Assembly

2.15-2.25 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, I thought I made myself very clear. I do not want to put it in a harsher form but I am drawing your attention again to the fact that the \$60,000 is in relation to a subsidy in respect of the year 1967.

Mrs.DaSilva: Very well sir, I have to bow to your decision. You are the Speaker.

The Chairman: Whilst it is true you have to bow, I am drawing your attention to what is a fact.

Mrs.DaSilva: Yes sir, but, I do not agree with you because in the Estimates we used the head to talk about the Ministry that is being discussed and I am talking about the Guyana Marketing Corporation.

The Chairman: You will have that Opportunity during the debate on the Budget.

Mrs. DaSilva: Very well, sir.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture (Dr. Reid): Mr. Chairman, in connection with the telephones, this matter was dealt with over and over again. It is difficult to say, with certainty, what the changes are going to be and even though my friend is advising that we should make an estimate now we would either be coming back for additional provision or their vote would not be necessary. But, in connection with National Development and Agriculture has expanded. As a matter of fact, when the Estimated was made last year to be debated early this year this Ministry did not have certain departments. I wish him to know that in this Ministry we have also drainage and irrigation and sea defence. It is a Larger Minister, more people have to be accounted for and hence what is strange to him is regular.

2.25 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 18

Mrs.DaSilva: Item 117

Mr.Singh: Item 114 and 117

The Chairman: Hon. Member, I wish to make a slight correction. On page 18, item 118. You will observe that item 118 is a new item. It should read subhead 44(new). Contribution on Inter-American institute of Agricultural Services.

Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, please proceed.

Mrs.DaSilva: Item 117, subsidy to Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation. The Legend states: "To provide for an increase in the annual subsidy. " The Guyana School of Agriculture grow as cabbages and black-eye peas; they produce eggs and this must add to the total food produced in Guyana, the quantity available as food. To clarify this point, I wish to quote from Fax of September, 1973 produced by the Ministry of Information and culture:

"Since 1964 Guyana has made tremendous strides in the field of Agriculture so much so that we have attained self-sufficiency in commodities such as cabbages, table eggs and black-eye peas. The figures speak for themselves."

This, of course, was last year. For Example, the cabbage production rose from 320, 850 lbs. In 1964 to 1,650,000 lbs in 1972. This sounds like an awful lot of cabbages, especially now when you do not see it around and nobody pays attention to the controlled prices of 46c a lb. And as a market vendor would say: "tek it or leave it, 84c a lb." But when you really get down to brass-tacks and divide this quantity by .8 million one total population it works out to 2 lbs. of cabbages per head per year.

We have to make dhol with black-eye peas because there are no split peas. The Indian population, as you are aware, is very high and dhol is one of their staple diets so they are following the Prime Minister and making dhol with black-eye peas and they have to pay 70c per pint for the peas. Production of Black-eye peas works out to be ½ lb. per person per year.

We are supposed to be self-sufficient in eggs. This works out to 33 eggs per year and in December when we want to make our Christmas cakes we do not have any eggs.

How can it be said that we are self-sufficient in these three items – cabbages, black-eye peas and eggs? I would appreciate an explanation of how those figures were arrived at.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 114, under Head of Ministry of National Development and Agriculture subhead 9 Purchase, Production and distribution of seeds and plants. The sum originally voted was \$135,000 and we are now asking for supplementary provision of \$76,000 and The legend states: "To meet the cost of an expanded programme."

I have always thought that a Ministry that is supposed to be as efficient as the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture would have had its programme planned and settled, that they would know what was wanted and would have anticipated and estimated to cost of that programme.

The sum of \$76,000 is a very significant amount it is well over 50 per cent of what was originally asked for. Why is it that this expenditure was not foreseen? Surely it could have been foreseen. I do not think that any request for seeds from persons like me and other who asked to plant my own black-eye peas and kitchen garden could have resulted in an increase to the tune of \$76,000. There seems to be something wrong with the planning. If the Programme had been properly planned then we would have had this \$76,000 reflected in the amount originally requested.

The same comment has to be made on item 117 which is under the same Head. This is the subsidy to the Guyana School of Agriculture Corporation. The sum originally voted was \$155,000 and the sum of \$114,000 is now being asked for as additional Supplementary Provision. Again the legend states: "To provide for increase in the annual subsidy." Presumably, the Guyana School of Agriculture has also an expanded programme, following the previous legend. Since this amount being asked for now is nearly as much as the sum originally voted, one wonders what went wrong with the planning. Surely at the beginning of the year somebody must have realized that the school would have expanded and needed more money. Do not tell me the cost of living has gone up nearly 100 per cent. I have heard the Hon. Minister saying that our cost of living has gone up.

One would understand item 115, for example, Veterinary Preventive measures, under the same Head. The sum originally asked for was \$50, 000 and the sum now being asked for is \$135,000 a tremendous lot of money. But we understand that and we will not question that at all

because the legend explains it: “to meet unanticipated additional expenditure resulting from the outbreak of Foot and Mouth disease in the Rupununi District.” We can understand that because we do not know when the Foot and Mouth Disease will hit us. But we can plan for our expanded programme at the Guyana School of Agriculture.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, I will deal with the first speaker on Guyana School of Agriculture. She did not really deal with this increase requested but she mentioned some of the foods and read from a leaflet the facts that we are self-sufficient in certain commodities. Cabbage, black-eye and eggs we are self-sufficient in those commodities and I wish the Hon. Member to know that when foods are grouped you do not just pick out one item because now we do not only talk about black-eye peas but peas and beans.

Years ago, people only knew about black-eye peas, but today we have brown-eye peas, white beans, black peas, red kidney beans and all sorts of other peas and beans for dhol, so you need not mention that the person would only use black-eye. We have several others, so we are self-sufficient in cabbage, black-eye and eggs and I hope this would continue long time from now. But there had to be a request for a subsidy because of the change in salaries not only in staff, but of all the people who serve the Guyana School of Agriculture. At times we have emergency courses because of the thrust in agriculture. Requests come from the villages and District Councils and to meet these demands, it is necessary to ask for supplementary provisions so that the Guyana School of Agriculture can function more effectively.

In Connection with item 114 and my friend’s surprise at this additional expenditure. He believes that in doing this you can really plan in detail how many seeds and plants you will need for the year. That would be all if we were dealing with ten large estates or ten large plantations, but in agriculture one of the problems is that you are dealing with thousands of small farmers and it does not matter what you do, you cannot be sure what additional request will come from the thousands of small farmers.

In some countries they do not take on this task of encouraging small farmer, but we in Guyana have committed ourselves to a policy of encouraging our small farmers. Some people would like us to have large plantations and operate as in the past with a plantation economy. We

have changed that and we do not hope to go back on that. The basis of Guyana's agriculture is the thousands of small farmers who must make their living from farming, not these catch-and-go people who come in when things are good and then disappear again. We depend on the thousands of small farmers and their needs must be met. In the course of the year, if they request more planting materials, it is the business of Ministry of National Development to look at that notwithstanding the comments made by my friend. I hope, however, that he understands a little bit more about farming in this country.

The Chairman: Page 19. We will now proceed to page 27.

Mr Singh: Item 164.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 166.

The Chairman: Hon Member, Mr. Feilden Singh.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, this is Head 40, Ministry of Education, subhead 21 – Students Contingencies Fund. The sum originally provided was \$5,520 and the supplementary provision now being sought is \$9,610. What is interesting is the legend which says to provide for the payment of arrears of contribution towards hostel accommodation amount being paid but what we certainly would like to know what people were owed this money by Government for such a long period. If the accounts date back to 1966 and it is a sum of \$9,600, somebody has been owed a significant amount of money, and first of all I would like to know: Who is to be paid this money? Why is it that this money is being paid so late? Did our students suffer in any way as a result of this? What is it being paid for? Are these students overseas or in Guyana? I do not know, I am now asking for information. Is the money being paid to them or is it the money being to an institution? Would they suffer any embarrassment? Would people tell them 'Look your Government has not paid money for your accommodation' and things like that? I would hate to know that our students suffered in any way as a result of this. Something is wrong somewhere; somebody has been very lax in that a debt has been left unpaid since 1966 in respect of hostel accommodation of all things.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 166 – Grants to Aided Secondary School. The Legend reads “voted provision inadequate due to revision of wages and salaries” and so we have asked to provide \$301, 891. I just want a little information about this because I understand from various people I have spoken with in aided Secondary Schools - I wish to make it quite clear here, I am not speaking about the Roman Catholic School alone I am speaking of all the demonstrations I have spoken with, nationally - that aided Secondary Schools do not get the facilities, grants and aid that government gives to its own schools.

We talked yesterday of charity beginning at home – at least we say that here – but we in Guyana owe a great debt to the Secondary and Primary Schools that are being provided by the Churches of different religious denominations in Guyana. Without them our education would be in even a worse state it is now, but I would be interested to know if this provision – and we have spoken very often during these supplementary estimates that the people who are going to benefit from the wage increases are the charwomen and as we said we are very pleased about this because I understand that the salaries of charwomen in the government aided Schools are not an a par with or anywhere near the salaries received by those Government Schools. I would like to have some information on this matter, if this is correct, and I would like to know how it could be brought in line with the ideal where they should be all on par because they are all providing services in training our young people in Guyana. Once we have a school and the School is meeting the required standard and they are doing a good job about it, everybody should be on the same scale. I would like some explanation on this.

