

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2015-2016) OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

55TH Sitting

Thursday, 15TH December, 2016

Assembly convened at 10.14 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

Use of MPs' Lounge

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Jagdeo, had requested, yesterday afternoon, an opportunity to speak on a matter. I did indicate to him that his request could only take place at the end of our deliberations, when the House assembles from Committee. He was unable to be here for that length of time and I had said to him that this morning he would have an opportunity to do so.

I am advised that Personal Explanations would be an appropriate heading under which it is to be done. I was given to understand that Mr. Jagdeo is unable to be here this morning, but that there is a request from Ms. Teixeira that she speaks in his stead. I will permit that request. Ms. Teixeira, you may speak now.

Opposition Chief Whip [Ms. Teixeira]: Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for understanding. The Leader of the Opposition regrets not being here due to a number of meetings. However, your announcement last night about the Members' of Parliament (MPs') lounge, we are totally in support of the MPs' lounge being a private domain of the Members of Parliament where we can relax, speak, negotiate, tease and sometimes even argue without being under the scrutiny of anybody. We support that whole-heartedly.

We wish to say though that we believe that, although this has been a policy forever, since this Parliament has been around, we need to have some clarifications in the sense that we have noticed that staff members of various Members of the Cabinet enter the area.

Mr. Speaker, we therefore ask you to clarify who can give permission for staff members to come in and mingle in the Lounge? Secondly, if we are allowed to have staff upstairs in the two rooms belonging to the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister, could we ask who gives approval for that so that we are able to be properly in order. And thirdly, if meetings are going to be allowed in those rooms, where are the clearances and approvals being given? Yesterday, we had one person in the Lounge and there were also several persons waiting for the Prime Minister. One in particular was rude to one of our MPs, Mr. Harry Gill, when he told the person that they should not be in there.

We do not want these situations to arise. We would like to have clarification on, if persons are going to be allowed in the lounge, who and at what level approves it; are persons allowed to mingle in the Lounge or, if they are going directly to a meeting, allowed to go upstairs to the offices that are available? If there are staff who are going to be permanently based upstairs then can we have clarification on that, so that we can also bring our staff from the Leader of the Opposition's Office? We need clarification because we do not want to, in anyway, break the rules, but we would like to have this matter finally cleared up. Thank you Sir.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS

MOTION

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2017

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

AND WHEREAS the Constitution also provides that when the Estimates of Expenditure have been approved by the Assembly an Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the Assembly

providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet that expenditure;

AND WHEREAS the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the financial year 2017 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2016-11-28.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2017, of a total sum of two hundred and thirty billion, three hundred and forty nine million and seventy nine thousand dollars (**\$230,349,079,000**), **excluding nineteen billion and seven hundred and seventy four million, and eighty seven thousand dollars (\$19,774,087,000)** which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.” *[Minister of Finance]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee to continue consideration of the Estimates.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: We will now proceed with our consideration of the Estimates in accordance with the Schedule and the Sub-committee’s Resolution on the Schedule.

Agency: 72 Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam

Current Expenditure

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$184,171,000

Mr. Croal: Good morning and thank you Mr. Chairman. Line item 6281 – Security Services: There is an increase in the allocation, could the Hon. Minister provide to the House who is the current contractor for the provision of security service? Secondly, a justification on the increase in the allocation, as well as what is the hourly rate being paid?

Minister of Communities [Mr. Bulkan]: Thank you Mr. Chairman and Hon. Member for those questions. The name of the contractor is Home Safe Security. The hourly rate would be

\$300 and the major component that is responsible for the increase would be the introduction and application of the Value-Added Tax (VAT) charges by 2017.

Mr. Croal: Just a follow-up. Is the Hon. Minister confirming that, in 2016, the company would not have been applying the VAT? I do have a recollection that there was some issue here, so I am just trying to confirm.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, that is correct, VAT would have been applicable in 2016.

Mr. Croal: As a follow-up on this line item, I would just like to seek clarification whether there is anything being done to rectify any arrears, since there would not have been payments if there were any arrears, in terms of VAT payments. Has this been dealt with at the level of the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA)?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Hon. Member to either repeat or rephrase the question please?

Mr. Croal: The Hon. Minister indicated that the increase for this year is because of the payment of VAT which would imply that there was a non-payment of VAT.

Mr. Bulkan: No. Mr. Chairman. Given that the VAT was applicable in 2016 the answer would not have been accurate. In fact, there are increased locations in 2017, among these being for the Regional Executive Officer's (REO's) quarters, the State House Annex, both in Anna Regina as well as in Cotton field. That would be responsible for the increased allocation of approximately \$4 million in 2017.

Mr. Croal: I thank the Hon. Minister, for providing that clarification. But just as a follow-up on that same line item, the State House would have had security. Therefore, could the Minister indicate how many security guards are now being provided at the State House?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, there are actually three shifts of security guards at the REO's quarters, providing 24-hours security and at the State House Annex, there is an additional one security guard, bringing the complement to four.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line items – 6112 & 6116 – Senior Technical and Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister provide some information as to why there are reductions in a number of heads, as they relate to total wages and salaries.

10.29 a.m.

Could the Minister say why there is a reduction in staff, what positions of staff reduction occurred and whether they were dismissed or resigned?

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Hon. Member. There has been no movement or decrease in line item 6112, the number of staff remains at four. For the staff reduction under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, there has been a regularisation where staff have been moved to line item 6114 and line item 6115. That accounts for the reduction by 17 persons under that heading.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, I would want to pursue a follow-up on the matter of contracted workers. Were any of the contracted workers' contract not renewed over the last 18 months? Secondly, will the region continue to process the contracted workers onto the fixed establishment in 2017?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the contracts of approximately six persons were not renewed and that the additional persons would be part of the transitioning from the contract to the fixed establishment.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, Region 2 has been one of the regions on the coast that has called for further and increased employment. Could the Minister share with this House the reason for the disengagement or the non-renewal of the contracts of the six workers?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the principal reason for the non-renewal of those contracts was as a result of those persons attaining the age of retirement.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support: Staffing Details. Could the Hon. Minister state the eight persons who were employed? Are these persons the ones who came back on the job after they were retired?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is no. These are not persons who were previously or recently retired. These are new persons and they are Accounts Clerks, all of whom were appointed under the fixed establishment.

Mr. Damon: A follow-up question under the same line item. Could the Hon. Minister state, other than this line item, which other line item one would find the accounting for the other eight or so of the retirees who were reemployed?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, is it the Minister whom should provide you with the line item or should you provide the Minister with the line item? I think there is a need for a clarification here. You are the questioner and you are asking the questions on particular line items.

Mr. Damon: Well, Mr. Chairman we must all be aware that this budget is the Minister's Regional Executive Officer's (REO's) budget and they must have the idea.

Mr. Chairman: Well I repeat: You should address the question.

Mr. Damon: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, under the same line item, if this line item does not cater for the eight or so employees, the retirees, could you state under which line item they are employed?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, it would have been helpful, as you have pointed out, if the Hon. Member could have provided a line item. Nonetheless in the absence of that, I would like to reassure the Hon. Member that the line of questioning seems to relate to the re-employment of persons who were previously retired under contracts. I am advised that there was no such re-employment. In the absence of a specific line item, I am unable to provide any additional details to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Bharrat: Line item 6134 – National Insurance: Could the Hon. Minister say what the \$1 million increase in the National Insurance Contribution (NIS) is for, when the Staffing Details show a reduction in seven staff members for the year 2017?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, it would be noted that, while indeed the staffing component has been reduced overall and that it has been reduced considerably for contracted employees, there has been an increase in the number of persons on the fixed establishment, for which the NIS would now be payable. Hence that would be responsible for the increased provision for NIS in 2017.

Mr. G. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, I have two questions. Would you permit me to put both questions at the same time to the Hon. Minister?

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to lay over the names of the 24 employees, their designations, their effective dates of employment and their remunerations?

Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister please lay over the list of buildings to be maintained this year? Is the REO still occupying the State House quarters?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the question by the Hon. Member regarding the 24 employees under line item 6114, their designations are: Systems Development Officer, a salary of \$129,000 monthly; an Administrative Officer, a salary of approximately \$113,000; an Administrative Assistant, a salary of \$78,560; an Accounts Clerk II - \$69,618; Heavy Duty Vehicle Driver - \$69,915...

Mr. G. Persaud: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Let the Member finish and then you would...

Mr. G. Persaud: But he is not giving me the response I wanted Sir.

Mr. Bulkan: Caretaker - \$60,000; Vehicle Driver - \$60,128; two Typist Clerks...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member...

Mr. Bulkan: Yes, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: Could the Hon. Member repeat the question and state the line item again?

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There are 24 employees for 2017 under this category. Would the Hon. Minister please lay over this information, the names, the designations of the 24 employees, their salaries and their effective dates of employment?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you would recall my reluctance in relation to names. Designations and salaries and whatever else would identify the position, the Chairman has no difficulty with that.

Mr. G. Persaud: Very well Sir.

Mr. Chairman: The Chairman would not direct that names be given, if the Minister to whom that question is directed is not willing to give names. Please proceed Minister.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I will have to edit the document that is on hand with all the details of the 24 employees under this heading, to remove the names and to provide the designations, the salaries and the commencement dates of employment.

The question relating to where the REO resides, the answer is not in the State House compound, but rather at a location in Cotton Field.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: I notice here in the 2016 Budget - \$2.6 million; revised - \$13 million; and budgeted for 2017 - \$5.3 million. Could the Hon. Minister state under this line item what is responsible for the reduction in the budget? Is everything so good in Region 2 that the allocation could be reduced?

Mr. Bulkan: One minute please Sir. Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the increase in expenditure in 2016 over the budgetary allocation was to allow for priority works to be done to both the REO quarters and the State House, activities which are completed and which will not recur in 2017, hence the reduction in the 2017 allocation.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up question. How was the increase in this line item in 2016 financed? Was there a supplementary budget?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, those resources would have been provided by way of a virement from other allocations to the RDC.

Mr. Damon: Hon. Minister, line item 6284 – Other and I could go to line item 6294 – Other again: Could the Hon. Minister say what signifies ‘Other’.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the ‘Other’ refers to any other expenditure or activity, not specifically stated here under the Legend, namely Security or Equipment Maintenance or Cleaning and Extermination or National and Other Events, Dietary, Refreshment and Meals, would be areas outside of those.

10.44 a.m.

Programme: 721 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$184,171,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 721- Regional Administration and Finance - \$16,160,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I must remind you that we are allotted for Region 2 one hour. We started at 10.19 a.m.

Mr. Croal: Project 2401600, Land and Water Transport, purchase of boats and engines: Could the Hon. Minister give the breakdown, because I see the plural? Secondly to whom would it be assigned?

Mr. Bulkan: That will be two boats and engines at an estimated cost of \$2.675 million each. These are for use in the Supenaam to Parika and Supenaam to Bethany, and a covered boat for the Pomeroun River. It is to provide for more reliable source of transportation for regional officials visiting those respective areas.

Programme: 721 - Regional Administration & Finance - \$16,160,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 722 - Agriculture - \$326,184,000

Mr. Damon: Line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support: I have seen here an increase of the amount. Could the Hon. Minister say if any retirees are accounted for here?

Mr. Bulkan: No.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6231, Fuels and Lubricants: I have seen an increase here from \$47 million plus to \$49 million plus. Could the Hon. Minister say if there were new engines that were bought to take up the vacuum of the increase?

Mr. Bulkan: The provision is for 2017 and it is a marginal increase by \$2 million over the \$47 million that was expended in 2016. It would cater for a slight increase in the monitoring of works and any possible increases in the price of fuels as well.

Mr. Damon: Staffing detail, at line item 6116, Contracted Employees, 11 persons were either sent home or retired. I am asking the Minister, could you please say what happened to the 11 workers? At line item 6115, Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled, could the Hon.

Minister say the increase from 17 to 29 persons, which is 12 persons more, if he catered for the retirees here?

Mr. Bulkan: At line item 6116, Contracted Employees, the staff reduction is by 11. As part of the regularisation, those staff were moved to line item 6114 and line item 6115. The question pertaining to the increase in line item 6115 would be partly as a result of the transfers from line item 6116 as well as new appointees to Sluice Attendances and Rangers which is also partially responsible for the increase staffing under line item 6116. I am advised that no retirees were hired under these two programmes.

Mr. Damon: Line item 6264, Vehicles Spares and Services: Could the Hon. Minister say where are these vehicles stationed? Where are they assigned? How many vehicles are they? Added to that, at line item 6272, Electricity Charges, did you cater for the increase in value added tax (VAT)?

Mr. Bulkan: The vehicles, which are catered for under this line item, include bulldozers, backhoes, tractors, Massy Ferguson tractors, low bed grader, a number of pickup vehicles, few motorcycles. These are all for the drainage and irrigation (D&I) programme. The second question regarding the provision for VAT and electricity charges, the answer is yes.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6231, Fuel Lubricants: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the list of pumps and are any of those pumps not functioning presently?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, did you say line item 6231?

Mr. G. Persaud: Yes Sir.

Mr. Bulkan: There are a total of nine pumps situated in the region under that programme and I am advised that two of those pumps are currently not functioning, those being the one at Devonshire Castle and one at Lima.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the reason for the increase and what are the locations for the security?

Mr. Bulkan: Those locations would be several pump stations, namely at Dawa, Lima, Suddie, Cozier, Anna Regina and Charity. I am advised that Cozier and Charity are additional locations.

Mr. Croal: It is just to confirm. Under Programme 1, we were told that the increase was because of VAT, under Programme 2 we were told that it was because of increase location. Under this same line item 6281, could the Hon. Minister confirm therefore that only Programme 1 VAT was not being charged?

Mr. Bulkan: No. I subsequently corrected the impression that I gave in relation to the application of VAT. I thought that the Hon. Member understood my subsequent clarification.

Mr. Damon: A follow up on the same line item. Hon. Minister, is it true that the pump at Charity is temporarily there and the pump is assigned to somewhere else?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I will kindly request some additional time to be able to provide a more reliable and accurate answer to the Hon. Member.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$326,184,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

10.59 a.m.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 722 - Agriculture - \$47,000,000

Programme: 722 – Agriculture – \$47,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$117,104,000

Mr. Damon: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Hon. Minister, could you say where these buildings are situated and the amount that would be spent on each building?

Mr. Bulkan: There are several locations. There is the living quarters at Cotton Field. There are a number of activities. There are actually four buildings in that compound. The respective sums are \$2.93 million, \$2.67 million. The first one is 828, the second one is 824, and the third one is 834 for \$2.134 million and 836 for \$1.78 million, the purchase of materials at a projected sum of \$4 million for the total allocation of \$13.514 million.

Mr. Damon: Hon. Minister, line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: Could you say which are the roads and if these roads would be done with double bituminous surface treatment (DBST)? At the same time too, line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges: Could you also say which villages these bridges are situated and how much would be spent on each bridge?

Mr. Bulkan: Under line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: There is approximately 24 kilometres of roads slated for rehabilitation in Somerset, Dartmouth, Paradise, Danielstown, Lima and several other locations along the coast for the use of crusher run. DBST roads are targeted for approximately 32 kilometres in areas, including Anna Regina, Henrietta, Lima, Sparta and a number of other locations all the way down to Supenaam. There is also DBST roads in those very areas, so the provision is for the purchasing of asphalt and bitumen to effect those repairs.

Under item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges, the bridges to be funded under these allocations are bridges at Cotton Field, Anna Regina and Kabakaburi in the Pomeroun, a respective allocation of \$1.6 million, \$2.38 million and \$3.39 million, including the purchase of building materials valued at approximately \$3 million, with a total allocation of \$10.37 million.

Mr. Damon: A follow-up question. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to hand over copies of all those bridges and roads to this Assembly, please.

Mr. Bulkan: This information would be laid over to the Clerk.

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$117,104,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$69,500,000

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$69,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$1,733,710,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6281, Security Services: The increase in the allocation from \$159,939,000 to \$173,764,000, would the Hon. Minister seek to inform us as to the reason

for the increase? That is one. Secondly, would the Minister be kind enough to lay over for us the locations, the number of hours of security services provided for each of the locations under this programme?

Mr. Bulkan: The second request, the requests to lay to over the locations for which security are provided as well as the hours of security at each location, would be laid over with the Clerk of the National Assembly. The reason for the increase in the 2017 provision over the 2016, I am advised, that there are a number of new locations, but it would have to be extracted from the list, it is not easily identifiable here, but I would seek to so identify when this list is laid over with the Clerk of the National Assembly.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: I see there is \$1,208,000. Could the Minister tell me if there is a facility and what tendering process would use for the purchasing of the facility to store the drug?

Mr. Bulkan: The drugs, which would be procured under this particular line item, are for the first aid kits and they are basically basic medications among these being painkillers such as Advil, Tylenol, Panadol, Limacol, plasters, eye wash, Shiling Oil, Vicks, Andrew, Tussadryl, cotton wool, Pepto-Bismol, rubbing alcohol, Dettol and other painkiller, Ibuprofen...
[**Mr. Jordan:** Any condoms?] No Sir, but there are anti-diarrhoeal medication, Lomotil, cold and sinus medication, Iodex and Mecurochrome lotion. These are all first aid items.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6291, National and other Events: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the increase is for and also tell us what are the events planned? Since I am on the floor line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials, there is also an increase in allocation. What is this increase for?

Mr. Bulkan: Among the national events to be celebrated in the Pomeroun/Supenaam region in 2017 would include participation in the children's Mash competition, national and regional float parades, the regional science fair, independence celebrations, the children's float parade, day of sports, Arts and Crafts exhibition, essay competitions and debate competition. It also includes for education month activities. There are certain categories under that particular activity, the spelling bee competition, impromptu speech, literacy day, give a book initiative, face the community meetings. There are also activities for Agriculture Month and the

National Athletic Championship. These are some the national events that had been commemorated.

Line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials: It increased by approximately \$2.6 million. It allows for the provision of increase. Materials under that heading, I am advised, designed for the Mathematics and English programme for the Grade Six and the Caribbean Secondary School Examination (CSEC) examinations and it includes relevant materials pertaining to those two particular programmes, reading materials, paper, the provision of lessons and materials along that nature.

11.14 a.m.

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$1,733,710,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 724 - Education Delivery - \$161,170,000

Mr. Croal: Project 1202800, Buildings – Education: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the plan is for the Abram Zuil Primary School? I know that would have been requested by the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) for a school at Abram Zuil.

Mr. Bulkan: There is no provision for any construction at Abram Zuil Primary School under the regional budget but I believe, and subject to correction, that such a provision is made under the budget for the Ministry of Education. That can be verified.

Mr. Damon: Project 1100300, Bridges, project 1202800, Buildings – Education and project 1903500, Infrastructural Development: I want to ask the Hon. Minister if all of those moneys for 2016 were exhausted.

Mr. Bulkan: Of the three projects, which the Hon. Member referred, for the third there is actually no allocation in 2016. For Bridges and the buildings under Education, I am advised that the budgeted sums will be expended in 2016.

Mr. Damon: A follow-up question. Will they be extended in 2016?

Mr. Bulkan: They will be “expended”.

Mr. Damon: It is this year.

Mr. Bulkan: Yes Hon. Member.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project 1202800, Buildings - Education, I see that there is \$130,570,000 to spend. I would like to know how much money will be spent in construction and extension of the sanitary block at Charity Secondary School, Mabel Sandy at Wakapau, Abrams Creek and Charity. How much money will be spent at each one?

Mr. Bulkan: For the first of the locations named, namely Abrams Creek, the budgetary allocation is the sum of \$3.8 million. The second one, the sanitary block at Wakapau, is \$6.3 million and for the extension of the sanitary block at the Charity Primary School is the sum of \$2.7 million.

Mr. Neendkumar: Kindly lay over to us the amount that will be spent on the specific numbers 2, 3 and 4 in the legend.

Mr. Bulkan: Read it to me.

Mr. Neendkumar: Do you want me to read it out?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you do not have time to read anything out.

Mr. Neendkumar: That is why I am telling him that I would like if he could lay over the specific expenditure in these three areas.

Mr. Chairman: Has he asked you a question?

Mr. Bulkan: No.

Mr. Neendkumar: Could you please lay over to this Assembly the amount that was spent for the construction of the Liberty Primary School and living quarters and the construction of the walkway at Suddie Primary School tarmac, C.V. Nunes Primary School and drains. Could the Minister tell us how much will be spent for the extension of the Charity Secondary School, Suddie Primary School Annex at Good Hope and the Fisher and Kabakaburi Primary Schools? Could he give us a specific amount for these bids?

Mr. Bulkan: In the interest of time and moving ahead, this information is on hand I could choose to either read it now or if the Hon. Member...

Mr. Chairman: Hon, Member there is no time for you to read anything. If you are going to hand it over, then that will suffice.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I will lay over this information.

Programme: 724- Education Delivery - \$161,170,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Current Expenditure

Programme: 725 - Health Services – \$799,410,000

Programme: 725 - Health Services – \$799,410,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are allotted one hour. Right now we are exceeding our hour. We will not take from another region the opportunity to ask questions.

Mr. Neendkumar: It is unfair, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Neendkumar, you are out of order.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 725 – Health Services – \$145,140,000

Programme: 725 – Health Services – \$145,140,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 73 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara

Current Expenditure

Programme: 731 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$204,509,000

Mr. Chairman: I will take two minutes to say to Hon. Members we are allowed one hour for the consideration of the Estimates of this programme. That means that Members ought to be able to ask their questions fairly rapid.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: There was an allocation in 2016 of \$20 million under this line item. I am seeing here that there is a reduction to \$18 million. Will the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us how this reduction can be justified and what impact it will have on the working of the Regional Democratic Council of Region 3?

Mr. Bulkan: It will be noted that out of the budgetary allocation in 2016 of \$20 million a little less than \$15 million would have been spent, actual expenditure, and it is proposed to increase that sum in 2017. Hence, there is an increased allocation in 2017 of \$18 million. There is no anticipation that the work of the council will suffer as a result because the provision in 2017 is greater than the expenditure in 2016.

Mr. G. Persaud: A follow-up. I am a bit confused and let me share why so. I have heard the Hon. Minister stating that what is reflected under revised 2016 is actual expenditure. Over the last two days we have heard that that is not so and we were given a lecture, in terms of reading the Estimates and to understand that this figure would have been reflecting expenditure sometime in August 2016 and not actual expenditure to date. I wish that the Hon. Minister correct that.

Mr. Bulkan: The sum that is reflected here is the projected expenditure as of the end of 2016.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: In 2016 there were 35 persons now it has been reduced to ten persons. Could you tell me why the number was reduced to ten? Further to expedite the process, I see line item 6116, Contracted Employees the employment cost last year was \$30 million and now it is \$29.2 million. The drop is not as significant as the drop in the amount of workers.

11.29 a.m.

Mr. Bulkan: The reduction under line item 6116 is the result of three main reasons. A number of persons retired in 2016 totalling ten persons under Administration, a further five persons under Agriculture, a number of persons were transferred from contract to the fixed establishment and two persons exercised their option for the non-renewal of their contracts.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6114 – Clerical and Office Support: I was made to understand that the Regional Chairman was denied the right to choose and select who should be his clerical and office support. Is that correct?

Mr. Bulkan: Strictly speaking, I believe that is an administrative issue and not a budgetary one relating to the issues before us.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Is it that these retirees' contracts were not renewed or did the persons retire? For you to be retired, you would have had to be on the

fixed establishment. The contract has duration so the two are not the same. Something is not making sense.

Mr. Bulkan: The persons who retired, which were earlier referred to, all voluntarily resigned. It was not because of the non-renewal of their contracts, which was separate.

Mr. Croal: A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the reason was for the non-renewal or why they were severed? That is just a clarification. There is a difference between a non-renewal of a contract or if you were severed.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that there was no severing and that all of the non-renewals were as a result of voluntary resignations.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$204,509,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$17,600,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Project code 2503200 – Furniture and Equipment - Administration: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to lay over the list of items that would be purchased, the costs and to whose office these items would be assigned?

Mr. Bulkan: Indeed, the list is quite long and this information would be provided to the Clerk.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$17,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$334,304,000

Mr. Seeraj: Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: In the interest of time, could the Hon. Minister layover in this House the works that were identified under this line item?

Mr. Bulkan: I am reminded by my Colleague, the Hon. Member, Mr. John Adams, that he spoke extensively on a number of these activities and projects that would be funded under

this regional allocation. Nonetheless, the list that is being requested by the Hon. Member will be provided to the Clerk.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: I noticed that the staff complement has been reduced by 50% but next year's employment costs remain almost the same as this year. What is the explanation?

Mr. Bulkan: An examination of the figures would show that there has been a continued downward trend from \$52 million in 2016 where the revised figure was actually \$40 million and that downward trend continues in 2017 to \$39 million. It is already catered for as part of the trend.

Mr. Chand: A follow-up: Would the Minister provide to this House a list with all the designations and the commencement dates of employment?

Mr. Bulkan: Is it the same line item 6116, Hon. Member?

Mr. Chand: Yes, it is the same line item.

Mr. Bulkan: This information would be provided.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$334,304,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$48,700,000

Mr. Seeraj: Project code 1300800 – Agricultural Development – D & I - Construction and upgrading of drainage and irrigation structures: The profile page mentions works to be done at Goed Intent, Schoonord, Zeelugt, Endeavour and Maria Johanna. Could the Hon. Minister please state the individual amounts that would be spent at these different locations?

Mr. Bulkan: The estimated amount at Goed Intent for the construction of revetment is in the sum of \$14 million; at Schoonord, the construction of a re-enforcement concrete (RC) control structure, a sluice, at a budgeted sum of \$8.9 million; at Zeelugt, the construction of a similar RC sluice at a similar amount of \$8.9 million; an RC sluice at Endeavour at \$5 million; and the rehabilitation of the Maria Johanna sluice in Wakenaam at an estimated cost of \$11.9 million, giving a total allocation of \$48.7 million.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$48,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 733 – Public Works - \$106,616,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There was about an \$800,000 increase in the allocation but Staffing Details remain at two. Could the Hon. Minister explain?

Mr. Bulkan: The increase in the 2017 allocation allows for the increase in salaries and benefits for the two employees as the result of annualisation of their benefits?

Mr. Croal: Could the Hon. Minister therefore provide the designations and the salaries as well as all emoluments for the two contracted employees?

Mr. Bulkan: This information will be provided subsequently to the Hon. Member.

Mr. G. Persaud: I have two questions. Sir, with your permission, I could ask both at the same time. Line item 6231– Fuel and Lubricants: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to provide us with the list of pumps, equipment and vehicles that would benefit from this allocation?

Line item 6281 – Security Services: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to let us know the name of the security company, the rate per hour and when this engagement will come to an end?

Mr. Bulkan: The vehicles that are applicable to line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants - include car, back hoe, caterpillar grader, skid steer loader, motorcycles, a Nissan Pickup that is based in Leguan, brush cutters, slashers, two additional pickups – one located in Plantain Walk and one in Crane, and two caterpillar bulldozers in Plantain Walk.

11.44 a.m.

There is a Toyota Pickup, PRR 8327, based in Vreed-en-Hoop. Those are the vehicles that are for which fuel and lubricants are required.

On the question relating to the security, the company providing the service is Home Safe Security and the locations are Crane compound and the Plantain Walk works compound with

a total of four guards each at a rate of \$300 per hour. This contract comes to an end at the end of December, 2016.

Mr. Seeraj: Thank you, Comrade Chairman.

Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Can the Hon. Minister, through you, identify the roads earmarked for maintenance and what kind of maintenance will be done on these roads?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, all of the roads would be double bituminous surface treatment (DBST) and the locations are, firstly, approximately 1,200 feet of roads in De Kinderen; 870 feet in Patentia and 900 feet in Toevlugt. The estimated cost for De Kinderen is \$4 million; in Patentia, it is \$3.5 million and, in Toevlugt, it is \$4 million. In Wakenaam, it is 900 feet of rehabilitation with an estimated cost of \$3 million and Nismes approximately 820 feet at an estimated cost of \$5.5 million, giving a total of \$20 million.

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$106,616,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$65,500,000

Mr. Seeraj: Thank you, Comrade Chairman.

Project code 1100400 – Bridges: An amount is being budgeted - \$27.5 million. Can the Hon. Minister give us an itemised breakdown of the cost for these bridges?

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The budgeted sum for Richmond Hill in Leguan is an estimated cost of \$9.5 million to provide better access for some 500 residents in that location. At Leonora, construction of a reinforced concrete heavy-duty bridge with dimensions of 30 feet by 17 feet (30ft x 17ft) and an estimated cost of \$9 million to benefit approximately 600 residents in that community. And thirdly, at Met-en-Meerzorg, the construction of a similar RC heavy duty bridge, slightly longer at 35 feet by 17 feet (35ft x 17ft) at an estimated cost of \$9 million and this is to benefit approximately 2,500 residents in that community – a total sum of \$27.5 million.

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$65,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$2,686,927,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you, Sir.

Line item 6273 – Water Charges: Hon. Minister, there is an increase of about 300%. Can you please help us to understand the movement from \$11 million to \$44.6 million?

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The 2017 allocation of a provision of \$44.6 million is to provide water supply to a total of 77 schools throughout the region. It is a significant increase. I am advised that, in 2016, there were only 36 schools that were metered but, as a result of the complete metering programme, it is now 77, and the adjustment has been made to take this into account.

Mr. G. Persaud: I have a follow-up: Let me thank the Minister for qualifying it that all 77 schools were in receipt of water but they were not metered, so now they are all metered.

Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: The 2016 Budget was \$1.5 million. According to the Hon. Minister, the explanation he gave for the revised 2016 is that \$500,000 is projected to be used by the end of this year. Yet, there is a request of \$2.5 million. So there seems to be some inconsistencies. Would the Hon. Minister please justify that?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Chand, we are awaiting a reply from the Minister. Thank you.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the increased budgetary provision in 2017 is as a result of an increase fleet that this line item caters for and it includes now for minibus, canter truck, boat, an additional truck and weeding machines. So, there is an increase in the amount of equipment in that region.

Mr. Chand: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: The staff complement is one as against seven for 2016. Yet, the expenditure has gone up from \$1.334 million to \$2.612 million. Is it that the one person's salary has gone up considerably? And can the designation be provided along with the date of employment?

Mr. Bulkan: Indeed, as it states, the provision is for the emoluments for one person who is a voluntary teacher at a stipend of \$30,000 per month.