2.45 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education (Mr. Chowritmootoo): Mr. Chairman, with reference to item 164 students Contingencies Funds brought up by the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, The supplementary provision now sought is to accommodate monies owing to the Students hostel in London. This Provision is now sought because of the arrangement which is made by that organisation for the running of that hostel. The provision comes after the facilities have been offered. It goes like this. Allocation is calculated on the basis

of beds being provided, and until the facilities are used up, we will not be in a position to know exactly how much is to be expanded. This amount \$9,610, relates to Guyana's contribution from 1966 to 1972. For further information, this amount was not submitted to the Ministry until June of this year.

In relation to item 166, under Head 49, Ministry of Education, a paradox that our Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva asked, in view of what she has said, that government should recognise the quality and standard being provided and what have you, yet she has chosen to question why there should be the provision of \$301,000. It is quite adequately put forward in the legend: "Voted provision inadequate due to revision of wages and Salaries."

As you might have known sir, Government provides 72 per cent of the salaries paid by the aided secondary schools. In addition to this pay a grant in block for other facilities which are enjoyed by the Government schools. As you will note, all these school are privately owned, and Government's commitment is a moral one. As I said, we recognise the contribution bring made by some of the private secondary schools, thus, the provision.

The Chairman: Page 28

Mr. Singh: Item 170, 171, and 172. Item 170, electricity, Head 49, Ministry of Education-Anna Regina Secondary School. This is not the Telecommunication Corporation now but the electricity Corporation. I am sorry Dr. King is not here. I am sure he would have supported me. It is really an atrocious state of affairs that the Government should be owing bills to these corporations. This one says: "To provide for the payment of accounts for the period 1970-1972."

We all know there must be a lapse of sometime before we can fix up the accounts for any particular year, but we are not talking about fixing up accounts for 1972 in February 1973. We are talking about accounts for 1970 at the end of November, 1973. This is not good enough. These corporations must be given a better chance than this. If we owe them money, we must pay them.

Even here it is obvious there has been short budgeting, because if one takes the 1970-1972 period, which is three years, and if the sum of \$4,368 is required for three years, than it is obvious that 1973 will cost more than \$1,000, and \$1,000 is what has been provided for 1973. The pattern of 1970 and 1972 would lead is to the inescapable conclusion that the provision of 1973 is inadequate. Let us have a more realistic set of estimates rather than doing this on an ad hoc basis. When the bills come in we pay them without budgeting.

Item 171, Transport and travelling, Under Head 51, Ministry of Education – Technical Institute, New Amsterdam, this deals with the Technical Institute, New Amsterdam. The sum of \$3,500 was originally voted; \$1,500 is now being asked for to meet unanticipated additional expenditure due to heavy rain repairs to a Land rover, and also incidental expenses during the period of disrepair, so that according to the legend, the sum of \$1,500 is directly related to the land rover, and the travelling which the land rover does, and the fact that during the time the land rover was laid up, money was expended to fill the breach.

I would like to ask; what is this land rover used for? The Technical Institute, Georgetown, page 144 in the Estimates, does not have any Land Rover. It does not seem to have any vehicles because, whereas the technical institute, New Amsterdam, has provision for a driver, the Technical Institute, Georgetown, does not provide for a Driver. The question is, why has the New Amsterdam Technical Institute being allocated a Vehicle? There may be very good reasons for giving the Technical Institute, New Amsterdam, a Land Rover, and not giving the Technical Institute, Georgetown, anything.

As I said before, while the Honourable Minister was not listening, there was no driver allocated to the technical institute, Georgetown. I know the Georgetown institute, has only \$3,200 provided for. Transport and travelling, New Amsterdam has \$3,500 and an additional \$15,000 and it has a Vehicle. I am not quarrelling with the amount. There may be very good reasons but I would like to know.

The last one, item 172, Head 51 – Ministry of Education, Technical Institute, New Amsterdam, Sub Head 6, Power and Lighting. This is a complaint I have been making all the time. On this occasion the Government owes the New Amsterdam Municipality. Perhaps if this

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National Assembly

2.45-2.55 p.m.

\$22,000 were paid, then the residence of New Amsterdam would have some improvements on the roads. The sum of \$14,800 was originally voted for power and lighting for the Technical Institute, New Amsterdam, and now the sum of \$22,000 is being asked for to provide for the payment of the 1972 accounts. The 1972 accounts will not come in at the end of 1972, but they will come in long before November, 1973. Pay the New Amsterdam municipality its accounts.

In the 1972 estimates, the sum of \$8,000 was provided for power and lighting, at this technical institute so if one adds \$8000 to the \$22,000 that is now being asked for, one gets the sum of \$30,000 being requested to pay the 1972 accounts. If \$30,000 is required to pay the 1972 accounts, and the estimates provided \$14,000 for the 1973, it means the New Amsterdam Municipality will have to wait for supplementary provision, to get the balance of money due for 1973. If they 1972 change is \$30,000, 1973 cannot be \$14,000. Why come back again? If you know it is \$30,000 ask for an additional \$15,000 and make up the money. It is pretty obvious that these corporations and municipalities are being given a raw deal.

2.55 p.m.

Mr. Chowritmootoo: Mr. Chairman, under item 171 it should be noted and recognised by the Honourable Member Mr. Feilden Singh that the vehicle that is assigned to the New Amsterdam technical Institute services the entire the Bernice Area and a paltry increase in the provision of \$1,500, to my mind and to any reasonable mind, is reasonable.

Item 172. We have recognised that it is reasonable to pay 1972 account in 1973.

The Chairman: Page 29.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Items 173 to 175.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 173 under head 51 – Ministry of Education – Technical Institute, New Amsterdam, sub head 7 – Materials, Equipment, Books etc. The voted provision is \$25,000. The sum now being asked for a supplementary provision is \$15,000 and, the legend states “To provide for the maintenance for current courses,” it goes on to state that

“An amount of \$7,500 has been advanced from the contingencies fund.” This is a very strange legend – “for the maintenance of current courses.” Presumably it would not have been possible to continue these current courses, not additional courses, not special courses, if this sum of \$15,000 was not forthcoming. Again, this is an example of bad planning. This is a 60 percent increase. \$25,000 voted, \$15,000 requested in addition to the \$25,000 60 percent asked for. We have no objection to this at all, absolutely no objection. Of course, our children must be educated, of course, the existing courses must be brought to finality but what we object to is the bad planning. What is not realised that it would need \$25,000 plus \$15,000 dollars to continue these courses? Surely, it must have been realised. Are they saying that the cost of living has affected these courses? If you have a set of courses going through to the end of the year, you must know, have some reasonable idea, what these courses would cost. How could the cost of these courses suddenly increase by 60 percent? Let us be done with this bad planning. Let us come at the beginning of the year and ask for a realistic amount. Even if the sum is a little bit more, we would not grumble. Education is something on which it is necessary to spend money. Our children, our people must be educated and, therefore, we should not be niggling in respect of allocation for education but let us know at the beginning so that we can balance our budget and do not come at the end of the year and tell us we need this or that amount to carry on the courses.

Item 175, under head 52, Ministry of Health, sub head 4 – Telephones is “To provide for the payment of the 1972 accounts” the sum of \$80,000 was provided in 1972 estimates, so that the sum of \$112,000 is required for the 1972 accounts. Let us check it out; \$32,000 now is being asked for, \$80,000, was originally provided, a total of \$112,000 for 1972. How can \$80,000 be enough for 1972? That is what is provided here - \$80,000 for 1972. Let us have realistic figures. It is quite apparent, from going this supplementary provision, that the Telecommunication Corporation is owed hundreds of thousands of dollars in 1973. If we fail to provide it here as we have been failing to provide it during the year it means that we will not be able to pay our bills to the Telecommunication Corporation. Let us do something about it.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Chowritmootoo.

Mr. Chowritmootoo: Mr. Chairman, under item 173, the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh should be able to recognise that the Technical Institute, New Amsterdam, is a new facility provided for the people of Berbice and, as he had recognised, one would be grateful for extension of educational facilities. This is exactly what my Ministry has done in this case. We have provided for an increase in students in the present courses and, as he had recognized, there is also, apparently, an increase in the cost of raw materials. There ought to be an increase also in the provision of raw materials or increased classes.

The Chairman: Hon Minister of Health.

The Minister of Health (Dr. Harper): Mr. Chairman, the \$32,000 additional provision is needed to meet payment of 1972 accounts that we received during 1973.

The Chairman: Page 30.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 184, please.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Item 185, sir.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 184, 54, Ministry of Health – Bacteriological. “To provide for the creation of a new subhead to reflect expenditure on the maintenance of laboratory equipment” under subhead 13, Maintenance of Laboratory Equipment. It has always been the custom, sir, during discussion of estimates whether the Estimates for the year to come supplementary estimates, that an opportunity is taken to enquire about things in general in the various ministries. We wish to know, for general information, that is, for the public to know, what is going on. I hope, sir, that this custom will be continued that we will not be told that this is not the time and not the right place.

As is well known there is a big programme going on now throughout the country to get money for a cancer detection centre for women. A great deal of money has been raised during fund raising drives and our people are asking when is this going to get off the ground.

3.05 p.m.

There is one question that has been going through the minds of people, I think it was given a certain amount of publicity in the newspapers. I wonder if the Hon. Minister could help on this point. People want to know with regard to the Paps Test, what is happening about the training of technicians. Can the Hon. Minister say how many are capable of doing the test?

The Chairman: Hon Member Mrs. DaSilva, please let us confine ourselves to this. This is for maintenance of laboratory equipment. It has nothing to do with the training of technicians.

Mrs. DaSilva: Technicians will use the laboratory equipment, that is why we want to know about the training of technicians.

The Chairman: I am not going to allow that. I am going to allow the questions dealing with maintenance of equipment.