Mr. Chand: I have a follow-up, Comrade Chairman. My calculation is telling me \$30,000 multiplied by 12 months is \$360,000 but we are talking about an expenditure of \$2.612 million.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the sum reflected there also has something to do with changes in the payroll but further clarification will be provided to the Hon. Member subsequently.

Mr. Seeraj: Thank you, Comrade Chairman.

Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Can the Hon. Minister identify for the House the buildings that will be maintained under this line item? And if the list is too exhaustive, maybe, in the interest of time, the Minister can provide us with a list of those buildings.

Mr. Bulkan: The total budgeted allocation, the sum of \$80 million, caters for interventions in a number of schools throughout the regions, among the locations being Plantain Walk, Leonora, Belle West, Stewartville, La Grange, Canal No.2 Polder, Vreed-en-Hoop, Met-en-Meerzorg, Cornelia Ida, Tuschen Nursery, Windsor Forest Nursery, Uitvlugt Nursery, Eastern Leguan, Sisters Nursery; a building in Aliko in the Essequibo River, Stewartville, Richmond Hill, Malgre Tout, La Retraite, Great Truli Island in the Essequibo River, Zeelandia, Wakenaar, Met-en-Meerzorg, Saint Lawrence, East Bank Essequibo, Vreed-en-Hoop, Karia Karia, Lower Bonasika, Stewartville Secondary, L’Aventure Secondary, Fellowship PIC, Leonora Secondary, Parika Salem Secondary, Vreed-en-Hoop Secondary, Vergenoegen Secondary, West Demerara Secondary, Uitvlugt Secondary and Leguan Secondary.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6284 – Other: There is a movement from \$57.655 million to \$100 million.

11.59 a.m.

Would the Hon. Minister give us the expenditure under this line item, how much would be used for each of the items and tell us why this \$43 million increase on this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the activities to be funded under this line item are the payment of examination supervisors as well as sweeper/cleaners in the education system. The reason for the increase in the allocation is due to the increases for examination supervisors as well as the salaries being paid to the sweeper/cleaners who are now receiving a sum of \$41,200. Before, they received \$29,000 monthly. There is a total of 42 sweeper/cleaners.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$2,686,927,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$179,100,000

Mr. Seeraj: Project code 1203000 – Buildings – Education: The profile page lists a number of buildings and other works to be done. Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the estimated cost for the works identified?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the total budgetary allocation of \$155.7 million caters for funding the completing of a building to house the Department of Education in Plantain Walk - a budgeted sum of \$35 million; construction of cold storage in the education compound at Plantain Walk - a budgeted sum of \$20 million, which is to ensure adequate storage of the juices supplied under the School Feeding Programme; construction of a sanitary block at Vreed-en-Hoop - a sum of \$5 million; construction of a boat house at Parika - a sum of \$2 million; construction of a ramp and revetment at northern Hog Island - a sum of \$6 million; construction of a ramp and revetment at Upper Bonasika Primary School - a sum of \$6 million; sanitary block at Noitgedacht Nursery School - a sum of \$1.5 million; construction of a sanitary block at Sans Souci Primary School - a sum of \$4 million dollars for four facilities; construction of a sanitary block at Hague Primary School - a sum of \$1 million for one cell; construction of and equipment for a school to cater for special needs children at Schoonord - a sum of \$30 million; enclosing of a bottom flat at Great Truli to cater for teachers from the Coast - a sum of \$4 million; construction of Headmaster's Quarters at Northern Hog Island Primary School - a sum of \$10 million; construction of Headmaster's Quarters at Karia Karia - a sum of \$9 million; construction of Headmaster's Quarters at Upper Bonasika Primary School - a sum of \$9 million; construction of a Headmaster's Quarters at Western Hog Island Primary - a sum of \$9 million; installation of gas lines at the science laboratory of the Patentia Secondary School - a sum of \$2 million; a similar activity at the Essequibo Islands Secondary School in Wakenaam - a sum of \$2.2 million, giving a total provision of \$155.7 million.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$179,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$1,302,983,000

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister refer to line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled - and the Staffing Details? In the Staffing Details, we note the decrease by one, from 129 to 128, but there still seems to be a significant increase in the expenditure. Could the Minister explain this?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, whilst there has been an increase in the allocation by approximately \$8 million, it would be noted that this allocation provides for 128 employees. The increase would be as a result of an upgrade in status, promotion to the fixed establishment as well as increased benefits and emoluments for the 128 senior technical positions in the health services.

Dr. Ramsaran: Does it mean, Hon. Minister, that there is a difference in salary, a bigger salary for the same job, in moving from contract to the fixed establishment?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, there would have been, in many instances, an upgrade, an increase in the status from Government Scale (GS) 1 to GS 2. This would have attracted a higher salary.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister advise us of how many doctors are under contracted employees? And, due to the number dropping from 105 to 58, could he say how many of those doctors have been put on the fixed pensionable establishment?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that three doctors were placed on the fixed establishment.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up, please: Could the Minister say if there is any difference in the salaries and benefits of the doctors being moved from contract to the fixed pensionable establishment? Could he also give the plus or the negative of moving from one to the other in terms of dollars?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that there is no difference in the salary. The specific information will be provided subsequently to the Hon. Member.

Mr. G. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, line items 6272 and 6273 – Electricity Charges and Water Charges: It is noted that the revised and budgetary allocations for both of the line items are

the same for 2016 and that is repeated in 2017. Could I ask the Hon. Minister how then would the 14% value-added tax (VAT) for electricity and for water charges be taken care of?

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Hon. Member. Mr. Chairman, I believe similar questions were posed last evening in relation to the regions already examined. What we have here are the budgetary provisions for electricity and water. It is anticipated that these would be the sums required to provide electricity and water in 2017.

Dr. Ramsaran: Mr. Chairman, would the Minister explain the issue of gratuity and the fixed establishment? Does it mean that the Estimates now would not contain the sixth-month gratuity? Would the doctors be getting the same basic salary and have to wait until they end their work life to receive a pension?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the answer is yes, as described by the Hon. Member. There is no provision in these Estimates for the payment of gratuities in the ensuing year for persons on the fixed establishment. Those benefits are attainable at the time of retirement.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: The sum of \$40 million has been put aside for 2017; the sum of \$37.653 million is for 2016. Could the Minister say how many of the theatres will be completed, upgraded and functioning in Region 3?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, two theatres in Region 3 at the West Demerara Regional Hospital are currently functional, but there is provision in these Estimates for maintenance in 2017.

12.14 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I ask a follow-up, Mr. Chairman? Has equipment for the Neonatal Unit at the Bess Hospital, which has not been able to function, been included in the field medical and supplies? The unit has not been able to function because it did not have functioning equipment.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the Neonatal Unit is functional and that the allocations for that facility would fall under line item 6284 - Other.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: The allocation is \$359 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us whether the sum is adequate to ensure that there will

not be the prolonged situation of drug shortages during 2017, like we would have experienced in 2016?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am not sure that the Hon. Member can substantiate the allegation or assertion in relation to a prolonged drug shortage. I am advised that that is incorrect. Be that as it may, the budgeted sum of \$360 million is in anticipation that this will be sufficient to cater for the pharmaceutical needs of the region in 2017.

Mr. G. Persaud: Follow up: I want to draw the Minister's attention to the Budget Speech by the Minister of Finance that was read in this House, where it was accepted that shortages of drugs and medical supplies is a serious problem affecting the delivery of health in our country.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Follow up: In 2015, the Government changed the policy of putting moneys in the regions for the regions to then give the Ministry of Public Health a warrant. Is that system still continuing since it had problems in 2015 and in 2016? Or, is it that the region will be purchasing, on its own, these drugs or the majority or is it that the warrants are written to the Ministry of Public Health and that Ministry then purchase and debit drugs for the region? Which system is being used?

Mr. Bulkan: As earlier explained, under programme budgeting, the allocation is made *via* the region, but the money is eventually warranted to the Ministry of Public Health in relation to the procurement of drugs and medical supplies. The actual needs are identified from each region, but to benefit from the economies of scale, in those purchases, the procurement is done *via* the Ministry of Public Health, based on the needs, as identified by the respective regions for which the provisions and allocations are made.

Ms. Teixeira: Follow-up: Would the Hon. Minister be able to say if Region 3's health services received all of the drugs it had requested under this item in 2016, for the sum of \$366.3 million? According to the budget and the revised, all of the money was spent.

Mr. Bulkan: The figure the Hon. Member quoted was included in line items 6221 to 6224. In relation to the question to do with drugs and medical supplies for the sum of \$339 million, I am advised that approximately 95% of the drugs under that allocation were supplied.

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$1,302,983,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$104,168,000

Dr. Ramsaran: Would the Minister say, under project code 1203100, Buildings – Health, in relation to item five under the description in the Legend “The extension of building at Lenora Diagnostic Centre”. What does this capture, what is the extent and what services will be offered?

Mr. Bulkan: The budgeted sum of \$6 million is allocated for the extension of the Dental, X-ray, Emergency and the Outpatient Departments at that particular location.

Dr. Ramsaran: Follow up: The Minister would have noted that, in the Legend, it is quite extensive, it has six sub-points. Could the Minister lay over the details of the extension of the building, particularly point five, “Extension of the building at Lenora Diagnostic Centre”?

There was a report that there was the intention to construct a full-fledged maternity unit at Lenora, does this figure include that or has that plan been shelved?

Mr. Bulkan: The requested information relating to the budgetary allocations for the entire \$56 million will be laid over for the benefit of the Hon. Members. I am advised that work is currently ongoing at the Maternity Unit at that location

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$104,168,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this concludes our work for this morning. Let the Assembly be resumed.

Assembly resumed

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will now take the suspension and the Sitting will resume at 1.20 p.m.

Sitting was suspended at 12.24 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 1.29 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to continue the consideration of the budget Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2017.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 74 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica

Current Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$192,743,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I see that the number has been reduced by one, but I notice that the allocation for wages has increased from \$26.9 million to \$28.7 million, could the Minister please explain?

Mr. Bulkan: The reason for the minimal increase in the 2017 allocation is due to the annualisation of benefits for the 26 employees catered for under this line item, as well as the recent increases.

Mr. Neendkumar: Follow up: Could the Minister provide a list of the contracted employees, their designations and their emoluments?

Mr. Bulkan: The list, minus the names, can and will be laid over to the Clerk of the National Assembly.

Mr. Neendkumar: Line item 6271, Electricity Charges: I notice that, in 2016, the allocation was \$2.715 million and that figure remained in 2017, could the Minister say whether the 14% Value Added Tax (VAT) was included?

Mr. Bulkan: The provision that is made is deemed to be sufficient for the consumption of electricity for 2017.

1.34 p.m.

Mr. Bharrat: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Hon. Minister, there is an increase in the revised target of almost \$11 million. Could you say which new sites will be secured or does this cater for the increase in salary?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the reason for the increase in the 2017 allocation is due to one additional location being provided with security, namely for the residence of the REO.

Bishop Edghill: Just to follow-up on two line items. First of all, under line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: The Hon. Minister indicated that this would be adequate in terms of its provision, when it was enquired whether this amount included VAT. Since the budgeted and the actual sums for 2016 are the same amounts, could the Minister specify what would take place to ensure that, in 2017, this amount remains the same?

Mr. Bulkan: A very good question Hon. Member. One of the measures that have recently been introduced is the replacement of conventional bulbs with energy saving bulbs. It is expected to reduce the consumption of electricity and it is hoped that the allocation that is provided for in 2017 would be sufficient, but that is the provision.

Bishop Edghill: Line item 6281 – Security Services: A follow-up to the question asked by my Colleague, as it relates to the increase of security. The Minister indicated that there is an additional location, which is for the residence of the REO. I would like to ask the Minister whether the previous REOs had security at their residence as well, what is the rate being paid and who is the contractor?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the incumbent has been in that position for all of 2016, but did not choose or enjoy security services until October of 2016. In addition, the Regional Vice-Chairman (RVC) did not enjoy that similar service until mid-2016. Both of these would apply for the entire 2017 and these are the main reasons responsible for the increase in the 2017 allocation. The provider of the security services is Home Safe Security and Domestic Services and the rate is \$360 per hour.

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$192,743,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$27,700,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code – 1208800 – Buildings – Administration: I noticed \$10 million is budgeted for and in the Legend it states, “Construction of trestle for living quarters at Triumph”. I would like to ask how much will be spent on this. For the rehabilitation of

electrical system and roof at the Regional Administration Office, I would like to know how much, specifically, would be spent on that?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the budgeted sum for the first activity is \$2 million. For the second question on the rehabilitation of the electrical installation, as well as on the roof of the RDC's Office in Triumph, the budgeted sum is \$8 million.

Bishop Edghill: Project code – 2404700 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Minister indicate what is to be procured and for use by whom?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the provision is to allow for the acquisition of a reconditioned minibus for use by the RDC in its activities and field visits across the region. It is a budgeted sum of \$4 million.

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$27,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$329, 850,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: In 2016 there were 46 employees; there are two more in 2017. I have noticed that the salaries for them have increased from \$50,679,000 to \$57,144,000. Could the Minister please lay over to the Clerk of the National Assembly their emoluments?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, would I be correct in thinking that this request was made before under a different head?

Mr. Bulkan: Yes, Mr. Chairman. The request is to lay over the information and this will be complied with.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Minister lay over to the House the areas where this work would be done because \$160,000,000 would be spent?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the request is to lay over the information for all of the activities that are provided for under this allocation and it will be provided to the Clerk of the National Assembly.

Bishop Edghill: There is a follow-up under line item 6253. Sir, the Minister expended \$40 million more than was budgeted for under this programme in 2016. Could the Minister indicate how this was financed in the absence of a supplementary?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the increase in the expenditure that is above the budgeted sum was to necessitate emergency works. It came by way of a virement.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, as follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister lay over to this house where the emergency works were undertaken and the value for each item? He needs to lay it over to the House. He does not necessarily need to give it now.

Mr. Bulkan: Yes. Mr. Chairman, the request is duly noted and the information will be provided.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$329,850,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$44,100,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code – 1701200 – Agricultural Development: I see a total of \$44,100,000 is to be spent. In the Legend it states that the project entails the construction of revetments at Nabaclis, Mahaica, Supply and Alliance. Is it possible that the Hon. Minister could lay over the specific amount for each one of these activities to the Clerk of the National Assembly?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, there are only four activities and it would not take long for me to relate them. It is the construction of a timber revetment at Nabaclis for a budgeted sum of \$11,180,000; construction of a timber revetment at Hand-en-Veldt for a budgeted sum of \$13,800,000; another timber revetment at the Supply Sluice, which is on the East Bank, \$11,180,000; and a fourth timber revetment at Alliance on the East Bank for a budgeted sum of \$7,940,000.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$44,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 743 – Public Works – 131,168,000

Bishop Edghill: Sir, I would like to bring the Minister's attention to line item 6116 – Contracted Employees, there has been an increase of three employees.

1.49 p.m.

I would like to ask the Minister what necessitated these three persons being employed as contracted employees as against being placed on the establishment? Could he give the particular skills that they bring to this?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the three positions or designations are two Sluice Attendants and one Accounts Clerk. These vacancies had to be filled and there was reluctance for persons to fill those positions, other than by way of contract employment, which brought the immediate benefits. The exigencies of the situation necessitated the hiring or filling of these three vacancies.

Bishop Edghill: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up question on this same line item. Sir, the Minister just indicated to the House that the persons who were employed are two Sluice Attendants and one Accounts Clerk. By his and the Government's admission, is he indicating to this House that these three individuals, who are now engaged as contracted employees, would be enjoying benefits superior to positions in the establishment?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, no, the benefits are not superior. The salary would be the same and the filling of the vacancies were done on an emergency basis, but the process of transition to the fixed establishment is also in train.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item, just for the purpose of clarity. The Hon. Minister, a while ago, indicated to this House that these persons were placed as contracted employees because of the difficulty in attracting people to the positions on the fixed establishment. If they had difficulties in attracting people to the fixed establishment, but they were engaged as contracted employees, there had to have been a package that is better than the one under the fixed establishment. So, could he indicate clearly what the additional package is? Apart from

the salary what are the other emoluments and benefits that these positions will attract as contracted employees?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the difference between being employed under the two scenarios is that, in the case of contracted employees, the gratuity is due and payable at a six month interval, as opposed to persons being on the fixed establishment who have to wait a longer period of time and it depends at the time of retirement. So, that is the only difference in the conditions of service procedure.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, I notice that the increased amount in salary for these three persons is \$3 million because the sum moved from \$12.5 million to \$15.7 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell us whether he has calculated this, because I do not see how this could be synchronised to arrive at this amount?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the total allocation and the difference between 2016 and 2017 would not be solely attributable to the three new employees, but rather it would apply to all 12 persons under this category. So, as a result of the annualisation of the benefits, and in addition to the salaries, this is what is responsible for the difference for the three persons between the 2016 and 2017 figures.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, line items 6251 – Maintenance of Roads and 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: I see there is a total of \$35.5 million and \$23 million. Could the Hon. Minister please lay over the specifics to the Clerk of the National Assembly about where these bridges will be repaired, where the roads will be repaired and the cost attached to them, so that the House could have notes?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads - \$35 million. It is not a lot of projects and activities; it would only take a moment for me to relate these. The repairs to the Enmore Line Top Road, which is south of the Railway Embankment - budgeted sum \$6 million; repairs to the Nursery School Road in Belmont - budgeted sum \$5 million; repairs to Prince William Street - \$3 million; First Cross Street in Bare Root - \$8 million; repairs to the Diamond Cinema Street on the East Bank - \$4.5 million; repairs to the Fernandes Road, Soesdyke - \$4 million; and finally repairs to the road at Cowpen Street, in Eccles, East Bank Demerara - \$5 million, for a total of \$35.5 million.

For the bridges: Culvert Street, First Street Covent Garden - \$3 million; the last street in Nonpareil - \$2.5 million; repairs to a bridge at Victoria Street, Plaisance - \$3 million; timber

bridge at Triumph North, this is the one next to the Seawall - \$3.5 million; repairs to a bridge at Moravian Street - \$3 million; main access bridge in Coldingen - \$3 million; Ganesh Street, Craig Mill, Cove and John - \$2.5 million; and repairs to a timber bridge at Bare Root on the East Coast Demerara - \$2.5 million. The location as to where Moravian Street is will be provided subsequently.

Programme: 743 –Public Works - \$131,168,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 743 – Public Works - \$79,800,000

Bishop Edghill: Project code 2404700 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what type of vehicle is being purchased under this programme head and for what purpose it will be used?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the allocation is to facilitate the acquisition of one double-cab 4x4 pickup to be used by the Regional Engineers in the execution of their duties.

Bishop Edghill: Sir, a follow-up question: Could the Hon. Minister indicate how many vehicles are presently in the fleet of this particular programme?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the current fleet consists of two vehicles, one that is quite old, so this would bring the complement to three, bearing in mind that one of them has seen better days.

Bishop Edghill: Under the same line item, could the Hon. Minister tell this House the staff complement of the Public Works Department?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the staffing complement in that department numbers 25. It is stated in Programme 3.

Mr. Neendkumar: Project code 1100500 – Bridges: I see that there is total of \$25 million for the rehabilitation of bridges and in the Legend it reads:

“The project entails construction and rehabilitation of bridges at Cove and John, Vigilance South, Soesdyke and Victoria.”

Mr. Chairman in order to save time could the Minister lay over to the Clerk of the National Assembly, the specific amounts for the specific areas where the bridges will be built?

Mr. Bulkan: There are only four activities; it is quite a short list. There is the bridge in Cove and John, which is a timber bridge, that will cost of \$6.5 million; in Victoria - \$3.5 million; the bridge in Soesdyke - \$8.6 million; and the Foot Path Bridge in Vigilance South - \$7 million, for a total of \$25.6 million.

Mr. Bharrat: Project code 1400700 – Roads: The budgetary allocation is \$46.2 million. Could the Hon. Minister state where will these roads be constructed and of what quality?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, it is for the upgrading of the Third Street to the Back Road in Covent Garden, AC Roads for the sum of \$24 million; \$7.3 million is budgeted for the upgrading of Hendrick Street, in Beterverwagting (BV); a sum of \$8.8 million for the construction of a Back Road, Soesdyke Nursery School; and \$6.1 million for the upgrading of the School Road in Covent Garden.

Mr. Neendkumar: Mr. Chairman, as a follow up question. I would like to say that in the Legend Soesdyke is stated. So, I would like to know how much money would be provided for Soesdyke because that is what is in the Legend - Soesdyke, Covent Garden and Beterverwagting? I do not know where the Hon. Minister got the other one from.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, there are actually two interventions in Covent Garden, one in Soesdyke and one Beterverwagting, which is a total of 4.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, under project code 1100500 – Bridges: The 2016 Budget had \$12.4 million. Was this entire amount of \$12.4 million spent in 2016 because one Minister said that this was projected and another said that it was incomplete? So, could the Hon. Minister say whether the allocation in 2016, under this head, Bridges, was spent entirely?

I have a second question in relation to project code 1400700 – Roads: The amount is \$49 million. Was this entire amount spent in 2016 or are works still continuing and is this the projection?

2.04 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that for project code 1100500, the budgeted sum of \$12.4 million - that the projections are that the sum will be exhausted by the end of the year

and similarly in the case of the roads the budgeted sum of \$49 million the completion sum of the activities that the final payments are currently in process and similarly the entire amount will be exhausted by the end of the year.

Ms. Teixeira: A follow-up question. Would the Hon. Member then say that these projections do not accurately reflect the actual money spent as of the time the budget was presented on November 28th?

Mr. Bulkan: I think it is clearly understood, based on the latest expenditure, that a projection was made and it is that projection that informs the figure, the latest estimate, that is quoted here in the document.

Ms. Teixeira: One more follow-up, because these are bridges and roads. Are you saying, Minister, that the retention money and everything will be completed as of December 31st 2016, because these are maintenance and works?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the works have been completed. Some of the final payments would relate to retention payments and these would not go forward into 2017. Those payments must be made in 2016.

Programme: 743 - Public Works - \$79,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 744 - Education Delivery - \$3,547,790,000

Dr. Persaud: Line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled: I notice there has been a decrease in the numbers. Could you say where these vacancies exist, if they do, will there be a shortfall of the delivery services? What were the circumstances that led to the decrease in those numbers?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the reduction in numbers, under this line item, is primarily due to persons being promoted higher up in the teaching service and education delivery. That is responsible for the reduction in the staffing for 2017.

Dr. Persaud: Could the Hon. Minister say if this is so in 90% of the cases and if that is so vacancies now in the other positions? Will these be filled? My question still stands. Will there be a shortfall in the delivery of services?

Mr. Bulkan: In cases where there is a vacancy, a provision can be made in these Estimates if those positions have not been filled but the Ministry of Finance does cater for vacancies that are filled in the new year to provide additional resources where such cases apply.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6284, Other: Could the Hon. Minister say if this budgetary allocation has been increased in 2016? I have not noticed a supplementary for that. The second question has to do with the 2017 figure. Could the Hon. Minister say what will be covered by this other and the increase here?

Mr. Bulkan: The additional resources came by way of virement. The provision for 2017, this heading caters for the main component which would be payment for sweeper-cleaners, supervisors, exam invigilators and for which the rates for those have been increased from \$1,200 and \$900 to \$1,800 and \$1,200 respectively. The sweeper-cleaners are presently paid approximately \$9 million on a monthly basis.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Minister advise us where was the virement taken from Budget 2016 for this end, because it was not submitted? It was virement. Could you say what head or subhead it was taken from under this programme?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that it came principally from two headings, namely fuel as well as security.

Programme: 744 - Education Delivery - \$3,547,790,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 744 - Education Delivery - \$263,243,000

Mr. Neendkumar: Project 1203300, Building - Education: I see a total of \$230,443,000, but in the legend I see that it is the payment of retention. What is the payment for? Completion of Golden Grove Secondary, Peter's Hall Primary and Eastman Ville Diamond Grove, I would like to know how much will be spent here. Construction of Hand en Veldt Nursery School, I would like to know how much will be spent here. How much money would be spent on the rehabilitation of Mahaica Primary School? The extension of Buxton and Lancaster Secondary Schools, I would like to know how much. Could he lay over that for us please?

Mr. Bulkan: In this instance the activities are quite a few. I think in the interest of time it might be preferable for this information to be laid over. It has all the information with the rollover projects, the retention payments, as well as the four new projects which are the extension of the Buxton Secondary School, extension of Lancaster Secondary School, the construction at the nursery school at Hand en Veldt and the rehabilitation of the Mahaica Primary School.

Dr. Persaud: Project 2404700, Land and Water Transport: Could the Minister you say what vehicle will be purchased and where will this vehicle be utilised?

Mr. Bulkan: The provision is for the purchase of an enclosed van vehicle. It will be used to transport books as well as items for the school feeding programme, such as juices and biscuits, for \$8 million.

Ms. Teixeira: Project 1203300, Buildings - Education, in 2016 \$254 million was approved and \$218.77 million was expended late in the Estimates. Could the Hon. Minister why the underperformance under this head of education was? What were the problems encountered and as anything been done to rectify this?

Mr. Bulkan: The reason, which is responsible for the reduced expenditure over the 2016 allocation, relates to two main projects namely the construction of the Golden Grove Secondary and at Peter's Hall as a result of the delay in the tendering process. Construction did not start until late, so whilst the mobilisation would have been effected these projects would be rolled over into 2017. This is the main reason for the reduction in the expenditure for 2016.

Bishop Edghill: As a follow-up on the same project that my colleague asked, could the Hon. Minister indicate to us what date were the contracts for those two projects signed?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that in the case of Peter's Hall Primary School the contract was signed around July or August. I am unable at this moment to provide information with relation to the Golden Grove Secondary School, but it would be provided subsequently.

Bishop Edghill: Could the Hon. Minister lay that over to the Assembly? Also we would like to find out the duration of the contracts for these works to be executed.

Mr. Bulkan: This information will be provided as part of the submission.

Bishop Edghill: Project 2503400, Furniture and Equipment – Education: Could the Hon. Minister indicate if the sums provided in 2016 of \$23 million was fully expended and if the sums asked for in 2017 \$24,800,000 would ensure that there is adequate furnishing in every school in Region 4?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to the first question relating to the allocation for 2016, that sum has been completely spent of \$23 million. The second question in relation to the allocation for 2017, which is fairly subjective, but that is the provision and it will be used to procure furniture and equipment for use of educational facilities across the region.

2.19 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: When you read the legend, with regard to project 2503400, Furniture and Equipment – Education, \$24.8 million for 2017, in Volume 3, page 314, it talks about musical equipment, sports equipment in addition to other things, computer and solar systems. Could you advise this Assembly on - we would like to have - the breakdown of all these things, but in particular where is it projected that the solar systems would be used and where the musical equipment, sports equipment and computers would be assigned to, which school or department?

Mr. Bulkan: The solar systems would be used at three locations, namely Dora Primary School, Susanna's Rust and St. Cuthbert's Primary School. Did you say the musical or sports equipment, Hon. Member?

Ms. Teixeira: Both, if possible.

Mr. Bulkan: The musical equipment, it is to facilitate the purchase of keyboards and drum sets and these are to be used at the Peter's Hall Primary School, Golden Grove Primary School as well as the Diamond Secondary School. These are designed to promote and enhance the musical ability of our students beginning in those particular locations.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$263,243,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$1,176,807,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Minister explain why in 2016, \$56 million were spent, but in 2017, an allocation of \$106 million is requested? Are there increases in sites?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the budgeted allocation in 2016 had catered for the provision of 24-hour security at all of the locations, but the regional administration was, I believed - it is fair to say - grossly dissatisfied with the level of service that was being offered and hence, there was a cut back in the security being provided at those locations, the reduced hours, and it resulted in the decline in expenditure. Based on the projection to resume 24-hour security in 2017, it would be noted that the provisions have increased to the previously budgeted amount in 2016 with the expectation that the service would be adequate based on the new tendering process.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister tell us which locations this is? Even if we look at the original provision 2016, what is provided for in 2017 is about \$8 million short, so would this amount budgeted for 2017 be adequate?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the provision is to cater for security services at approximately 31 locations. The budgeted sum of approximately \$107 million, it was estimated that this would be adequate to provide this service in 2017.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister tell us how much of this money was spent by the region and how much was spent by the Ministry of Public Health?

Mr. Bulkan: I take it you are referring to the allocation of 2016. I am advised of the budgeted sum of approximately \$587 million that approximately \$13 million of that amount was spent by the region directly, and the remainder or the bulk of it was transferred to the Ministry of Public Health for central procurement, as earlier explained, to take advantage of economy of scale and central procurement, but the answer is \$13 million.

Question put.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman, Region 4 has an hour and a half. We have not finished the hour yet. According to the schedule here, Sir, it is an hour and a half. Please check your schedule and you stopped it at an hour, Sir. Some regions have an hour and some have an hour and a

half. Regions 4 and 6 have an hour and a half. The other regions have an hour. I was trying to catch your eye before you put the vote, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you are correct.

M. Teixeira: Could we go back to the programme of Health Services?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we would return for half an hour to consider questions, please go ahead. Hon. Members, please put your questions, current expenditure, Programme 745.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have the floor.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Minister tell us the portion of drugs, the \$13 million that was expended by the region the method of procurement was used for those drugs and medical supplies and who were the persons who won the bids?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the public procurement procedures were employed in the acquisition of the medical supplies for the \$13 million. For the details requested by the Hon. Member could be provided at a subsequent stage.

Ms. Teixeira: Again, line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister advise us of the warrant that was made to the Ministry of Public Health? How much of those drugs were actually delivered to the region? Did it get 75%, 90% or 100%?

Mr. Bulkan: I am not in a position at this time to give an adequate figure at this stage. I do not want to run the risk of misleading the Assembly. This information would be provided subsequently for the benefit of the Hon. Member.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you very much Minister. I would appreciate it. What may be useful in your provision of information is the crib, which would show what is requested and what is received that would probably be the most adequate representation for the Assembly, so it is the crib that the Ministry of Public Health requested. I think that would save us all a lot of trouble.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that is indeed the most efficient method. I thank the Hon. Member for the word of advice.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Hon. Minister tell us for the region how many bids there were for drugs and medical supplies? What type of drugs was requested, the quantities? I understand that you would lay that over, but could we get that type of information?

Mr. Bulkan: The request is duly noted and as was earlier advised that the procurement was done centrally by the Ministry of Public Health and the requested information would be furnished subsequently, Sir.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: I believe that is the right heading. This seems to me to be a rather paltry amount of money in terms of the health services having to go down the Demerara River as well as the Mahaica Creek and the Mahaica River to cover health services. Are outreaches not done anymore by the department of health because this one does not cover that kind of river transportation into these areas?