Mr. Singh: Item 185, Head 55, Ministry of Health –X– Ray, X-Ray Supplies. The voted provision is \$65,000, the supplementary provision is \$30,000, the legend is what I want to deal with. It states: “To meet the cost of supplies ordered through the Crown Agents during 1972, and received in 1973.” I have no quarrel with the money itself. What I want to ask is this: Are we still ordering through the Crown Agents? I personally have absolutely no objection to this as long as we are getting the value for our money. But I thought that it was the Government’s philosophy to do away with such colonial institutions as the Crown Agents. Do not say, no, because I have heard P.N.C. Ministers of this very honourable House criticise the ordering of goods through the Crown Agents and say that the P.N.C. Government would put an end to that and would do its own ordering directly. Has there been a re-thinking on this policy? Or is it that order was put through by some loyal colonial-minded Permanent Secretary who has since been fired?

Dr. Harper: Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$30,000 was required to pay for supplies ordered in 1972, but was received late due to delays in production and shipping. One of the reasons why our Ministry still orders through the Crown Agents is that in some instances the Crown Agents offer us better prices but prefer purchasing from other Commonwealth Countries.

The Chairman: Page 31.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 187.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, item 187, Ministry of Health, Hospitals and Dispensaries, etc, Subhead 3- Miscellaneous. We are being asked to vote the sum of \$1, 150 and the legend states. "To provide for unanticipated expenditure due to requests for a higher level of health services." First of all, why do we need to request a higher level of health services? Should the Government not provide a proper health service? At last after the many years that we on this side of the House have been speaking about the disgraceful condition of the Public Hospital Georgetown, they have heard from the lips of their own supporter, Dr. Broomes, that the conditions at the P.H.G. need going into. I should like the Hon. Members of the House to get hold of the *Guyana Graphic*, Monday 26th November, 1973 and read the article. No wonder we need a higher level of health services which will also include the question which I wanted to ask earlier because it has to do with improving the level of our health services. Perhaps I can ask the question now: What is the position with regard to the training of technicians to do the Paps Test? Have we got the people to do the work? The Cancer Detection Committee has raised the money to go ahead but the plans have not been implemented. We understand that there is only one man at the Public Hospital who has been trained to read these very important smears for the Paps Test.

To go back to Dr. Broomes. I wish to quote one paragraph:

"How do you explain or excuse in attending doctors and nurses, shortages in sympathy and compassion, in courtesy and in kindness in demonstrating elementary rules in hygiene, in patients' care in providing the elementary medical skills to make more comfortable the helplessly ill."

I do wish everyone would read this excellent article because we on this side have spoken over and over again about conditions at the Public Hospital Georgetown and nothing has been done about it. I would be most grateful if the Hon. Minister could tell us something about it.

Dr. Harper: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member on my right should be reminded that in the last few years we have developed a very effective Medical Department and the small amount here was due to the increased demands made upon the Health Centres outside of the city. I do not think it is fit and proper for me to discuss the Public Hospital under this Head but with proper notification I will be happy to do so. We are training technologists and we have trained cytologists. As soon as our staffing pattern at the laboratory is complete we will be quite happy to inform the Hon. Member.

3.15 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 32.

Mr. Singh: Items 194 and 201.

Mrs. DaSilva: Items 194 and 198 under Head 58, Ministry of Health-Palms I would like to look at them together. Item 194 – Dietary at the Palms and Item 198 Meals for Nurses. The sum of \$21,000 is asked for dietary and \$6,000 for Meals for Nurses at the Palms. We are not quibbling against it, we are pleased to vote any money to make sure that the patients and the nurses are adequately and properly fed and I notice that the legend against item 194 reads “to provide for the introduction of a new menu with greater nutritional value and also the payment of outstanding 1972 accounts.”

Again I wish to say that we do not object to this, we approve of this amount of money being spent but we keep coming back to the same thing over and over again. Where the Palms is concerned we would not have so many people applying for admission if they had adequate old-age pensions to allow them to live at home, with a relative or somewhere else. Again I use this head to stress upon the need for an increase in old-age pensions. I have been doing this all through these supplementary estimates because the Estimates for next year are being prepared and I am looking forward, when they are produced to us some time in December, to see that the old age pension has been increased.

Mr. Singh: Item 194, subhead 4 – Dietary – for which the sum of \$21,000 is being asked. We have no quarrel with the amount of money, as my Hon. Colleague has said, but what arrests

the attention immediately is the fact that again Government is not paying its debts. The legend says "To provide for the introduction of a new menu with greater nutritional value and also for the payment of outstanding 1972 accounts." Why do we not pay our bills? Government should set the example by paying the bills. After all, if we owe Government we have to pay very promptly or else, probably in the case of income tax, we would have to pay interest on it. For whom do we owe these outstanding 1972 accounts? This is almost December, 1973, and we owe 1972 accounts to people for Dietary, that is, for food presumably supplied. I would like to say that probably some of the people may be poor farmers from whom they bought some provision or things like that. These amounts have owed for a long time and I would like to know what part of this \$21,000 is in respect of 1972 accounts owing. Let us set the example.

Item 201, Head 59, Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction. This deals with subhead 5 – Telephones, but I am not talking about telephone now. The supplementary provision sought is \$16,212 and the legend says "To meet the payment of 1972 accounts and for provision of new telephone facilities at the D'Urban Park Pavilion." I would like to know what is going on at the D'Urban Park Pavilion now. There were elaborate plans to establish a Cultural Complex there. Is that still going to be done? And what are these telephone facilities that are installed or are to be installed? The money must be spent before the 31st December, 1973. Presumably this sum of \$160,000 will be spent. Will we have telephone facilities at D'Urban Park by the end of 1973? What are the plans for this area?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Health.

Mr. Harper: Hon. Chairman, the Hon. Member on my right should remember that bills owing to 31st December, 1972, can hardly be presented in 1972 and many of these bills paid in 1973 were submitted to us in 1973.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Housing.

The Minister of Housing (Mr. Naraine): Mr. Chairman, we have spent quite a lot of labour over the past two days on the subject of telephones so I will not repeat what has already been said concerning the 1972 bills. However, on the question that was asked in relation to the

D'Urban Public Park Pavilion, I should like to inform the Hon. Member that plans are afoot and being implemented for the Ministry of Housing to be re-located and re-housed in the Pavilion at D'Urban Park and before the end of the year or certainly by the first week in January, the three offices which the Ministry of Housing occupy now will be handed over for other uses and these three sections of the Ministry of Housing will be re-housed in the Pavilion so that we can get all these sections in one building to perform in a more efficient manner.

The Chairman: Page 33.

Mr. Singh: Items 203, 204, 206 and 207.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 204.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Item 203, Head 60 – Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction, subhead 5 – Planning Surveys. The sum of \$30,000 was voted and the supplementary provision is \$5,000. The legend says “Voted provision inadequate on account of an increase in surveying activities for housing purposes.” I should like to ask the Hon. Minister where are these increased surveying activities taking place and what are these proposed housing sites. I have not seen any particular increase in the building of houses so we certainly would like to know. We appreciate that the sites have to be surveyed so let us know where these increased surveying activities are taking place.

Item 204 – Transport under Head 16, Ministry of Co-operatives and Community Development and Travelling. \$87,000 was provided and the sum of \$32,960 is being sought. That will make the total provision for this year \$119,960. I think we need to do some research into this. If we look at the Estimates, we will find that in 1970 the sum actually spent was \$49,000. In 1971 it was \$77,000, in 1972 it was \$85,000 and now in 1973 it is approximately \$120,000. Did the Ministry not realize that they would increase their activities by over 40 per cent this year? Again one has to ask what kind of planning is going on in this particular Ministry when the sum goes up to the astronomical figure of \$120,000 as against, for example, \$49,000 in 1970.

30.11.73

National Assembly

3.15-3.25 p.m.

I am reminded that this was election year and one wonders whether we will see the same level of expenditure being requested in the Estimates for 1974. I shall look very carefully for that because if this amount of money is voted for increased activities let us see how increased the activities will continue to be in 1974. My personal view, unless I am persuaded to the contrary, is that this is yet another example where the P.N.C. has utilized the tax-payers' money to finance its campaign for the 1973 elections. This is glaring example of it. There is 40 per cent increase on what was originally voted for this year. The increase in this vote compared with last year is large and the same thing can be said of 206. Under item 204, you pay them transport and travelling and item 206, subhead 8 – Community Development Workers, you employ them.

3.25 p.m.

Item 206, Community Development Workers, under the same head. The sum originally voted was \$50,000. When the general election was planned and known to be this year, the Government asked for supplementary provision and the sum provided was \$167,131. Now to meet the deficit, the amount being asked for is \$88,310. Again, let us look at the pattern. In 1970, the actual expenditure was approximately \$45,000; in 1971 the actual expenditure was approximately \$30,000; 1972, revised expenditure \$50,000; in 1973, what? From \$50,000 in 1972, to \$50,000 plus \$167,131 plus \$88,310, making a total of \$305,441 in 1973. It is a fantastic figure.

What is the explanation? I know what the explanation is Elections. These are the people who were employed to collect proxies and organize for the P.N.C. at the taxpayers' expense. Will the expenditure remain at the same level? Even if I am not allowed in here to debate it, I am looking carefully at the Estimates to see whether we will provide in the vicinity of \$305,000 under this Head, Community Development Workers, for 1974. So the Minister had better think of his explanation now.

I am saying that this expenditure was for the P.N.C. But why do it at the taxpayers' expense? The P.N.C. is a big party. It has two-thirds of the majority of the people of this country voting for it in such a tremendous fashion, and yet a total of over half a million is required to pay them. They should not be working for pay. They should be working for free.