2.34 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the hiring of transportation in the riverain areas, boats, is covered under line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage, which has a separate provision and allocation.

Ms. Teixeira: It seems rather to be a paltry figure for the kind of surveillance that should be done by the health services. I appreciate the Minister guiding me, but I thought that the region had a health boat, but it does not, it appears. If you are hiring at this cost of \$3 million in 2017, and even in 2016 you underspent, it means that the surveillance, which should be going on by the health services in Region 4, is not taking place.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that there is only one riverain location that is serviced by the RDC and that is at Low Wood. In relation to the transportation needs of the region, in 2017 a bus will be acquired and this would reduce the request for hiring of land transport, hence the provision will be adequate.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I just finish this one on health, this one issue on land surveillance?

Mr. Chairman: I beg your pardon, Hon. Member?

Ms. Teixeira: Would you allow me to just ask a follow-up question on the health surveillance, Sir? Then I will finish this item.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Ms. Teixeira: Minister, I am not talking about an actual center. I am talking about the work of health personnel which is to do with vector control, to do with education and to check on the sites. It is not just about us having one place at Low Wood, so I just want that to be clear. Therefore, for me, this amount of money seems rather paltry. In other words, I am sure the Regional Chairman will be happy. I am saying that she should get more money.

Mr. Bulkan: In addition to the region having its own vehicle, I am advised also that there is additional support provided by the central Ministry and those are adequate at this time.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6281, Security Services: Firstly there was a 100% in the actual expenditure under this line item. Could the Hon. Minister explain what happened here? Then on the request for 2017 there is almost a 100% request. Why now the doubling of the expense when there was a decrease by a 100%? Could you explain that?

Mr. Bulkan: An explanation was offered a moment ago. I believe, perhaps, the Hon. Member was not in the Assembly, I would assume, but a request was provided at the request of Dr. Anthony.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6112, Senior Technical: Could the Minister advise us whether the Regional Health Officer (RHO) is covered under this heading? Is there a Regional Health Officer for Region 4?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that there is an acting Regional Health Officer who is not being paid under this heading, but rather being paid by the central Ministry.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister advise us how many medical doctors are working in Region 4?

Mr. Bulkan: The scope of the information being requested is beyond what is currently provided for here. This information can be sought and provided for the benefit of the Hon. Member subsequently.

Dr. Anthony: What I am seeking to clarify is how many doctors who are being paid by Region 4, because they are working in Region 4 in the regional health system. How many doctors are there? I do not want how many are at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation (GPHC) or how many are in private practice, I understand. We will deal with that under a separate heading. That is not what I am asking for. I am asking for the people who are in the public health system for Region 4.

Mr. Bulkan: As I indicated a moment ago, no doctors are being paid for under the budget for the Regional Democratic Council, but rather they are being paid by the central Ministry. That information is not on hand at this moment but it will be provided subsequently.

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6292, Dietary: Could the Minister advise us what this is for, which institution?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that this allocation is to cater for dietary needs for inpatients at the East Bank Regional Hospital and going forward. It is also envisaged to provide a similar service to the inpatients at C.C. Nicholson Hospital on the East Coast Demerara.

Dr. Anthony: Approximately how many patients are we catering for at East Bank Regional Hospital? When C.C. Nicholson Hospital comes into being, how many beds are we talking about?

Mr. Bulkan: The East Bank Regional Hospital has six beds. The exact number of beds at the C.C. Nicholson Hospital, I am advised, is approximately nine.

Mr. Bharrat: Line item 6292, Dietary: There is an increase of almost \$3 million. Could the Hon. Minister say why there is an increase?

Mr. Bulkan: The information that was provided earlier also relates to this line item where the allocation the \$8.2 million is to provide for dietary needs on a 24-hour basis for the service at the C.C. Nicholson Hospital, which subject to correction, has, I believe, nine beds.

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$1,176,807,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$88,297,000

Dr. Anthony: At project 2506900, Equipment - Health: Could the Minister provide us with a breakdown he can lay it over, the types of equipment and the quantities that would be purchased and the approximate cost?

Mr. Bulkan: The Hon. Member might note that there is a zero provision in 2017 under the project that he related to.

Dr. Anthony: Looking at the same project in the capital...

Mr. Chairman: Would you repeat the project?

Dr. Anthony: It is project 2506900, Equipment – Health, in this capital Estimates. There is a list of items and it is stated here that there are \$28 million allocated for that purchase.

Ms. Teixeira: It is 700, project 2503700.

Dr. Anthony: Which one?

Mr. Bulkan: It is 700, the one above that.

Dr. Anthony: It is project 2503700, Furniture and Equipment - Health. There is a list of equipment there and I was just asking the Minister, because there are \$28 million allocated, if he can probably lay over the equipment, the amounts budgeted or projected to be spent on each piece of equipment.

Mr. Bulkan: The complete details will be laid over, but perhaps I can just spend a brief moment and identify some of the items that are to be procured. They include photocopying machines, automatic washing machines, air conditioners, computers, printers, refrigerators, fans, microwaves, desks, chairs, transformers, filing cabinets, water dispensers, steriliser, incubator, ultrasound machine, examination couches, patient monitors, emergency cart, foetal heart dopplers – I am unaware what that is but the honourable doctor would be familiar - emergency trolleys, stretchers and a generator, but the details will be laid over with the Clerk.

Dr. Anthony: Could the Minister please tell us, the medical equipment, which location they would be assigned to? For example, the infant steriliser, incubators, where would the ultrasound machine be going? The doppler, where would that be going?

Mr. Bulkan: The steriliser, incubator, the ultrasound machine are all destined for the C.C Nicholson Hospital. The dopplers are to provide antenatal services at a number of health locations in the region. The trolleys are destined for the East Bank Regional Hospital as well as the C.C. Nicholson Hospital. This information will be contained in the list that will be laid over.

2.49 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Project 1203500, Buildings – Health: Budget 2016, \$37.5 million was approved and the latest estimate \$31.9 million was spent. Could the Hon. Minister advise what were the reasons that approximately \$6 million, thus far, was not spent?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the activity that was responsible for the shortfall in the 2016 allocation was the construction of a health centre in Eccles. The initial location that was provided was deemed to be unsuitable. By the time a suitable location was determined, it had resulted in the delay in the construction of that particular health centre. It resulted in only the mobilisation fees disbursed in 2016. It will result in a rollover in 2017.

Ms. Teixeira: Under 2017 Budget, the same project code 1203500 – Buildings: \$56.2 million has been set aside. I notice in the Legend in Volume 3, page 315, that \$56.2 million would include the construction of a bond at Paradise. It states incinerator and so on. Is this a pharmacy bond? Could you advise this House on the size of this bond and the cost to build it?

Mr. Bulkan: The activity to which the Hon. Member refers is a budgeted sum of \$7.6 million, as identified, for the construction of a drug bond at Paradise and it is to store small quantities of pharmaceuticals at that location.

Ms. Teixeira: Since we are going to tender for this, what is the size of this bond? Is it 2,000 square feet, 500 square feet or 6,000 square feet?

Mr. Bulkan: The dimensions of the proposed bond would be provided subsequently.

Ms. Teixeira: A follow-up: I am sure that the Hon. Member knows why I am asking. It is because \$7.6 million for a bond versus \$12.4 million for rental is a big... Maybe Region 4 could be the host of the drug bond instead of Sussex Street. If it is approximately 3,000 square feet, then the Government has found an answer to the solution of the Sussex Street bond.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you have not replied.

Mr. Bulkan: I am unaware that that was actually a question. I think it was more in the nature of a commentary.

Mr. Chairman: In the event, it was a question.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer is, I would say, hardly.

Programme: 745 – Health Services - \$88,297,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 75 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$145,931,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: There are no new contracted employees under this Programme. However, in line item 6114, there was an increase from 8 to 31 but there was a reduction of 33 contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister indicate who the employees are, the category of employees who were not moved to the fixed establishment?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that it is a combination of some persons being transferred to the fixed establishment and some persons would have retired. That is responsible for the fact that the increase in one category does not correspond to the decrease in the other category identified.

Mr. Croal: This does not answer the question because 33 contracted employees were removed but then there was an increase on line item 6114 - Clerical and Office Support - from 8 to 31. It is not the same as 33. I am asking which are the categories of employees that were not moved to the fixed establishment?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that there are a number of vacancies and this would account for the difference between the two figures.

Mr. Croal: In the interest of time, I will move on, except to say that that did not answer it because we asked for the categories of employees that were not renewed.

Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: There was an increase in the allocation. I am sure that the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) would welcome that.

Could the Hon. Minister provide to the House the breakdown of this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: I pointed out an increase from \$7 million to \$10.4 million. The allocation is to effect payment to 16 Councillors, Toshaos and Deputy Toshaos – stipend; travelling for the Toshao from Maraikobai as well as Members of the RDC; Sub-Committee meetings; fuel and utility bills for the Regional Chairman and the Regional Vice-Chairperson; and to facilitate community consultations throughout the region.

Mr. Gill: The total appropriated current expenditure, on the surface...

Mr. Chairman: What is the line item, please?

Mr. Gill: The entire Programme.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Gill, you must enable...

Mr. Gill: This is for the entire Programme from line items 6011 to 6351. On the surface, it would appear that there is an increase in the Budget for this Programme from approximately \$139 million to \$145 million.

Would the Hon. Minister agree that the allocated amount for the Regional Administration and Finance is in fact a cut of \$5.8 million from what was requested by the RDC to effectively manage this region?

Mr. Bulkan: Unfortunately, the question does not lend itself to an answer. What we are dealing with here is a budgetary provision to allow for the funding of the activities that are listed here. It is a commentary that the Hon. Member has given to us. It is not a question.

Mr. Gill: A follow-up: This is not a commentary.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have to...

Mr. Gill: This is not commentary. This is a budget allocation that was issued for the effective management of Region 5. This budget was cut by \$5.8 million before it was presented to this House.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister identify the buildings slated for maintenance?

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation is to allow for renovations to the Mahaicony sub office, the Mahaicony Hostel, the RDC main office and annexe and the REO and other living quarters at a budgeted sum of \$11 million.

3.04 p.m.

Mr. Mustapha: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister say what is responsible for the increase in budgetary provision under this line item? And also, can the Hon. Minister state the name of the security services?

Mr. Bulkan: The provider of the service is RK's Home Safe Security. The increase in the 2017 allocation provision is a rather modest sum; it is less than \$2 million but the provision is to allow for an additional five security guards and escort duties. And, as an example, I am advised that the Mahaicony Cottage Hospital currently enjoys only one guard per shift but the intention is to increase the security being offered at that location.

Mr. Gill: Line item 6273 – Water Charges: The allocation for water charges remains the same as the 2016 Budget allocation of \$1.314 million. Can the Hon. Minister explain why the 14% VAT was not added to this line item? Does he expect the Region 5 RDC employees to conserve and use less water?

Mr. Bulkan: Should the need arise, and if the budgeted sum proves to be inadequate, the Ministry of Finance has made provision to take up the slack across any agencies it so applies to.

Mr. Seeraj: Thank you very much, Comrade Chairman.

Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: There has been a significant increase here. Can the Hon. Minister say what accounts for this increase? Probably the Minister is not given an allowance for electricity.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I do not want to be disrespectful to the Hon. Member but I believe the use of his word...

Mr. Chairman: Please do not, sir.

Mr. Bulkan: Duly noted, Sir. I believe his use of the word "significant" was uttered in *tongue in cheek* because the actual increase is less than \$500,000. As a percentage, it is quite modest but it is for electricity charges to the administrative building, the sub-regional office as well as the REO's quarters. And it is anticipated that the budgeted sum would be sufficient for the provision of this service.

Mr. Seeraj: I was wondering if the calculation of VAT was put in here and, for the Minister's information, \$500,000 might be half of his salary but it is 10 times the salary of ordinary workers out there. So, it is significant, Sir.

Mr. Bulkan: The budgeted sum, I beg to repeat, is anticipated to be sufficient to cover the electricity charges for the locations that have already been named.

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$145,931,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$13,500,000

Mr. Croal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Project code 2401900 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to whom will the vehicle be assigned and the type of vehicle?

Mr. Bulkan: It is to facilitate the purchase of an enclosed 4x4 pickup to be used by the REO who currently does not have a vehicle.

Mr. Gill: I have a follow-up to that, Mr. Chairman. The residential area of Region 5 was heavily flooded. There were heavy rainfalls and the release of irrigation water from rice lands into drainage canals. Can the Hon. Minister explain why the purchase of this vehicle is more urgent than the Long Boom Excavator that was requested by the Region to prevent further disasters?

Minister of Social Protection [Ms. Lawrence]: What is the project code?

Mr. Gill: It is a follow-up to the previous question.

Mr. Bulkan: As I stated a moment ago, the REO of this Region does not currently have a vehicle of his own that would allow for the proper execution of his duties. And the redress of that condition is deemed to be necessary that the REO has a vehicle and the responsibility for the activity that is outlined by the Hon. Member is duly shared but it is principally a responsibility of the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA).

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we will hear a project code if we are going to progress; speaking in generalities is not for this. This is to discuss the allocations under the various heads; we had the debate already. Please proceed.

Mr. Gill: Mr. Chairman, we are talking about the project code 2401900 – Land and Water Transport. As a follow-up to what was just said, both the REO and the Hon. Minister are aware that two excavators have been requested from the Ministry to prevent flooding from Region 5; and I would assume that one of these excavators would have been going...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Gill, you are strongly giving the Chairman, on this matter, the impression that you are not averse to abusing his goodwill in this regard. I do not believe that that is a good thing. If the process here is one where you use, as a frame of reference, project codes, we should not try to twist it to be anything else but that. We had a debate before we got here. We cannot transfer the debate to here. Hon. Members, let us try to do that. Thank you.

Mr. Gill: I have a follow-up to the same project code. Can the Hon. Minister explain when Region 5 will finally get an excavator to alleviate the flooding that we have been suffering from in that region?

Mr. Bulkan: Sir, I would like to advise the Hon. Member that, two days ago, on Tuesday of this week, right below where we are standing, a task force, comprising the NDIA, the Ministry of Agriculture led by Minister Holder, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure led by the Minister, met. I also attended with members from other agencies that addressed this question of any deficiency in our regions. And, in relation to Region 5, the task force did a reconnaissance the following day, which would have been yesterday, and submitted a report that allowed for the repairs to the two pumps at Trafalgar as well as the loan from the NDIA for excavators to Region 5. That is to assuage the concerns expressed by the Hon. Member.

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$13,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$199,143,000

Mr. Croal: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Line item 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled: The allocation has increased by just over \$1 million but yet the staffing amount remains the same. Can the Hon. Minister explain?

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The reason for the increase by approximately \$1 million is as a result of the increases in salaries to the five employees under this heading as well as the annualisation of benefits.

Mr. Croal: Hon. Minister, that answer cannot be accurate. I will tell you why. The budgeted expense for 2016 was \$5.058 million; the actual expenditure is \$3.939 million. Annualisation

of salaries is done every year so that will only change based on the salary increase but now we are asking for \$5.058 million. Can you explain this?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, did you ask a question?

Mr. Croal: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bulkan: The answer remains substantially the same that the 2017 provision is to cater for the increases in salaries that will be payable to these employees under that line item.