Item 207, National Insurance in the same Ministry. This is very revealing also. Under this subhead the original voted provision was \$35,000. The supplementary provision now sought is \$37,868. The legend is interesting. It states: "Voted provision inadequate on account of staff increases." Not on account of increases in salaries or wages. All the other requests for supplementary provision for national insurance I just pick one at random – page 35, item 216, National Insurance.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, do you want them to put an untrue legend? They are telling you it is for increases.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, if you will allow me to continue, perhaps you will appreciate what I am saying.

The Chairman: But I have appreciated what you have been saying repeatedly.

Mr. Singh: You must wait until I am finished, I say.

The Chairman: Don't be rude. Hon. Minister of Housing, please answer the question asked.

Mr. Singh: I am saying that they have not put that in here; they have put staff increases. They did not revise their salaries and wages. Are they not asking for provision for revision of wage and salaries? Why do you not revise their salaries and give them increases? That is what I want to know.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Housing, will you please answer the question.

Mr. Naraine: The question was: where are the additional surveys being taken? [**Mr. Singh:** "He is not listening to me because he is too damned stupid."]

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, if you do not apologize, please leave The Chamber. Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, I am speaking to you.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, you were not speaking to me before. Do you want to speak to me now? There is nothing for me to apologize for.

The Chairman: I heard you. You said I am stupid. If you do not apologize I will take the appropriate action.

Mr. Singh: I was making a remark. I was not talking to you. [Pause]. Mr. Chairman, I have no intention of being rude to the Office of Speaker. If you think I have been rude, I apologise. [Applause]

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Housings.

Mr. Naraine: The question was asked as to where these additional surveys were carried out. The position, if the Hon. Member remembers, is that a large acreage of land was taken over from the sugar estates and it was necessary to survey these lands so that title could be passed to the Government. These lands which have been surveyed spread from Corriverton to Met-en-Meerzorg to Boeraserie, and they include such places as Port Mourant, Albion, Canefield, and Adelphi on the Canje, Blairmont, Bath, Lusignan, Enmore, L.B.I., Vryheid's Lust, De Kinderen, Wales, and all the other bits and pieces of vacant land owned by the Booker Group of Companies.

In addition to this, the Government has identified a considerable area of land on the Rockstone-Wismar highway, approximately 7,000 acres of land, for housing development. This area was also surveyed, and presently additional surveys are being carried out for the subdivision of this land into housing lots. Further, because of the expansion of such areas like Matthews' Ridge, and the need for urbanization of certain parts for housing needs, schemes had to be worked out for this area, for Wauna, Yarakita, for Lethem, and these surveys and subdivisions of land involved additional expenditure. In truth and in fact, I feel that we have done very well in all these areas; and we ask for a modest increase in the provision of only \$5,000.

The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Mr. Jack): In the absence of the substantive Minister, I should answer the question raised. The point was made of the increase at item 204, Transport and Travelling. This, as the note states, is necessary because the voted increase is inadequate –

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I had asked to speak on item 204. I would like to speak before the Hon. Minister replied. I had asked to speak on item 204. Maybe you forgot.

The Chairman: Please proceed with item 204.

Mrs. DaSilva: I wish to support what the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh said about the increase of \$32,960 on travelling expenses for the Ministry of Co-operatives and Community Development. Yesterday, we were told in this House by the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh about another section of our workers in Guyana, namely, the Police Force, whose members are being used to sell P.N.C. newspapers on busy streets, stopping the traffic to do this.

3.35 p.m.

The position of the ruling Party using their position, abusing their position. Well, I have positive proof that vehicles of the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation were used in the last General Elections for carrying out P.N.C. propaganda. In the area in which I live, in front of my house, a vehicle of the Ministry of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation stopped and put up P.N.C. posters. I have no objection to anybody putting up P.N.C. posters when they use their own private vehicle, on their bicycle, donkey cart or whatever they like, but, they are using Government's property for carrying out P.N.C. propaganda. I know the person very well, I know the vehicle, I stood on my verandah and I waved to the man, shouted at him because I knew perfectly well that he knew that I know who he was and he had no right to be using that vehicle. So that is why this head can go up and we can be asked today to have to vote an additional sum of \$32,960, and, until this kind of thing is stopped, sir, so much more will the Guyanese taxpayers be hurt.

The Chairman: Hon Member Mr. Jack.

The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Mr. Jack): Mr. Chairman, in 1972 there was an amount of \$500,000 voted for capital for community development work. In 1973 this amount was increased to \$1,500,000. As a result, there was an increase in community development activity and the amount of workers moved from 47 to 100. If we had started at 207 we would have seen that there was an increase in staff. I have given the actual Number.

It does appear that much of the questions stem from some suspicion that the activity in this department, in some measure, was directed to the outcome of the last Elections. Let me assure Hon. Members on the opposite side of the House that this is not the case. This is a normal increase of community development activity but if we are to speak of elections I should remind Hon. Members that they are not the only persons who question the right of us on this side and of them on that side to be here and, when he hints that he may not be allowed to speak further in this House, I wish to assure him that on our part we will always welcome him in this House. However, let it be said that I understand that there are other persons outside of this House, at present, who seek to prevent him from remaining in this House and they might conceivably succeed. If they do, in keeping with the laws of this country which we must obey, we will have to welcome into this House those persons who may then prevent themselves from occupying those benches. Because of the high regard which we have for the sterling contributions which our Hon. Friend has made, I personally would be sorry to see him leaving this House prematurely but there is nothing that we on this side of the House can do having regard to our respect for the laws of this country.

If we return to the travelling expenses, they follow necessarily from the increase in personnel. The increase due to salary revision should by now be accepted because it is common knowledge that in July of this year there was a salary revision, there was back-pay to public servants and there was an increase in emoluments. I take it that being keen public-spirited individuals, both Members on the opposite side of the House are aware of this fact but, if perchance they are not yet aware of it let me assure them that there was in fact a salary revision this year and as a result of that salary revision there were in fact increases and if they continue to peruse these pages they will find appearing again and again a call for increases subsequent upon these salary revision.

The Chairman: Page 34.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Items 209, 211 and 213.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Item 209 Head 62 - Ministry of Labour and Social Security, subhead 5 – Telephones. Here is where I would like to commend the Hon. Minister and his Ministry for not asking for any money to pay 1972 accounts. Very well done Mr. Minister and your Ministry! I note, also, that he has rightly asked for supplementary provisions in order to make sure that he does have a realistic amount to pay his 1973 accounts. Again, well done Mr. Minister. I wish the other Ministries would emulate this example.

I have to take issue with him on item 211 because, apparently, there seems to have been a slip there. This is a new subhead being sought to be established for Maintenance and operation of vehicles. The sum being sought is \$7,700. The Legend states to provide for the maintenance and operation of two Land Rovers acquired during the year. I checked the Capital Estimates and I found that in fact provision was the sum of \$14,000 was sought for the purchase of two short wheel-based Land Rovers. If the Ministry knew that they were getting two Land Rovers in 1973 they should have asked even for a token provision for maintenance and operation of these vehicles. If you ask for two vehicles, then you should ask for money to operate the vehicles. It seems as though there was a slip there. I commend the Hon. Minister I also point out this slight discrepancy here and I want to make an additional point.

The additional point is that: If these two vehicles were received some time during the year and we presume that the Ministry must have received these two vehicles because they are asking for this money and since no money was advanced from the Contingencies Fund it would appear as though these two vehicles have been operated by the spending unauthorized money because if no money has been authorized in the Estimates, if no head has been established and if these vehicles have been operated where have they been operated from? Under what head and with what money? I am sure the Hon. Minister of Finance takes the point very well.

Item 213, Head 64 – Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Social Assistance, Subhead 5 – Old Age Pension. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I shall touch on item 214 on the next page because I shall not speak again as I am saying the same thing. The sum voted for this subhead was \$2,351,000. The supplementary provision is \$100,000. The legend states “To provide for payment to additional pensioners.” I would have been glad to see more than \$100,000 being sought for and I would have been glad to see more than \$100,000 being sought for and I would have been glad to see the legend expanded to read, “To provide for payments of additional pensioners and additional monies on account of the revision in the rates of pension payable to pensioners.” In other words, I am reiterating the urgent request made by my colleague Mrs. DaSilva. Let us realize that almost everyone else has got salary increases. The inmates of the Mahaica Hospital who are working, the charwomen, so many other people got increases to meet the rising cost of living, What about the pensioners? Some of these pensioners are not in a position where they can particularly help themselves.

3.45 p.m.

I also said that I was going to deal with the people who receive social assistance, the people who are dealt with under item 214 on page 35, where \$100,000 is being sought under subhead 6, Public Assistance, “To provide for payments of public assistance to additional persons.” But what about those people who receive public assistance? They also need more money. The cost of living has not only affected the charwomen, the workers at the Mahaica Hospital, and those of us here in Parliament who has had increased salaries and allowances. It affects the pensioners also; they are crying out loud for an increase. How many letters have I not received. The little money that they receive cannot meet the rising cost of living. I am asking, nay I am demanding that this Government which calls itself a Government of the ordinary man do something about that now, even if we provide a temporary measure. We will have the benefit of our increased allowances for Christmas. Why not these people? And even if we give them a temporary measure of relief, I demand also that as early as possible the Cabinet should consider and settle it finally and approve revised rates to be paid to pensioners and to people who receive public assistance. Public assistance perhaps can be dealt with in the Ministry right now. It may

not need ministerial approval other than merely to ask for more money, but the rates would need Parliamentary approval. I would be prepared to come here at any time to approve of additional monies to be paid to our pensioners and this is an urgent plea that we make to this Government. Do something for our pensioners, do something for our people who receive social assistance, and do it now.