3.19 p.m.

Mr. Seeraj: Mr. Chairman, line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There has been a significant increase in the amount budgeted for fuel and lubricants. Could the Hon. Minister say if he is catering for the new vehicle for the REO?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member would be aware that the programme under consideration is Agriculture. The allocation is to cater for the purchase of fuel for a mini excavator, one tractor, one pick-up, one outboard engine, three brushcutters and one dump truck. The increase is attributed to more drainage and irrigation (D&I) works being done within communities by the mini excavator that is in the possession of the RD.

Mr. Seeraj: Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister is in agreement with me that there is a significant increase.

Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Budgeted is \$67 million. Could the Hon. Minister lay over, in this House, the roads that have been identified for maintenance? If I can, with your permission, Sir, I ask the Minister to address line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works – and similarly lay over in the House the canals identified for improved drainage and irrigation works.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I notice that the request is to lay over the details for all of the activities to be funded under the allocations for line items 6251 – Maintenance of Roads - and 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works – with respective sums of \$67 million and \$90 million. This information will be provided to the Clerk.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up to the question of my Colleague. Could the Minister also lay over to the House the bridges earmarked for maintenance under line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges?

Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister identify the other infrastructure which will be maintained?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the request is for the information on line item 6252 to be laid over and that will be done. The activities to be funded under line item 6255 include maintenance to sluice doors and other control mechanisms which include starring, caulking, greasing, replacing of deteriorating members, *et cetera*, at Ithaca, Rosignol, De Edward, Zes Kinderen and Central Mahaicony; repairs to revetment at Shieldstown and the installation of seven self-acting doors to a number of drainage tubes. The total budgetary allocation is \$15 million.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$199,143,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$77,000,000

Mr. Seeraj: Project code 1300900 – Drainage and Irrigation: It provides here for the:

“Construction and rehabilitation of drainage and irrigation channels and structures.”

The profile page speaks to the construction of drainage and structures at different areas. Could the Hon. Minister please provide us with the individual estimate for the different interventions provided here?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the locations are listed here – Davis, Grass Hook, Perth and Strath Campbell. The sum of \$13.925 million is budgeted for rehabilitation of the channel at Perth; a further \$6 million for the rehabilitation of the Perth Village northern side line drain; the sum of \$1.5 million is budgeted for the construction of a drainage structure at Davis; \$2,080,000 for the construction of a drainage sluice at Grass Hook; construction of sluices at Perth at \$492,000 and another sluice at Strath Campbell for \$1,003,000, giving a total of \$25 million.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, line item 1300900 – Drainage and Irrigation: Could the Hon. Minister please state why the budgetary allocation for capital works in a primarily agricultural region moved from \$57.168 million in 2016 to only \$25 million in 2017? What is the rationale behind that movement?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the funding of D&I works and infrastructure is not only done through the RDC, but is also done through other agencies like the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Agriculture Development Authority (MMA/ADA) and the NDIA. However, the sum of \$25 million is provided for D&I works in the region for the year 2017.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as a follow-up, could the Hon. Minister please state whether the RDC is comfortable with this huge reduction for agriculture in Region 5?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, perhaps it has not been said as yet so, perhaps, I can make a simple point: this Budget before us is some \$250 billion. It is the case that the request put to the central Government *via* the Ministry of Finance would have far exceeded that number and if, as a country, we had the ability to finance a sum twice as much as that, \$500 billion would have been welcomed. However, as with an individual or a household, we all have to live within our means. The particular allocation of \$25 million to fund D&I works in Region 5 is what the Ministry of Finance has provided and this is what we have to work with.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as a follow-up, I was not asking the Hon. Minister for the semantics. I was specifically asking whether the RDC is comfortable with this allocation, a drastic reduction from \$57.168 million to \$25 million for a predominantly agricultural region; everything in Region 5 is either rice or sugar.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I believe that almost every agency and Ministry would not have received the sums that they would have requested. The process of budgeting has to deal with competing interests. As I said, this is the number we have before us, the sum of \$25 million provided to supplement the D&I works being done in the region, in addition to what is being done by MMA/ADA and NDIA, among other agencies.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, project code 1903800 – Agricultural Development: Could the Hon. Minister please state the reasons that at Fort Wellington or there about the RDC has moved to evict farmers from an area along the public road? The tarmac is also in disrepair.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, did you quote the project code?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, I did.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member is speaking about eviction but what we have before us is a budgetary provision of \$52 million to fund capital works as listed here for the

region. The works include the construction of a tarmac at Abary - \$14 million; the construction of a timber bridge at Now or Never - \$3.5 million; rehabilitation of the access road at Good Faith and Recess - \$9.8 million; rehabilitation of a section of the side line dam at No. 8 Village - \$15.633 million; and extension of the Baiabu access dam - \$11.5 million.

Mr. Gill: Mr. Chairman, I am happy to hear the Minister admit that the allocation for...

Mr. Chairman: You are going to tell us the project code, Mr. Gill.

Mr. Gill: ...he just opened the door...

An Hon. Member: Line item...

Mr. Gill: I am coming to the line item.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Mr. Gill, please address the Chairman. Please tell us the project code and let us proceed.

Mr. Gill: This is a follow-up to what the Minister just said. The Minister said that what the region requested was far exceeding what was given and I am happy to hear him admit that.

3.34 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a born son of Region 5, specifically from the West Berbice area...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Dharamlall, I did not give you the floor; you just got up and started talking. We are not going back there. All of us must be clear that there is a procedure which we follow in this House. There is only one procedure.

You may have the floor.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I was saying that I was a born son of Region 5, specifically from West Berbice and I have a close relationship with Bath Settlement, which the Hon. Prime Minister also has.

Under project code 1903800 - Agricultural Development: I notice that in and around the Forth Wellington area, on the northern side of the Public Road, where there are many farms, agents of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) have been executing infrastructural works. Could the Hon. Minister please state the nature of the agricultural works that will be done there as a consequence of the removal of the farmers who were once there?

Mr. Bulkan: The budgetary allocation is stated for the project code identified and I have enumerated and listed the activities that would be funded under this allocation, so I am not sure that I can add to what has already been said.

Mr. Dharamlall: Follow-up: Since works are being done there, could the Hon. Minister state under which project code those works are being funded?

Mr. Bulkan: With all due respect, I believe that the Hon. Member is on an expedition of sorts. The activity that he is referring to is not capital in nature and the estimates that we are considering are those of the capital expenditure.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$77,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$158,813,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116 - Contacted Employees: The allocation has increased by \$400,000 and the number of staff has decreased, could the Hon. Minister explain this?

Mr. Bulkan: Some of the employees under that line item would have been moved to the fixed establishment and there has been a case where someone had retired.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister tell the House the locations of the roads that are identified for repairs?

Mr. Bulkan: The locations identified for maintenance and rehabilitation works includes areas in Kingelly, Calcutta, Number 8, Woodley Park, Ross, Fellowship, Cotton Tree, Number 40, Catherinas Lust, Tempe and De Hoop Branch Road.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have 15 minutes remaining for the consideration of this item.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister state whether, in the villages of Blairmount, Cotton Tree, Number 2, Bath Settlement and Bush Lot, the street lights that were seized during 2015 would be replaced?

Mr. Bulkan: The budgetary allocation under that line item 6255, the sum of \$14.5 million is to cater for maintenance and repairs to the revetment in Hope Town, street barriers across the

region, infilling and landscaping of the officers' living quarters and weeding and cleaning of compounds. It does not include the activity outlined by the Hon. Member.

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$158,813,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$107,300,000

Mr. Seeraj: Project codes 1100600, 1400800 and, all of the project codes under this capital expenditure have seen a significant decrease and against the background of larger budget, which the Minister spoke about earlier, this region, for this particular item, is receiving \$13 million less. As a matter of fact, there is no allocation for three project codes. Could the Hon. Minister explain how it is that, with a larger budget, the allocation for Region 5 capital expenditure for public works has been reduced?

Mr. Bulkan: For the project codes the Hon. Member has referred to, a crude calculation by my account would give a figure of approximately \$99 million for those three line items in 2016. The 2017 allocation is a similar amount of \$99million. What the Hon. Member is representing as a significant reduction in the allocation is not correct. The allocations are approximately the same as they were in 2016.

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$107,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$1,481,490,000

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6134, National Insurance: I note that the sum of \$73,412,000 is allocated in 2017, which is the same figure that was allocated in 2016. In 2016, the staffing for education in Region 5 was 694 and in 2017 the staffing is projected to be 756. Could the Hon. Minister give an explanation to this House whether it is situation where the 62 additional staff, who will be brought on board, have passed the age of paying NIS?

Mr. Bulkan: The Hon. Member would note that, while indeed the allocation in 2016 is the figure that he related, the actually expenditure was considerably less. It was \$71.6 million instead of \$73.14 million, which indeed is a higher sum in 2017.

3.49 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up. Here again it is interpretation. The Hon. Minister is saying that the \$71.539 million is actual expenditure for the year 2016. We were repeatedly told in this House that this expenditure reflected what it was in August, when this budget was being put together. Then, subsequently, by the Minister who said that this was what is projected to be expended and that budgets are fluid, they can be either up or down. Thank you Sir.

Mr. Bulkan: No, Sir. What I am saying is that the actual expenditure in 2016 will be less than what was budgeted for in 2016 and what was originally projected, but the projections for 2017 are greater than the actual expenditure at the end of 2016. Those respective sums are \$71.6 million to \$73.412 million. So what I am saying is that the figures that are stated here for 2016 are the projections to the end of the year. So the 2017 allocation is greater than the 2016 actual sum.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: In the interest of time could the Hon. Minister lay over to the House the Maintenance of Other infrastructure? Line item 6281 – Security Services: The region would have spent \$10 million less than what was allocated, yet in 2017, the Ministry is asking for an increase even more than the budgeted sum for 2016. Could the Hon. Minister explain the reason for this increase having had a decrease in spending?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the explanation that was offered earlier about the inadequate level of the service and the need to provide additional security in some locations, namely at the schools, would result in the increased allocation of approximately \$17 million that is being requested and projected for in 2017.

Mr. Croal: As a follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister, therefore, confirm all of the educational facilities under the region that have security provision? Secondly, line item 6282- Equipment Maintenance, does this allocation cater for repairs to the solar panels for some of the schools within the riverain communities?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that at all of the schools security services are provided, but, as was earlier explained, they were inadequate at some of the locations and some of those locations had suffered from vandalism. But the increased provision that is being requested in 2017 is to cater for that particular phenomenon. The allocation requested

in 2017 for equipment maintenance does not cater for the activity mentioned by the Hon. Member, but rather it is to cater for the maintenance of laboratory equipment in the region.

Mr. Croal: Last question from this side on this programme. I had asked for line item 6255, may I include line item 6242 to be laid over to the House. Could I also make mention that, for example, at the Baiabu Primary School the solar panel is not working. So I just want to know where that would be covered.

Mr. Bulkan: It is noted that the request is for the laying over of the details relating to line items 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings and 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure. This has been noted and this information will be provided. I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the information that he has just conveyed in relations to what obtains at the Baiabu Primary School. The officials here have taken due note of that.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$1,481,490,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$94,925,000

Mr. Gill: Project code 2503800 – Furniture and Equipment – Education: I noticed there is an allocation of \$17 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain whether children are behaving themselves more in school now than before because this is far less than previous years?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, what is the question that you ask?

Mr. Gill: Why is this allocation less than previous years for furniture and equipment in schools?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, perhaps, the Hon. Member is referring to the 2016 allocation of \$20.47 million. However, the allocation in 2017 is the sum of \$17.1 million and this would be to purchase furniture, desks and benches, also computers, chairs for teachers, sports equipment valued \$2 million, musical equipment for \$42 million and nursery sets, fire buckets and book racks, all for the schools in the region for a total of \$17,100,000.

Mr. Gill: Project code 2401900 – Land and Water Transport: There is an allocation of \$4 million for the purchase of a vehicle. Could the Hon. Minister explain what type of vehicle and what purpose it will be used for?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, would you repeat that code?

Mr. Gill: The project code is 2401900 under Education Delivery.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the allocation is to enable the purchase of a 4x4 double-cab pickup which is to be used by the Education Department for the delivery of supplies and for uplifting supplies from Georgetown and delivery across schools in the region, including inland locations such as Abary, Mora Point, *et cetera*. Currently, the Department has only one such vehicle and it was found to be very inadequate. The Minister of Finance has agreed and consented to the doubling of the fleet for use by the Education Department.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, project code 2503800 – Furniture and Equipment – Education: Could the Hon. Minister, identify the schools which will benefit from the furniture and equipment?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, based on needs assessment, it will be distributed to some 30 primary and 11 secondary schools throughout the region, inclusive of the newly constructed and extended secondary schools. It is to benefit 4500 children and 100 teachers who would benefit from these improved facilities.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$94,925,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$625,841,000

Dr. Anthony: Line item 6221– Drugs and Medical Supplies: In 2016, the region would have spent \$155 million on drugs and medical supplies. Could the Hon. Minister advise how much money was spent by the region and how much money was sent to the Ministry of Public Health for it to buy the drugs? Secondly, for the moneys that the RDC would have spent, could the Minister advise whether those contracts were done by public tendering and if so, what were the dates they were advertised, when were the bids opened, when were the awards made, the companies that would have won these awards and whether these companies are compliant with the Food and Drug Administration?

In addition to that, the amounts of money that was sent to the Ministry of Public Health, did Region 5 receive the value of drugs from the Ministry of Public Health and if so, when was that amount of drugs received. Also, I understand that right now there is a number of items, such as Salbutamol, that are in short supply in the region. Which agency was responsible for the procurement of such items? Is it the Regional Administration or is it the Ministry of Public Health?

4.04 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, of the total allocation of \$155 million, I am advised that, approximately, \$11 million was spent by the region and that the sum of \$144 million was sent to the central Ministry.

In relation to the expenditure of the \$11 million, I am advised that the medical supplies that were acquired would have been obtained from a number of suppliers, among these included, the companies Health International, the New Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation (GPC), the International Pharmaceutical Agency or (IPA) and Medical Care. For the particular details that have been requested, I am not in a position at this stage to offer those details. There are many questions in there and if the Hon. Member would kindly put those questions into writing, they will be answered with the level of detail that the Hon. Member requires.

The main figure is that \$11 million of the \$155 million was spent by the region and \$144 million was sent to the central Ministry for central procurement and acquisition.

Dr. Anthony: I thank the Minister for his answer and as I have stated the question, I do not mind if the Minister could lay over the information regarding the questions that I have asked. What I am interested in also is that, the Minister said that approximately \$144 million was sent to the Ministry of Public Health for them to procure drugs on behalf of the region. Could the Minister, may be at this point in time until he is able to get the details, give the House a ball park figure of what was the value of the drugs that the region would have received to date? There seems to be some items that are repeatedly short in supply. For example, I am told that Salbutamol, something that asthmatics use, is short in supply. So, I am not sure whether sometimes it is the region that is responsible for procuring or if it was the central Ministry...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the question.

Dr. Anthony: The question is, for those items that are in short supply, who is responsible? Is it the Ministry of Public Health or the region? Why are these items in short supply?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, do you have...

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that, as of now, approximately 85% of the sum that has been redirected to the Ministry of Public Health, the drugs to that value have been supplied to date. I am also advised by the medical personnel here that there is no shortage of Salbutamol tablets. They are in stock in the region and, perhaps, the information that the Hon. Member has may probably be dated, but this is the advice currently being offered.