Mr. Carrington: Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank the Hon. Member for bringing these matters to our attention. On the question of the vehicles it is a fact that we did not request monies for maintenance of vehicles, because at that time we were not sure whether or not we would have had the vehicles. We made this request for vehicles in 1972 and we did not receive them in 1972. These vehicles depended to some extent on the assistance we would have got otherwise to purchase the vehicles. We were told suddenly that we would be able to get the vehicles. When we decided we should have them the money was provided but then we had to make provision for the maintenance and working of the vehicles. We could not have the vehicle standing in the compound doing nothing. It is a fact that we had to decide and work out how much it could cost us for maintenance of these land rovers.

He also raised the question about examining the needs for old age pensioners and public assistance. It is known that this Government has always been looking in this direction and we did make increase in the old age pension in 1971. It is the Government's intention to examine the position of old age pensioners and social assistance.

Before I get to the question of the pensioners, I should let the Hon. Member know what we are doing in respect of social assistance. We are planning a new approach to social assistance, in that, instead of giving people social assistance we are trying to make them self-sufficient in some ways to provide them with means of self-employment. We discovered in many cases that persons in need of social assistance may do better if we give them \$60 and \$70 and set them up in a small business, perhaps farming, in sewing, in repair shops, or something of the kind. We have done so in many areas and we intend to do more. We are also looking into the question of the rehabilitation of some people who need social assistance but need other assistance to make them more productive and to find a better place in the community.

On the question of old age pension, we could need to examine not how much they receive but there is need for lowering, if necessary, the means test for those receiving old age pension and social assistance. We are also looking into areas indirectly of assisting pensioners perhaps with free passage on many of the ferries or whatever public utilities are used so as to reduce their cost of livelihood. We are looking into these matters. In due course the Hon. Member would hear what the Government proposes to do in this direction.

The Chairman: Page 35.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 215, under Head 64, Ministry of Labour and Social Security – Social Assistance. We have been asked to approve the sum of \$2,000 to provide for the grant to the Guyana Nurses' Association for the Florence Nightingale Home, under subhead 7 – Grants to religious and Charitable Organization. We are pleased to support this very worthy cause we approve wholeheartedly of this grant. But I should like to use this opportunity to go a little further on social assistance and old age pensions because these people who come to the House and have to live off the charge of the Government need not always have to do this if they were provided with adequate old age pensions.

The Hon. Minister said that the old age pension was increased in 1971, but I was just checking with the book and I see that the increase was negligible. It is time for the Government to think about. I was pleased to hear the Hon. Minister say that the Government was looking into ways and means of helping the people to help themselves. I have in mind – I think I have mentioned it before – to introduce into this House a Motion. I am sure I can look for the understanding and sympathy of the Hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security who has always given straightforward and honest answers to our questions and dealt with them sympathetically. I propose to bring a Motion in the House, maybe next year, dealing with our handicapped people because many of them depend on social assistance, they depend on the grants they receive from these religious and charitable organizations.

Incidentally, they have not had any increase for the last three or four years. These charitable and religious organizations, as it were, supplement the social assistance and the old age pensions given by the State. The little pittances – I know from personal experience, sir, because I have worked and been associated with many of these organizations – that they can afford to give are collected mainly from fund raising efforts and voluntary contributions and it is pitiful to see how grateful these people are to have this little extra pittance. We feel bad when we have so little to give, but they are grateful for it and in these days of rising cost of living it is time for these religious and charitable organizations, also, to have their grants increased, do not look at them as religious and charitable organizations, as something set apart, but look at them as something that is providing what the Government of Guyana should be providing for its citizens who, in their older years, have to depend on such charity.

Giving these people money to help them to help themselves, as the Minister was saying, is a very excellent idea and I hope that later in the year we will extend this. Maybe, we can start by having a survey to know exactly how many handicapped people, blind, lame or people who are shut in at home can, with a little assistance, help themselves. They do not want charity; they want to be independent like the rest of us and with a little bit of training, with a little bit of assistance, with a little bit of help, they can relieve the burden the State bears in having to provide money to let them live on a mere subsistence level. They will keep some little dignity, pride and independence which they so want and which they deserve.

In the meantime, until that can be done, I would urge the Hon. Minister that we seriously think of increasing the grants to the charitable and religious organizations, to the old-age pensioners and those who receive social assistance.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security.

Mr. Carrington: On the question of the homes and many of such institutions in Guyana, more or less in Georgetown, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security has built up over the years good relations with many of these religious and social organizations. In 1973, we established a National Council of Voluntary Social Services bringing together all the voluntary organizations responsible or doing work with the social fields so that Government could give

assistance in a wider area. What happened in the past was that they were operated in pockets. We would like to do more for these organizations so we have brought them together and they are by such means bringing to the Government's attention the need for assistance in these areas. On Wednesday last, I personally paid a visit to most of the large homes of this kind in Georgetown. I visited the Dharm Shala, the Archer's Home, the Palms and a few other places to see conditions there for myself. I also went to the Florence Nightingale Home and I propose to give them further assistance. We are looking, also, at the Dharm Shala because these are institutions that are doing a good job for the country as a whole. We have very good relation and we would try to do our best in providing assistance.

There are times when we do not give cash but we give cash but we give assistance by helping them with the maintenance of their buildings, running a little electric wire here and there, looking after their plumbing or cleaning the yard. All of this the Ministry of Labour does from time to time to reduce the cost of running these various homes.

On the question of the handicapped, I must thank the Member for bringing this to our attention, but Government has this very much in view. As a matter of fact, we invited one of ILO's experts in this area, one Mr. Phillips, who visited Guyana this year, to make a survey and to make recommendations on how the Government could help the handicapped. This request was made by the Red cross. As the Hon. Member knows, Mathews is very active in the area. So we had Mr. Phillips with us and he has put up a preparatory recommendation but on his return to Geneva in the ILO, he will put up a more comprehensive recommendation as regards how we could help the handicapped in Guyana. So you can see, Mr. Chairman, that we think like the Hon. Member and the Government is active in this area. Any suggestion and any Motion the Hon. Member would like to bring forward in this direction, the Government would be willing to support once it is in keeping with Government's requirements.

Mrs. DaSilva: May I ask a supplementary question on the assurance of support? The Hon. Minister was talking about the bringing together of the organizations. I am very pleased he brought this matter up. I wanted him to do this because this has caused such concern amongst many religious organisations, particularly about Government bringing them together, and maybe

this would be a good opportunity if the Minister could tell us his plans. There seems to be fear and concern at the back of the minds of some people that Government wants to take these organisations over in order to control them like a national service to the people. Could the Minister say anything about this?

Mr. Carrington: I was careful when speaking at the inauguration of this Council. I assured the members then that Government intended to assist and not to control, to have co-ordination and good relations. I would put down on paper what was Government's position in this matter. All the organisations were sent a number of copies for circulation so that they would know exactly what is the Government's position.

The reason really for bringing these organisations together is not at all in any way to control the activities of these organisations because what we are doing is giving them a greater opportunity of assisting the Government in the social areas. By the voluntariness of these organisations, they are reducing the cost and the burden of Government to provide such services. So what we would want them to do is to do more, not to do less. We would want to give them more freedom to do more than they are doing presently, but what we have found is that they are at times competing with each other in many areas. For instance, there is the collection of funds to put up a home or to do something and when one organisation is collecting money, another organisation is collecting money and when there is need for the channeled assistance of these organisations, we can only find out what one organisation needs when there are others that need. So bringing them together would give Government an opportunity of assisting them more.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4.00 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On Resumption—

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: Page 37.

Mr. Singh: Item 228. There is no Minister present. I am not even sure if we have a quorum.

The Chairman: Are you rising on a point of order?

Mr. Singh: Yes. I am saying, Mr. Chairman, that it appears to me that we do not have a quorum.

The Chairman: I do not think you are right, there are eighteen members present.

Mr. Singh: I take it that you mean that there are eighteen voting Members present? Very well sir.

The Chairman: The rule does not say that, it says that there must be eighteen Members present.

Mr. Singh: I am very glad to see the Hon. Minister coming in otherwise he would not have heard what I have to say. Item 228 – Head 67, Ministry of Finance – Accountant General, subhead 18, Special Visits and Representation at External Conferences. The sum originally provided was \$475,000, the supplementary provision now being sought is \$200,000. This makes a total of \$675,000. For what? For Special Visits and Representation at External Conferences. Mr. Chairman, this figure is reaching astronomical proportions. In 1970, the sum actually spent was \$329,000, in 1971 it was \$380,000, in 1972 the estimated amount revised was \$200,000.

This year, the provision is \$675,000, an increase of over 300 per cent. Is it fair to spend so much on these special visits and representation at external conferences, at this present time when our economy is in such a precarious condition? When sugar, bauxite, and rice have had such bad years, when foreign aid has almost dried up? When the cost of living is going up all the time?

The Hon. Minister of Trade should be commended for his speech last night, but on the other hand, part of this speech did talk of increases through no fault of our own, increases in the

price of petroleum products, which must reflect and have its boomerang on the ordinary man in the street. Should we not do something to alleviate the suffering of the ordinary people? Is it fair to spend taxpayers' money to such an enormous extent on these lavish fetes? I would like to ask the Hon. Minister: is attendance at all these conferences really necessary, or are we really living it up for prestige because we want to show the world that we, the little Guyana nation, can be present at all these conferences? I think the people of this country deserve a better deal. Let me bear in mind that only \$200,000 was estimated for last year. This year, it is \$675,000. Should we attend all these conferences?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: Let me say, first of all, that I certainly share, and the Government certainly shares, the concern felt by the Hon. Member on the opposite side for the way this particular vote has had to move in the past twelve months. The Government had, in fact, exercised a great deal of restraint, or should I say constraint, to ensure that Guyana was represented abroad on these visits only where the circumstances absolutely demanded it. It is a fact that it is costing us very much more, but if we accept that the cost of living and prices generally in some countries have increased substantially, we would recognise that once we go, we have little choice but to pay the price in those places for the few days or so. And that, certainly, is beyond our control. What we can control is the number of occasions that we do send our people abroad, and the size of our delegation.

Let me assure the member that we have done two things. We have sent our officers and people abroad to represent this country on much fewer occasions than our Caribbean partners near to us. We have, also sent smaller delegations. As a matter of fact, our delegations are noted for their small size as compared with other countries in the region. We have exercised a great deal of economy in this area. This year, 1973, has been particularly different from 1972 and 1971. It is in this year that we have had the large number of meetings involving working towards the final agreement on the basis of which, the Caribbean Common Market and Community came into operation. That meant not only our people had to go abroad on visits to be at these meetings,

but there was numerous meetings in this country where people came here and spent their money here, and so improved our balance of payments. This fact must not be lost sight of.

In addition to that, we have had a Heads of Government Conference; we have had a Conference of Head of State in the Commonwealth, we have had a Conference of Non-aligned Nations where the representation was by Heads of States. These were some of the very peculiar circumstances affecting the size of this vote in 1973, and which make 1973 substantially different from the position in 1972 and 1970.

We are also upon as an Independent country, and this is one of the prices we have to pay for Independence, to join a number of international organisations and institutions. If we are to play our part, we cannot refuse to join these organisations. As a matter of fact, in many cases, our membership has brought us advantages which are not reflected in figure against this Head, but it has brought us advantage in aid and technical assistance which are not easily recorded here. I think members should recognize this fact, and understand that the Government has commitments internally, it has commitments externally. A Government cannot enclose itself like a chrysalis in a cocoon, and just confine itself to the circumstances within, living in total oblivion to the circumstances and demands from outside.

Having said all of this, I repeat, that we on the Government side are in fact concerned at this vote and we are doing our best to keep it within reasonable limits. I can assure the Hon. Member that when officers go abroad, they return more tired, more hard-worked. They do not go for fun and they have to live very carefully, because the money which is provided them cannot support any kind of lavish spending, I wish to assure Hon. Members that this is, in fact, the case.

The Chairman: Page 38.

Mr. Singh: Items 231, 232 and 233 under Head 67, Ministry of Finance – Accountant General. I will deal with all of them together. There are *ex gratia* payments to people. I am not questioning these amounts, except perhaps to ask why they are so small, but before I can ask that, I must ask some other questions. The first two talk about *ex gratia* awards to the relative of

the late so-and-so, and the third one, *ex gratia* award to Mr. Bovell in respect of his services with the Government.

4.40 p.m.

We presume Mr. Bovell is alive and getting an *ex gratia* payment, that is, in respect of his services with the Government.

The two other items do not say what the *ex gratia* payment is in respect of. We presume that the first two are also in respect of services with the Government and that is because the person is dead the award goes to the relatives but we just wondered exactly how these amounts were computed. Maybe, there are other instances where, because of the rising cost of living these people should be getting more money.

First of all, could the Hon. Minister say exactly how these amounts were computed, could the Hon. Minister confirm that they were in respect of services with the Government by the respective persons who perhaps were Government servants but not on the pensionable establishment, I presume I think it was computed on a fixed basis but, maybe, this is another case where we should put in an urgent request that these people also be considered in the general demand for increases in monies payable to people to meet their present living requirements.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: Mr. Chairman, Mr. E.C. Taylor and Mr. I. Small were two men who were working with the Government but at the time when they died they were not entitled under the present pensions regulations to pension, gratuity or death gratuity, but the circumstances of their death were of such that the Government considered that it was only equitable that their Estates should be compensated in some way.

In this particular case, the two men were returning from an assignment which they were sent to Linden when they become involved in an accident on the Soesdyke/Linden road; they did as a result of the accident. What will be done in circumstances like this we calculate the gratuity as if persons concerned were persons on the fixed pensionable establishment and having got an

amount we give that amount as an *ex gratia award* because there is nothing in the Pensions Ordinance that is required to be done. The calculations were based on the exact formula provided for in the Ordinance for pensionable posts.

In the case of Mr. Bovell the situation is entirely the same. I think in his case he had worked with the Government and had given very good service but he had not worked long enough before his retirement age to qualify for a pension. What was done was to calculate the pension and the gratuity as if he was in fact entitled, using the same formula, on that basis an amount was arrived at and that amount was given in the form of an ex-gratia award because he was not entitled to it under the Ordinance.

The Chairman: Page 39.

Mr. M.F. Singh: item 239.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, this is Head 69, "Ministry of Finance-Inland Revenue, subhead 3 – Miscellaneous. The voted provision is reflected as \$12,000, the supplementary provision being asked for is \$4,000 and, the legend states: "Voted provision inadequate on account of salary revision." I am going on to say that Legend could not possibly be right and, I am about to give the reasons why I make that allegation

I am saying that this cannot be correct in that in the Estimates, page 200, subhead 3, miscellaneous, it breaks down the amount of \$12,000, which was provided, into (a) cleaning expenditure \$5,000 and (b) sundries \$7,000. The Legend does not say anything about sundries at all. It merely says, "Voted provision inadequate on account of salary revision." I know we have given hefty increases to persons who are cleaning and, that is as it should be but, I am sure the Hon. Minister would not tell me that we anticipated \$5,000 as salary is for the cleaners and we are now asking for \$4,000 on account of salary revision, an increase of nearly 100 per cent increases. That cannot be correct. My information is that the cleaners did not have any salary increase which is to the extent of nearly 100 per cent.

It would appear as though the Ministry should have added to the legend that voted provision was inadequate on account of salary revision and also that money was needed for sundries also, but, certainly not \$4,000 for the cleaners alone because if their initial salary was \$5,000 how could their salary revision, the additional salary as a result of the increase, be as much as \$4,000? If that is in fact correct I would be very happy to hear it because they do deserve the increase.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: Sir, the problem here is that the miscellaneous vote being what it is, if one were to detail every reason why the vote would have to go up, it would be a very long legend. Consequently, the officers do say that voted provisions were inadequate. They did not say that in this case. They said it was largely due or mainly due to salary revision. That is how it should be interpreted.

What has really happened is that some of those cleaners, I am told, did not get just an increase, it was really a substantial change in the structure of their pay. Where payment was based on part-time work, I think on advice from the Ministry of Labour, they were paid as if they were on a full-time basis. So in some cases the increase was quite substantial and so substantial that it surprises even the Hon. Member here. It was not just a rate of increase, it was a change in the structure of their payments, I suspect however that the figure, perhaps, does include some elements of increases on the other items of expenditure. If the price of soap goes up, we have no choice but to pay more for soap and that kind of thing.

The Chairman: We will proceed to section "B" Capital Estimates. Page 1.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Item 2, 4 and 6.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 2, Division V – "Prime Minister, Subhead 1 – Purchase of Equipment." The voted provision is \$665,900, nearly \$666,000. The supplementary provision being asked for is even more than what was originally voted. It is \$705,366. We saw

30.11.73

National Assembly

4.50-5 p.m.

yesterday request for fantastic sums for the Guyana Defence Force. The Legend here states: "To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment for the Guyana Defence Force." The sum of \$666,000, approximately, was provided, therefore, one would expect that there must have been some emergency, some re-thinking, some sort of special circumstances which would cause a request for even more money - \$705,366 – to come at this particular time, towards the end of the year.

4.50 p.m.

We have seen no money advanced from the Contingencies Fund. Therefore, the presumption is that this \$705,000 is to be spent during the month of December. Presumably equipment will be received, and it will be paid for during the month of December. Now it may well be a security matter, a state secret or what have you, but we know of no emergency, no border problems at the present moment, no war and, apart from the PPP, no particular problem that the Government has to deal with. If this is miscellaneous equipment which is to be paid for, again I repeat no money has been advanced from the Contingencies Fund so I must presume that this equipment has not arrived or if it has arrived, it has not been paid for as yet and it is not with the GDF. If the GDF has received the equipment already and has in fact used it, then it is unauthorised expenditure. I wonder if the Minister, within the confines of what is known as state secret, can tell us something about this miscellaneous equipment that was so anticipated that it was not provided for in the initial amount asked for. It is a very significant amount here as I said.

Item 4, Division XII – Ministry of Home Affairs, Subhead 2 – Prison Improvement. I wish to ask just a small question on this. The legend states: "To provide supplementary funds for the construction of a Cargo/Passenger launch for the Prisons Department." Where this would be operating? I may have to travel on it one of these days; I may be taken to Sibley Hall.

Item 6, also under Division XII – Subhead 7, Equipment, Land, Air and Water Transport. Voted provision \$196,000; additional provision approved during the year, \$655,400, so that we have a lot of money asked for, after the original amount was provided in the Estimates. Now the request is for another \$50,000, and the legend states: "To provide for placing of orders for vehicles to arrive in 1974, and the purchase of equipment in 1973." I merely wish to ask a simple

question. A lot of money has been spent, \$655,400 plus approximately \$200,000 which adds up to \$855,400. The sum of \$50,000 being sought is only an initial amount merely to place orders for vehicles and equipment for 1973/74. I should like to know what equipment and vehicles are being ordered in addition to what we have bought with this fantastic sum of money.

The Chairman: The Hon. Minister of State for Internal Security.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs (Mr. Mingo): Mr. Chairman, with regard to item 4, the Hon. Member asked where this launch will operate. I wish to tell him that it will operate in the Mazaruni area.

The Hon. Member seeks to know in respect of item 6, what are the types of vehicles. Efforts are being made to equip the Police Force properly, and these vehicles will include patrol cars, lorries and buses. Efforts will also be made to acquire revolving lights.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance, question 2 has not been answered.