Programme: 755 –Health Services - \$625,841,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$103,000,000

Programme: 755 –Health Services - \$103,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 76 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne

Current Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$158,501,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, are you ready?

Mr. Bulkan: Yes Sir.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister identify the buildings listed for maintenance in 2017 under this line item?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the buildings and locations are: The Regional Democratic Council's (RDC) Administrative Office, Block 'A' as well as Block 'B', allocations of \$2 million and \$3 million, respectively; repairs to the State House in New Amsterdam - \$3 million; repairs to the Amerindian Hostel in Stanley Town - \$1.5 million; and repairs to the Amerindian Hostel in Springlands, a further \$1.5 million - giving a total of \$11 million.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister provide the list of what is constituted “Other Infrastructure” identified for maintenance in 2017?

Mr. Bulkan: These would be repairs to the State House’s fence in New Amsterdam, for a budgeted sum of \$3 million; the Amerindian Hostel in New Amsterdam, a sum of \$2.5 million; and the Amerindian Hostel in Springlands - \$1.5 million - for a total of \$7 million.

Mr. Mustapha: Mr. Chairman, line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister identify the security company and the number of security locations employed within the region under this line item?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the name of the security provider is Homesafe Security and Domestic Services Provider and the locations for which that service is provided includes the Whim Office, Black Bush Polder Pump Station, Manarabisi Pump Station, Borlam Pump Station, the Seawell Pump Station, the Eversham Pump Station... [Hon.

Member:...agriculture] I beg your pardon Sir?

[Mr. Chairman hit gavel]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, could I ask that we proceed to the next question and return to this immediately after?

Mr. Chairman: Very well. Hon. Member, Mr. Mustapha?

Mr. Bulkan: I beg your pardon Sir, the information is here.

Mr. Chairman: I thank you.

Mr. Bulkan: The three locations are the Regional Chairman’s residence, two Guards at that location; the Regional Democratic Council’s (RDC’s) compound at Vrymens Erven, a total of 12 Guards at that location; and the Regional Executive Officer’s (REO) residence at Whim, an additional three Guards - giving a total of 17 Guards.

Mr. Chairman I beg to correct the information that was just provided.

For the last of those locations, it is not the REO’s residence; it is the Whim’s Office. I am advised that the former REO resided at that location and that the information has not been

corrected on this printed sheet. So, it is the Regional Chairman's office in New Amsterdam, the RDC compound and the Whim RDC office, a total of 17 Guards.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Mustapha, do you wish the floor?

Mr. Mustapha: It is okay. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

4.19 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you Sir. Line item 6134 – National Insurance: Budget 2016, \$1,986,000, revised \$2.7 million, requested in 2017 \$3.4 million. All that happening whilst the staff entitlement for that programme... The staffing details states that 59 in 2016 and 54 in 2017. It is a reduction but an increase in allocation.

Mr. Bulkan: It is indeed correct what the Hon. Member said that the total staffing details have reduced rather from 59 to 54 but line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support, has increased from eight to 30 and these are persons who are now on the fixed establishment and hence the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) is payable under this line item and this is responsible for the increase.

Programme: 761- Regional Administration and Finance - \$158,501,000 agreed to ordered to and stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 761 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$11,200,000

Mr. Croal: Project 1208100, Building – Administration: There is an allocation for the hostel at New Amsterdam and while we just review the current we also heard about the hostel at New Amsterdam, maintenance. Could we have a separation in what is happening there because one is capital expenditure and one is current expenditure?

Mr. Bulkan: This particular allocation for the sum of \$9 million is to allow repairs to the roof, floor, windows, walls, electrical upgrade, plumbing works and a trestle. These would differ from the activities that would be funded under the current expenditure, I believe it was stated, perhaps the fence, but this is different activities to the same location.

Mr. Croal: Just as a follow-up. May I ask what would be the difference because both sounds as repair and maintenance, the category of the expense?

Mr. Bulkan: The current allocation caters for an upgrade as appose to a rehabilitation upgrade rather than repairs. For example, the electrical works would be a replacement for the existing installation.

Programme: 761 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$11,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 762 - Agriculture - \$716,114,000

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Hon. Minister identify how many drainage and irrigation works will be maintained this year and the cost for each works?

Mr. Bulkan: It is quite a long list but I will briefly read some of the items. It includes repairs to timber bridge in the Numbers 52 - 74 Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) area for the budgeted sum of \$10.5 million to benefit approximately,1,500 farmers and residents in that location, back fillings and repairs to revetments for the same area, repairs to sluices, excavation to the outfall at Liverpool, the outfall at Whim, the outfall at Letter Kenny, the outfall at Borlam, repairs to bridges in the Black Bush Polder area, maintenance works in Manarabisi, excavation works and maintenance works in other areas in Number 49, Alness, Seafield. There is monthly manual maintenance of the main drain in Yakusari, maintenance of excavation in several locations, such as Crabwood Creek, Line Walk, Kilmarnock, Wellington Park, Maida, Johanna. Moving on, there are similar maintenance activities in Light Town, Manarabisi, Lancaster, Hogstye. There are maintenance of canals in approximately 53 locations, some of these being the canal at Hogstye in Black Bush Polder, one main drainage and canal in Number 19, Crabwood Creek, Black Bush Polder, several locations in there, Fryrish, Rose Hall, retreat at Belmont, East Bank, maintenance of canals from Fryrish to Rose Hall, Lesbeholden, Johanna, Yakusari, Letter Kenny, Canje Creek. There is maintenance to 14 outfall channels, further maintenance to ten canals for the total budgeted sum of \$257 million.

Dr. Mahadeo: Going back to the issue of national insurance, I have seen in 2016 there was 77 staff, 2017 there are 70. As far as I know, contracted workers also pay NIS but I have seen NIS increased from \$3,200,000 to \$3,790, 000...

Mr. Chairman: Is there a line item?

Dr. Mahadeo: It is line item 6134, National Insurance, from \$3.2 million to \$3.7 million. Could the Hon. Minister kindly explain the reduction of staff, because more is being taken out for NIS?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the NIS component, in relation to contracted employees, that sum, is included in their salary as opposed to those at the fixed establishment where it is separate and it is budgeted for separately, and it would be reflected under this line item. Hence, an increase in the amount of employees in the fixed establishment would result consequentially in an increase of NIS payment under this line item.

Dr. Mahadeo: I may not necessarily agree with you, but I will have to check it out. Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricant, \$270.5 million: Could you indicate briefly what this caters for?

Mr. Bulkan: This caters for drainage and irrigation (D&I) works and it is to supply fuel and lubricants for equipment which would include excavators. There are six excavators here namely Caterpillars, a Kobelco long broom excavator, seven mini excavators. There is provision of fuels and lubricants to drainage pumps. There are at eight pumps at Seawell, Berlin, Liverpool, two in Bengal, Eversham, and Joppa. There are irrigation five pumps in Mibikuri, a further three pump in the Manarabisi for irrigation. Those are some of the equipment for which this line item applies to.

Mr. Mustapha: Just a follow-up to my colleague question. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if the six excavators are operable right now in the region presently. What mechanism he has or the region has put in place in the pilfering of fuels? This region I know there is a problem with pilfering.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that all of the excavators, for which I just related all, are currently operational. With regard to the observation being proffered by the Hon. Member, in relation to pilfering, I am advised that is not considered to be a major issue at this point in time. The narrative that is offered here, and I will say this for the benefit of the Hon. Member, fuel for pumps in Black Bush Polder and the Manarabisi pump is transported by boat up the Canje

River from Guyana Oil Company (GUYOIL) heat burn terminal where the activity is witnessed by a representative from the region Field Audit Department who also accompanies the fuel on the boat to these location in Black Bush Polder and Manarabisi to witness the discharging of the fuel, the recording of the fuels in the tanks and store it in the logbooks.

4.34 p.m.

It further states here that thereafter, periodic checks are made by the rangers and the Water Users Association.

Secondly, the fuel that is transported in containers for excavators, mobile pumps and other machines are either accompanied by the region's Rangers to those machinery who witness the discharging and entering into logbook or the fuel is uplifted by a representative of the NDC in cases where the machinery is working in an NDC area and it is similar. It is witnessed by representative of the organ, both in this discharging and in the recording of the fuel in the logbook.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$716,114,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$107,000,000

Mr. Mustapha: Project 1301000, Drainage and Irrigation: Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of the estimated sum to spend on each project identify in this legend?

Mr. Bulkan: There are a total of 13 activities. I would list them quickly - excavation of the at Zorg en Vlygt to Kitty façade canal, estimated sum of \$10 million, excavation of the of the Number 52 to Number 62 Villages façade canal budgeted sum of \$9 million, construction of reinforce concrete drainage structure at New Vigilantie, East Bank Berbice budgeted sum of \$9 million, rehabilitation of a heavy-duty bridge at Mibikuri budgeted sum of \$8.5 million, rehabilitation of a heavy-duty bridge at Johanna, also in Black Bush Polder, similar - \$8.5 million, construction of timber revetment at Bush Lot, Kildonan - \$7 million, construction of revetment at Victoria Street sluice, Cumberland - \$7 million, construction heavy-duty bridge at Dingwall, Java in Number 41 Village - \$7 million, excavation of the Lancaster to Hogstye at façade canal a budgeted sum of \$6 million, construction of a reinforced concrete pipe drainage structure at Kortberaad, East Bank Berbice - \$6 million, excavation of the Fryrish

to Borlam drainage canal - \$6 million, a purchase of high-density polyethylene pipe (HDPE) tubes for agricultural areas and for the regional store, estimated sum of \$4.8 million, construction of timber revetment at the Alness sluice for \$3.2 million. That should bring us to a total of \$92 million, Sir.

Mr. Mustapha: Just a point of information, but we voted already. I just want to bring some information to this Assembly.

Mr. Chairman: With respect to which matter, Hon. Member?

Mr. Mustapha: It is not this capital expenditure, but the programme that we just voted on. The Minister informed the Assembly...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, there is no provision for that. I would not wish to start that.

Mr. Mustapha: If a Hon. Member misled the Assembly, Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: There is another way you could take it up, not here.

Mr. Mustapha: Okay.

Mr. Seeraj: Project 2402000, Land and Water Transport: Could the Minister advise us, the equipment to be purchased, whether it would be a new piece of equipment or used equipment?

Mr. Bulkan: The provision is for the acquisition of a pre-owned or a used bulldozer for the sum of \$15 million.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$107,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$264,709,000

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6131, Other Direct Labour Costs: Could the Hon. Minister identify the other direct labour costs, which are being catered for under this line item?

Mr. Bulkan: I regret that this information is not available at this time, but every effort would be made to provide it at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Anamayah: Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads: I see that there is a substantial increase. Could the Minister at least name some of the roads that would be covered under those heads and the cost?

Mr. Bulkan: Of the total allocation of \$80 million includes for repairs and rehabilitation to The East Bank Berbice road, Zorg-en-Vlygt to Belmont, a budgeted sum of \$10.5 million, Light Town to Macaw - \$10 million, roads in New Amsterdam - \$8.5 million, Macaw to Plegt Anker in East Bank Berbice - \$8 million, Belmont to Germania - \$8 million, repairs to roads in Kilcoy Hampshire in NDC area - \$8 million, repairs to roads in the Cumberland and NDC area - \$7 million to roads in Canfield, Gangaram NDC area - \$6 million and to the Corriverton road network - \$6 million.

Mr. Anamayah: Yes. On the same issue, we would be grateful if the Minister could lay over a list to the Assembly.

Mr. Bulkan: This information would be laid over.

Mr. Anamayah: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister name the security firm and state by what means their services were secured?

Mr. Bulkan: Name of the security provider is Home Safe Security and it is an ongoing contract.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister lay over to the Assembly the bridges that are earmarked for maintenance? Also line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister identify the other infrastructures and the cost associated the maintenance of each?

Mr. Bulkan: The request to lay to over the details would be complied with, but briefly I could just referred to some of the projects that would be funded under this allocation - repairs to the bridge at Vryberg in East Bank Berbice, the bridge at Khyber also East Bank Berbice. I am challenged here, a New Vigilantie, it spelled probably differently here - \$4.2 million, the bridge at Welgelegen in East Bank Berbice - \$4.1 million, repairs to Yakusari, bridge at Johanna - \$4 million, the Nigg north - \$4 million, bridge at Adelphi - \$3.5 million, bridge at Mibikuri - \$2 million, bridge at Liverpool, some of those.

Under line item 6255, there are seven projects that would be funded under this allocation. These includes repairs to the RDC compound at Vrymens Erven, the Regional Executive

Officer (REO) compound in New Amsterdam, the first activity is \$3.3 million, the second one is \$2.5 million, the senior officer living quarters in Strand - \$2 million, the Education Officer living quarters in Vrymens Erven - \$1.5 million, the Bridge Keeper's quarters in Sheet Anchor - \$1.2 million, Regional Engineer living quarters in New Amsterdam and the Engineer living quarters in Whim, bringing the total to \$12.4 million. As requested, these details would be laid over with the Assembly.

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$264,709,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4.49 p.m.

Capital expenditure

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$150,000,000

Mr. Mustapha: Project 1100700, Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the dimension and cost of each bridge identified in the project profile and also say how much money will be spent in the construction of each culvert?

Mr. Bulkan: There are a total of 13 projects beginning with construction of a heavy-duty bridge at Malali, the dimensions being 15.2 metres by 4.3 metres at a budgeted cost of \$5million, and that is in Crabwood Creek, reconstruction of heavy-duty bridge at Warren, being 91.1 metres by 4.2 metres, budgeted at a sum of \$4 million, construction of an reinforced concrete culvert in Cumberland at 3.6 metres by 2.4 metres budgeted at a sum of \$3.5 million, construction of a culvert in Good Banana Land, East Canje, 4.5 metres by 3 metres at a sum of \$3.5 million, reinforced concrete culvert in Chesney, 3 metres by 2.5 metres, budgeted at a sum of \$3.5 million, heavy-duty bridge in Liverpool, 12.1 metres by 4.2 metres, budgeted at a sum of \$3 million, a bridge at the Bush Lot Health Centre, budgeted at a sum of \$3 million, a bridge at Number 72 Village also \$3 million, a bridge at Lesbeholden to provide access for some 300 residents and students in that location, budgeted at a sum of \$3 million, construction of a reinforced concrete culvert in Courtland to provide easier access for 300 residents at 6 metres by 4.9 metres at a budgeted sum of \$2.5 million, construction of a heavy-duty bridge at Whim, budgeted at a sum of \$2.5 million, to provide access for some 200 residents as well as 100 students at the Auchlyne Primary School, the construction of a footpath at Yakusari north, front land, second street, to provide access for some 300 residents and students at the Yakusari Primary School - \$2 million, the construction of a footpath

bridge in Chesney, Albion to benefit some 300 students from the Chesney Housing Scheme to the J.B. Cropper Primary School as well as access to the Jai Hind Sports Ground, budgeted at a sum of \$1.5 million.

Mr. Mustapha: Project 1401000, Water: Could the Hon. Minister provide a detailed breakdown of how much money will be spent on each aspect of the project. Could he lay it over please?