Mr. Hope: Sir, it is well known that when one orders goods from these territories, industrial and other problems increase the lead time, and make delivery an uncertain matter. Things ordered in one year are very often delivered in the following year. Therefore it is sometimes not quite feasible to make a fair estimate of the amount you will, in fact, be called upon to pay in the current year, and this is the current year, and this is the position with item 2.

The Chairman: Page 2.

Mr. Singh: Item 10, Division XVII – Ministry of Works and Communications (Communications), subhead 7, Construction of and/or reconstruction of ships. Voted provision was \$100,000; supplementary provision now being sought is \$11,301 and the legend states: “To provide for the payment of outstanding liabilities resulting from the reconditioning of the ‘MV Ambrosio’.” I do not want to go into all that has been said about the “Ambrosio” being a white elephant. What I am interested in now is whether we have come to the end of the road in respect of the “MV Ambrosio”. Is this the final payment? Have we finished with the “MV Ambrosio”? Could the Hon. Minister tell us, if he is in a position to do that now, what the figure is in terms of

the “Ambrosio”? Where is it going to run? For what purpose is it going to be used? These are the questions we would like answered.

Mr. Hope: Sir, I am told that this is practically the final payment on works done on the “Ambrosio”. The very structure of the figure \$11,301 would suggest this.

The Chairman: Page 3. Before you proceed, there is a small correction to items 15 and 16. Subhead 37, “Purchase of Furniture” should read “Purchase of Equipment”, and under subhead 41, item 16, “Purchase of Equipment” should read “Purchase of Furniture”. Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: I wish to speak on item 16.

5 p.m.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, items 14, 15, 16 and 17.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Item 16, Division XIX – Ministry of Works and Communications (Works) – Purchase of Furniture for the doctors’ flats at Waterloo and Murray Streets. As I understand these votes, the doctors at present at the PHC Compound have to be removed. Surely, I would like first of all to know how many flats there are in Murray Street and how many flats there were at the PHC. If there are increases, what are the increases for? Are they going to furnish all the flats? What happened to the furniture in the previous flats that the doctors were using?

Mr. Singh: Item 14, under the same Division, subhead 35. The voted provision was \$842,300 and the additional provision now being sought is \$574,000. The legend states: “To complete the survey of the Upper Mazaruni Hydro-electric Project.” This legend really does not give us any reason why this additional provision is being sought now. Surely, if a survey was on the way could it have been ‘I will underestimate to the extent of over half a million dollars?’

When this provision was voted, it obviously must have been considered that \$842,000 was sufficient for the year 1973. How are we now being asked for over a million dollars to complete the project? Will this \$574,000 be spent between now and the end of the year, because we are dealing with 1973 estimates and this is an amount for 1973. Will the Minister say that \$574,000 will be spent between now and the end of December this year?

I should like to ask a supplementary question. We spent a lot of money on Hydro-Electric Power Surveys. I recollect very distinctly in 1966, 1967 and 1968 we had fantastic sums of money spent on the Tiboku project. The Hydro-electric power development site is there and one wonders what is the position. Are we doing another survey at a fantastic cost that we will push aside? It seems as though the Guyanese nation has been promised a Hydro-electric Survey for a long time. I well remember that the Prime Minister – incidentally, I wish somebody would do something about the

Public Buildings that is being painted with this lousy colour outside. It is really ridiculous for one to feast their eyes on it. I think that is in very bad taste. I think that is in very bad taste. I did speak to the Hon. Minister, Mr. Hoyte about it and I can assure Hon. Members that he agreed with me and he wondered who was responsible for that colour but I would hope that when the Hon. Minister again takes his stand at the Balcony of the Public Buildings, which I hope will be repainted in another colour—

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh, can we kindly deal with the matter at hand?

Mr. Singh: I was referring to the occasion when the Prime Minister spoke about Hydro-electric Power from the Balcony of the Public Buildings. On that occasion I distinctly heard him promise the nation that Hydro-electric Power would be a reality in a very short time. That was in 1966 and this is 1973. All we have had since then is a different colour scheme on the Public Buildings. What about the Hydro-electric Power? Why do we not have something more concrete on it.

Dealing with item 17, under the same Division, subhead 44 – Emergency Works – Flood Relief. The sum of \$200,000 was originally provided and the additional provision now sought is

\$1,045,000. I think it is very commendable on the part of the Government that it has recognized the need to help our poor farmers in their predicament because the legend states: "To provide for emergency flood relief." I want to commend the Government very heartily for this and I hope they will get on with the job as quickly as possible. One word of warning, though I would like the Hon. Minister to give his assurance that the people will not disqualify themselves for benefit because of political affiliation. A farmer is a farmer, and if he loses crops as a result of floods, he must get the same kind of relief and be considered for the same kind of benefits as everybody who has lost as a result of floods. Let us not have the same sort of thing that operates in the Rice Action Committee, where there is partisan politics. Let us administer this fairly. Everybody who has lost as a result of floods must get relief.

I would like the Hon. Minister to tell us how this flood relief fund is going to be administered and on what basis. I do not want us to spend the rest of the time on that, I just want a brief outline of how it will operate.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: The Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva, asked about the doctors' flats. The answer, sir, is that myself at this point of the time give a precise figure as to the number of doctors' households that the flats are supposed to serve, but the intention is to ensure that all the doctors who are now in the Compound of the Public Hospital be removed largely to those flat. As I said, I cannot give the precise number at this point of time.

Having done the flats, it was obviously necessary to give a modicum of reasonable furnishings to the new houses. Many of the pieces of furniture in the older house have been run down and I do not think if one looks at the aesthetics one would put the run down pieces of furniture in the new quarters. We would be undoing the good job that the builders have already done.

On the question of the Hydro-electric Power Survey, at the beginning of the year \$842,300 was allocated for the work but during the year we thought that the work should be substantially stepped up because the question of the Hydro-electric Power facilities was

discussed, and it was established that the development programme would require that Hydro-electric Power be made available in this country very soon. Certainly, the programme, as contemplated at the beginning of the year, would not have been enough to enable us to reach that target in the time that we now propose. In the circumstances, the new unit was required to do much more work, in other words, to step up their activities. In fact, they were technical assistance from the Yugoslavs, I think, on a much more rapid scale than had been anticipated, and all of this put together meant that it was possible to push the work forward much faster but at the increased cost. Hence the request for \$574,000 extra.

5.10 p.m.

On the question of flood relief, this vote does not provide money for a fund to be distributed, as gifts of money. It is money to finance flood relief works and this invariably means digging drains, digging canals, etc., to provide for a free flow of water in case of rains. I wish to assure the member that it has not been the practice of this Government to discriminate in these areas. The Government practices partisan politics, as it must, because it is a party, but it does not practice partisan politics at these levels. In fact, this is one of the reasons why the Government was that successful at the last elections in that it brought advantages to all and sundry without reference to the party to which a person belonged.

In this particular case, we are talking about works, and it is not physically possible to discriminate because how are you going to dig one man's drain and not dig his neighbour's? I can assure the Hon. Member that there is no discrimination and there will be no discrimination at this level.

The Chairman: Page 4.

Mrs. DaSilva: items 18, 20, and 23, please, sir.

Mr. Singh: Item 20, if it is not dealt with by my colleague.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I do not rise under item 18, Memorial to the last Sir, David Rose, Division XIX – Ministry of Works and Communications (Works), to question the expenditure of \$85,000. We on this side of the House know of the work and the good which Sir David Rose did for Guyana and its citizens, and we are pleased to see any type of memorial to remember and honour him. If I remember correctly, when we were talking about changing the street names, and naming Mackenzie, Linden, we voted against it because we said you do not name places after people in their lifetime, so it is very fitting that we should have a memorial to pay tribute to the late Sir David Rose, but I should be most grateful if we could be told something about it, what form it will take. I am sure it would be of interest to the nation to know it will be situated and how it will work.

Item 20, Special Projects under the same Division we have been asked for \$1,900,000. This is new but \$1,900,000 is a lot of money just to have a little legend which states: “to provide funds for Special Development Projects in various parts of the country. It is a bit vague. Could we have an idea where these projects will take place, and what they will be?”

Item 23, under Division XXII- Ministry of Education. We have been asked to provide \$4,000 for Science, Home Economics and Handicraft facilities, “to provide equipment for home economics departments at five primary schools.” The home economics departments would deal particularly with girls in the school, but I understand boys also attend classes. Dealing with the handicraft facilities, I am told that they have been presenting great problems in our primary schools. The thrust of the nation is to learn to do more for ourselves, and these handicraft centres are very important, but I believe they are having a bit of a tough time.

You only have to open the newspapers. I think it was about a month ago that they had advertisements for many handicraft teachers. They have not got the people. They have not got them trained. Could the Minister say what is the progress with their advertisements, have they been able to get people to fill these centres? In one school, for the last three years, the handicraft centres has not been functioning.

When we come to the home economics centres, the grant given the secondary schools and aided secondary schools are something like \$147 per year. If you do not have the equipment

and the staff for these centres, how are the children going to learn? Will the Minister say what progress has been made?

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, the question has been asked already.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: I am unable to provide an answer, regrettably, to the Hon. Member's question in relation to the memorial to the late Sir David Rose. I assume when the substantive Minister is in place during the discussion on the Budget and Estimates, these questions will be answered in a better way than I could at the moment.

The same applies to the question raised on the Ministry of Education. I think this was essentially the internal workings of the Ministry of Education, of which I myself am not entirely *au fait*. I think we will have ample opportunity during the debate on education to raise a number of these issues.

With regard to the special development projects, we know that the Ministers have been keeping in very close touch with the needs of the people over the past months and out of this close touch has come the recognition for a number of little things to be done in communities, for instance, helping communities to get pure water through the acquisition of pipes to be laid by self-helping methods. I think there is a case of the branch road to Mahaicony, going into the river, which was also built and financed from this Head.

What this vote has done is to enable a number of small but very useful works, works important to people in communities, to be done, either to improve their surroundings, to improve their surroundings, to improve their water facilities, sometimes to improve their economic circumstances, and this is the purpose of this vote. It is the case we have been spending this money over this year as Ministers get more in touch with the communities themselves.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to thank the Hon. Minister for his explanation and his courtesy. He always replies to us. My sympathies go to him that he cannot answer these questions. One man, no matter how good he is, cannot be expected to do the work

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of everybody. Where are the Ministries who ought to be here? I am not talking about those who are genuinely away on business, but why are the people not here to answer?

With regard to the memorial for Sir David Rose, this \$85,000, he says when the time of the Estimates comes along, I can ask it then. I am wondering if it is going to be more than \$85,000, and I am wondering if you, sir, will allow me to ask the question then.

The Chairman: I would suggest that you put in a written question.

Mrs. DaSilva: But if no money is asked for it for next year.

The Chairman: You can put in a Notice: "Will the Minister of Works and Communications say what was the sum of \$85,000 spent for in respect of the memorial to the late Sir David Rose?"

Mrs. DaSilva: I hope this question will be answered because I have asked many questions in the past, but I do not get answers to them.

The Chairman: Well, if I can do anything to persuade the Minister to answer, I certainly will.

Mrs. DaSilva: Thank you, sir. I am glad you have been so lenient and understanding, considering you do not allow us the opportunity to use the Heads now to ask questions.

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Mrs. DaSilva: Item 25.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Under the Head XXIV, Ministry of Health, subhead 12 Construction of two launches, "we have been asked to provide \$10,000. The legend reads, "To provide for the purchase of equipment for the two (2) now launches and the construction of a third launch. This amount has already been advanced from the Contingencies Fund." It strikes me that \$10,000 is

rather a small amount of money because on item 4, if you will remember, at the beginning of the capital expenditure in the Estimates we were asking for \$21,500 for that same launch that was to be used on the Mazaruni River on which the Hon. Member Mr. Mingo promised the Hon. Minister Mr. Singh a ride and, that is only one launch costing \$21,500. I understand it is –
[Interruption]

The Chairman: May I just say that this is for equipment? They said, “To provide for the purchase of equipment.”

Mrs. DaSilva: “And the construction of a third launch.” So that how much is going towards the equipment and how much is going towards the third launch? We would be willing to pass money because it is for the Ministry of Health and, we know of the Ministry’s need for launches in the interior regions, in the Pomeroon river. I wonder whether they consider using these launches to take the dentist to Wakapau where people have to wait months and months, until election time actually, to have their teeth examined. These launches will be moving up and down the Pomeroon river, up into the interior so that people can get regular visits from doctors, from the dentist, from the dispensers. This is for the Ministry of Health and we do consider that this sum of \$10,000 would be rather small is for purchasing equipment but it is also going towards the construction of a third launch when we are having the luxury of \$21,500 for that launch in the Mazaruni.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, item 26, under Head XXV, subhead 12 – Purchase of Equipment. The voted provision is \$152,000, the additional provision now being sought is \$253,000 and, the legend states: “To provide for the purchase of heavy duty equipment for development of new housing sites.”

Several years ago, the P.N.C. Government settled on the slogan, “Feed, Clothe and House the Nation by 1976.” So that we are wondering, 1973, with three more years to go, what exactly is the position in respect of housing the nation. I am very happy to see the sum of \$253,000 plus \$152,000 being asked for in respect of the purchase of equipment but what we are unhappy about

is the fact that we do not see the new houses. Where are the new houses? This is the end of 1973 and we have only three years more to come to 1976, if you count in 1976 itself, and all we are talking about here is development of new housing sites. I know that private enterprises are building houses: Guyana Housing Development Company, Guyana Mortgage Finance Company, C.D.C., but, what is the Government doing? Where are the houses? I would like to know that. I am reminded that English language is the official language of this Parliament and I wonder sometimes.

According to the legend this is "To provide for the purchase of heavy duty equipment for the development of new housing sites." Will the Hon. Minister say where are these housing sites? When will we get this heavy duty equipment? When will we start development of these new housing sites? When, perhaps, will these houses be built? Will they be built in time for 1976? How many are we planning to build? What areas are we planning to prepare with this heavy duty equipment. Perhaps at the same time we could be told that heavy duty equipment is necessary to provide supplementary provision to the tune of a quarter million dollars? We have no quarrel. What we do say is, instead of asking for the money should have been asked for initially not when supplementary the Estimates come before the House. Money should have been asked for to buy this heavy duty equipment to start preparing these sites a long time ago. Where are the houses?

Where are the sites? What is happening? I would like to see us house ourselves by 1976. I would like to see the Government succeed in this particular slogan and, I would like them to tell us their plans for success in this, bearing in mind that we are talking about Government expenditure and Government part in this housing the Nation.

The Chairman: The Hon. Minister of Health.

Dr. Harper: Mr. Chairman, the \$10,000 shown under item 25 was from the National Milling Company, the local flour mill. This was paid into revenue. The supplementary provision now sought is to provide a sub head from which the two launches for which the money was given, can be built and equipped. These launches will be used in the riverain areas.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: Mr. Chairman, the item referred to under item 26 covers equipment like bulldozers, graders and so on. All of this is necessary for land clearing, leveling, etc., in preparing for the construction of the houses. In many cases the houses will be going into areas where there are not enough infrastructural facilities. Some of them will be going into hilly areas, in the Wismar area, and, it will be necessary to ensure that the place is properly leveled, properly graded, streets constructed and so on. This is really the purpose.

The Hon. Member has been asking where are the houses. The answer is: the groundwork is being laid for the houses. Obviously we are not dealing with built-up areas. The built-up areas are properly serviced and, we are going out now into maiden areas where a lot of work has to be done before the houses can go up but, I can assure the Hon. Member that we are very pleased that he agrees with our objective of housing the nation. We are glad to hear that he will be happy if and when we succeed in our objective but I can assure him that we have every intention of succeeding and it is only a question of time and then the Hon. Member will see the houses.

The Chairman: This completes consideration of Financial Paper No. 5/1973.

Question put, and agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hope: I beg to report that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 5/1973 – Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending 31st October, 1973, and I now move that the Assembly doth agree with the Committee in the said Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

CONFIRMATION OF CONSUMPTION TAX (AMENDMENT)

(NO. 2) ORDER 1973 (NO. 128)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly Assembly, in accordance with section 5 of the Consumption Tax Act 1969 (No. 13), confirm the Consumption Tax (Amendment) (No.2) Order 1973 (No. 128), which was made on the 3rd of November, 1973 and published in the Gazette on the 6th November, 1973.” [**The Minister of Finance**]

Mr. Hope: Sir, the explanation is very brief. The order refers to certain items of petroleum products. During the course of this year when we were studying the whole question of petroleum prices it was necessary in order to ensure that the supply of petroleum products was maintained, that the petroleum companies operating in Guyana should be given an increase in the price of the petroleum products which they sold. The Government then decided that while it had not studied the whole question in all its ramifications and recognizing that the price of crude oil had in fact been increased decided that the petroleum companies would be given a modicum of increase but that the consumers would not be required to pay at the stage.

The Government did this by removing temporarily the whole consumption tax that was applicable to gas oil, a portion of the tax applicable to kerosene oil and a portion applicable to gasoline. Since then the whole question has been thoroughly gone into and the Government has established new prices on the basis of which this temporary measure was removed. What this Order does is to re-establish the level of consumption taxes that were applicable to petroleum products prior to 1973.

Question proposed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Speaker, I am very grateful to the Hon. Minister for the very able way in which he has explained the rather terse document in my hand, the Consumption Tax Act. It deals with figures, substitutions and insertions and to the layman it would not make much sense at all,

but it is obvious that it deals with petroleum products. One wonders whether this Order is not itself obsolete by now, and I bear in mind the statement by the Hon. Minister of Trade which was head on the air last night.

While I am talking about that let me reiterate what I said earlier that I commend and, indeed, compliment the Hon. Minister for his statement and the details in the statement which he made last night on the air. The Hon. Minister has impressed us on this side of the House that he intends to pursue vigorously methods to deal with the many and varied problems which beset his Ministry. I only wish he could be successful, and that he would be successful; he has our very best wishes on this side of the House.

Getting back to the Order Mr. Speaker, the situation in respect to petroleum products is recognized to be entirely out of our hands; means have to be taken to deal with the situation. Obviously the situation is being dealt with. In due deference to the new Hon. Minister of Trade, he did say that this is a final warning to the people of Guyana. I always believe in giving someone a second chance but he would have our forceful backing. If the citizens of Guyana do not respond then we must adopt drastic measures to deal with the situation.

The last item is gas oil, \$70 per hundred gallon. I wonder whether I could not ask the Hon. Minister if this has not changed as a result of that statement last night and whether new figures are not applicable. Because from last night the price of petroleum products, as I gather, did go up and I wondered whether this was not affected also – through nobody's fault. We may have another Order very soon. But we have no objections to the Order whatsoever.

Mr. Hope: (replying): Can I assure the Hon. Member that whatever happens to the price of petroleum products from now on would be entirely a function of what happens to crude oil and would not in any way be affected by the consumption tax which I assure Members would remain static.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

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Mr. Speaker: Hon. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do stand adjourned to date to be fixed.” [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

Adjourned accordingly at 5.40 p.m.