Mr. Bulkan: The budgetary allocation is \$82 million. There are ten projects and they range from rehabilitation of a new street in Cumberland, rehabilitation of the Liverpool Health Centre street, the first cross street in Number Nought Village, rehabilitation of the Massiah Primary School street – the Hon. Member would know that is the border between Number 71 and Number 72 Villages, budgeted at a sum of \$10.1 million, rehabilitation of Hampshire Street in Courtland, rehabilitation of the second cross street in Limlair, budgeted at a sum of \$8 million, retention payment for the rehabilitation payment of a street in Number 68 Village at a sum of \$1.6 million. There are 300 retention payments totalling some \$3.5 million, bringing the total allocation to \$82 million.

Mr. Mustapha: Just a follow-up. Could the Hon. Minister say what types of roads will be constructed there?

Mr. Bulkan: Some of them are asphaltic concrete, some would crusher run, some are being upgraded from crusher run to double bituminous surface treatment (DBST). It is asphaltic concrete and DBST.

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$150,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$2,786,033,000

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister identify the buildings which will be rented and the cost attached to each building?

Mr. Bulkan: This is for the rental of two buildings. For the Number 36 Primary School and the Trinity Street Nursery, for the total budgeted sum of \$1,080,000.

Mr. Anamayah: Line item 6281, Security Services: Could the Minister state the name of the security company and by what means they were recruited?

Mr. Bulkan: It is the same security service that is providing security to all of the programme areas and all of the locations. It is Home Safe Security.

Mr. Mustapha: Just a follow-up to my colleague's question. Could the Hon. Minister state how many schools will benefit from security and indicate whether all the schools will be benefiting from security on a 24-hour basis?

Mr. Bulkan: All of the schools in the region do enjoy the provision of security services. The total number of schools is 80. The answer is that they do not enjoy 24-hour security service.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6222, Field Materials and Supplies: I noticed that in 2015 there was \$12.5 million, it was decreased in 2016 to \$11 million and increased back to \$15 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that \$4 million of the budgeted sum in 2016 was vired to another programme, but in 2017 the request is for the full allocation of \$15 million.

Mr. Mustapha: Line item 6284, Other: Could the Hon. Minister identify the list of goods and services which will be purchased utilising this provision?

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is to cater for the payment for sweeper cleaners in all of the schools as well as the payment of invigilators to supervise the Caribbean Examinations Council (CXC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE), the National Grade Two Assessment (NGTA), the National Grade Four Assessment (NGFA), the National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA), the National Grade Nine Assessment (NGNA), the Government Technical Education Examination (GTEE), Education management, the non-grad Math and English programmes.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Mustapha, do you have another question?

Mr. Mustapha: I have one final question, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6302 Training (including Scholarships): Could the Hon. Minister describe the nature of the training programme, indicate how many persons have benefited from this training and who are the persons identified?

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation is to provide training to our teachers to improve their competence and qualification. It is to enhance the methodology being employed in the curriculum. It is all designed to improve their performance in all of the subject areas but particularly in Math and English for all of the grades.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$2,786,033,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery- \$96,800,000

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery - \$96,800,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 765 - Health Services - \$1,661,873,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical: Could the Hon. Minister say of the \$385,525,000, which was spent in 2016 for drugs and medical supplies, how much of this money was spent by the region?

5.04 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Approximately \$60.528 million of the total sum was spent by the region.

Dr. Mahadeo: Of the approximated \$60 million that was spent by the region, could the Hon. Minister say how was this spent? Did he have sole sourcing? Did he go to the Tender Board? Could a list of the companies be provided and how much money did they receive for the drugs and medical supplies that were purchased from the region?

Mr. Bulkan: The Tender Board's procedures were employed and utilised for acquisition of all of the supplies for the amount stated with the sole exception of the supply of oxygen gas which was sole sourced with the supplier being Massey and Company. The companies that were successful in the tender process were Poonai's Pharmacy, International Pharmaceuticals Agency (IPA), New Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation (GPC) Inc., Caribbean Medical Supplies Inc., and Meditron Healthcare Technologies LLC, being the main one.

Dr. Mahadeo: Yes, maybe the tender process was used. Was it the three-quote system? Did you advertise publicly? How was it done?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that, as a result due to the exigency and urgency, the three-quote method was employed.

Dr. Mahadeo: I would like to ask the Minister if the \$385.525 million was spent in Region 6 and yet we had a persistent shortage of drugs across...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Dr. Mahadeo, is there a line item that you are...

Dr. Mahadeo: I am following it up with a question.

Mr. Chairman: Is there a line item...

Dr. Mahadeo: Yes, the same line item that I am on; line item 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed, Dr. Mahadeo.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Three hundred and eighty-five million, five hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars did not provide us with adequate drugs and medical supplies in Region 6... *Shhhh.*

Could the Hon. Minister state...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we cannot do that.

Dr. Mahadeo: I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister say whether the \$400 million that is budgeted will be adequate to provide drugs and medical supplies from 1st January, 2017 to 31st December, 2017?

Mr. Bulkan: Perhaps a correction or clarification is needed. The Hon. Member referred to persistent shortage of drugs in the region. I am advised that indeed there may have been cases where there was a sporadic shortage but certainly not persistent. The answer to the question is that...

Dr. Mahadeo: Go back to the Hon. Minister of Finance's speech.

The Chairman hit the gavel.

Mr. Bulkan: The provision of \$400 million is anticipated to meet the pharmaceutical needs in Region 6 in 2017.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6221 - Drugs and Medical Supplies: Of the \$400 million that is projected to be spent in 2017 on drugs and medical supplies, what percentage do we expect will be spent by the regional authorities?

Mr. Bulkan: That information cannot be predetermined. The system allows generally for the acquisition to be done at the central level and only in cases where there is emergency need is the region employed. The general idea is to take advantage of economies of scale. Therefore, it is only when the need arises. That information cannot be known at this stage.

Mr. Chairman: I will now put the question which is...

Dr. Mahadeo: I have lots of questions more. We have five minutes more to go.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I will put the question now.

Mr. G. Persaud: We still have five minutes more. This is the agreement in the Schedule.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Ganga Persaud, you are disrupting the proceedings. You cannot respond to anyone across the table. You have been here long enough to know that.

Mr. G. Persaud: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: I would expect that you would observe the rules of this House or...

Mr. G. Persaud: Sir, we have to listen to both sides. I am not crazy to be speaking to myself.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ganga Persaud, you are out of order.

Mr. G. Persaud: Sorry, Sir.

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$ 1,661,873,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. G. Persaud: Sir, could I please?

Mr. Chairman: Could you please what, Hon. Member?

Mr. G. Persaud: The allotted time for Health Services is one and a half hours.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you cannot do that now.

Mr. G. Persaud: We would not have another opportunity to do it at all.

Mr. Chairman: That is probably true.

Mr. G. Persaud: Why is that so, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: Would you please resume your seat?

Hon. Members, we would continue the consideration. I propose the question. Hon. Members, it is open to debate. The Hon. Dr. Mahadeo will proceed. We are discussing Programme: 765 – Health Services – Current Expenditure.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants: Twenty-five million dollars was budgeted in 2016 and \$25.190 million budgeted in 2017 and yet, in the Capital budget, I noticed that there will be purchase of a vehicle and a River ambulance.

Would this cater for the fuel for the River ambulance and the bus that would be bought for health services in Region 6? If so, did we spend the \$25 million in 2016?

Mr. Bulkan: The projected allocation of \$25.190 million is anticipated to be sufficient to meet the needs of the Programme.

Dr. Mahadeo: I would just like to point out that there was \$25 million and we still had shortage of fuel for the generator at the New Amsterdam Hospital. I am thankful that the Minister is saying that it will happen.

Could the Hon. Minister layover the list of buildings and what works and how much would be spent on the buildings in Health Services in Region 6 at line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - and the same for line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure?

I do not need the Hon. Minister to read it. He could lay it over.

Mr. Chairman: Do you not need the Hon. Minister to read it?

Dr. Mahadeo: It is for him to layover.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the request is that you lay the matter over. Do you wish to read it, Hon. Minister?

Mr. Bulkan: I will be guided by you, Sir. I think for the benefit of all Members, we...

Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: It includes repairs to the Manchester Health Centre at a budgeted sum of \$8 million; repairs to the National Psychiatric Hospital in Fort Canje at a budgeted sum of \$7 million; repairs to the New Amsterdam Hospital for the Sanitary System, electrical and painting at a budgeted sum of \$5 million; repairs to the Skeldon Hospital at a budgeted sum of \$3.5 million; repairs to the Nurses Hostel in Skeldon Hospital Compound at a budgeted sum of \$3 million; repairs to the Nurses Hostel in Port Mourant at a budgeted sum of \$3 million; repairs to the Mibicuri Hospital at a budgeted sum of \$2.5 million; repairs to the Doctors' Quarters in Asylum Street, New Amsterdam at a budgeted sum of \$2.5 million; repairs to Doctors' Quarters in Brother's Village, East Bank Berbice at a budgeted sum of \$2 million; repairs to the Port Mourant Hospital at a budgeted sum of \$1.5 million; repairs to the Orealla Health Centre at a budgeted sum of \$1.5 million; repairs to the Doctors' Quarters in New Amsterdam at a budgeted sum of \$1.5 million; repairs to the Health Services building in Fort Canje at a budgeted sum of \$1.5 million; repairs to the Doctors' Quarters in Garrison Road at a budgeted sum of \$1.2 million. It goes on – Skeldon Health Centre, Williamsburg Health Centre, No. 64 Village Health Centre, Social Workers Quarters in Fort Canje Hospital, the Barakara Health Centre, Siparuta Health Centre, Family Life Health Centre in New Amsterdam, Eversham Health Centre, Doctors' Quarters in Mibicuri, Doctors' Quarters in Port Mourant, Health Centre in Angoy's Avenue, Nurses Quarters in Williamsburg, Fryrish Health Centre, Cumberland Health Centre, No. 47 Village Health Centre, Crabwood Creek Health Centre, Bush Lot Health Centre, Brothers Health Centre, Port Mourant Health Centre, Doctors' Quarters No. 5 in Asylum Street, New Amsterdam.

Line Item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: These are a total of 18 items and they include repairs to concrete fence in the New Amsterdam Hospital at a budgeted sum of \$3.1 million; the National Psychiatric Hospital, maintenance in the compound and repairs to the concrete walkway at a budgeted sum of \$3 million; Doctors' Quarters in Asylum Street, New Amsterdam at a budgeted sum of \$1.2 million; repairs to a wooden shed in the New Amsterdam Hospital at a budgeted sum of \$1 million; the Skeldon Family Health Centre, maintenance of Doctors' Quarters in Port Mourant; repairs to concrete trestle at Orealla Health Centre; repairs to concrete trestle in Mibicuri Hospital compound; weeding and cleaning of the compound at the Port Mourant Hospital; repairs to the fence and landfilling at

Cumberland Health Centre; repairs to the fence, weeding and cleaning of compound at Williamsburg Health Centre.

5.19 p.m.

It also includes repairs to the fence and landfilling at Yakusari Health Centre; landfilling and repairs to the guard hut at Brothers Health Centre; repairs to the concrete trestle at Skeldon Hospital; repairs to a reinforced concrete (RC) culvert in Brothers Health Centre; repairs to the Siparuta Health Centre's fence – the sum of \$800,000; repairs to the concrete bridge entrance at the Skeldon Hospital Compound – \$600,000; and, finally, repairs to the fence at the Port Mourant Health Centre for a budgeted sum of \$600,000, giving a total of \$20 million.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would still like the Minister to layover the scope of works.

Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: I would like to ask the Minister if the \$31 million budgeted for 2016 was spent? Who were the biomedical engineers, whether individuals or a company? And why is it that most of the medical equipment in the region were still malfunctioning? For example, four incubators from Skeldon Hospital that were removed at the beginning of the year and never returned and most of the spectrophotometer in the New Amsterdam Hospital Laboratory is not working as well as the ultrasound machine is not working.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the provider of that service, which is being procured *via* the central Ministry and the name of that company, is Meditron Inc. I noted that the Hon. Member has referred to a number of equipment that is alleged to be malfunctioning but currently there is a significant number of equipment at both locations in New Amsterdam and across the region. These include over 23 different types of medical information and this information can be laid over for the benefit of the Hon. Member.

Dr. Mahadeo: Services were provided by a company through the Ministry of Public Health so the \$31 million that we had was not spent by the region. Was the money wired back to the Ministry of Public Health? How was it done? You said that the company was contracted by the Ministry of Public Health.

Mr. Bulkan: The provider of the service, the name that I provided, Meditron Inc., is for the biomedical equipment that the Hon. Member asked about. But for the other equipment, which are air conditioners, freezers and other equipment, there are two other providers of those services, namely, GR Engineering Services Limited and BL Tech Co. Ltd, in the case of computer equipment.

Dr. Mahadeo: I have a follow-up, Mr. Chairman. Is the Hon. Minister saying that none of these moneys from the \$31 million spent was paid to Meditron Inc.?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that question is no. None of the money out of that \$31 million was paid to Meditron Inc. That would have been *via* the central Ministry, the Ministry of Public Health.

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6292 – Dietary: There is a substantial increase in dietary from \$92.362 million to \$97 million. And we would have used the \$92.362 million in 2016. Could the Hon. Minister say what the average bed occupancy is for the institutions? It is because this is how we calculate how much we expect to spend in the following year. For a very long period, the main operating theatre in New Amsterdam was not functioning. So, I would like to ask, first of all, have we spent the \$92.362 million in 2016? And secondly, what is the average or how much is expected for patient per day when the calculations are done to have this big increase? There is supposed to be a decrease and not an increase, Minister.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the bulk of the allocation is for the provision of dietary services to the National Psychiatric Hospital. The remainder of the allocation would be for the New Amsterdam Public Hospital as well as the other hospitals, namely, Skeldon, Port Mourant Public Hospital, Black Bush Polder, and National Ophthalmology Hospital. The occupancy rate is currently at about 40% – 45% in the case of the New Amsterdam Public Hospital. It is less, at 35%, at the Port Mourant Public Hospital and the average length of stay is 3.5 days. There are 136 beds at the New Amsterdam Public Hospital, 42 beds at Skeldon Hospital, 25 beds at Port Mourant Hospital, 15 beds at Black Bush Polder Hospital and nine beds, as the Hon. Member might be aware, at the National Ophthalmology Hospital.

Dr. Mahadeo: So, Hon. Minister, could you tell me how much per day per patient was calculated to get this figure here? I prepare budgets and that is normally submitted.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that that figure is \$800 per day per patient.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Hon. Minister, there was a shortfall in the usage of the amount of money budgeted for 2016 by about \$20 million and the number of contracted employees has been decreased for 2017 by 100. Could you say how many of these persons are doctors how have been put on the fixed establishment?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I will attempt to answer the question in a slightly different manner. The reduction in the contracted employees is part of the transitioning and that will be reflected in the increase in line items 6115 – Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled - and 6114 – Clerical and Office Support - both of which have gone up. But the information with regard to if there are any doctors who were under the contracted employees would have to be provided at a later stage.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Minister. When I tried to add up what you just said that some of these persons went to line items 6114 and 6115, it does not total the approximate 107 persons who have been dropped from the contracted employees. So could you say where the rest went? Were they terminated or have they retired?

Mr. Bulkan: The overall figures show that there is a reduction of some 20 persons. There would have been some non-renewal of contracts and there may have been a retirement and/or termination.

Mr. Seeraj: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: Hon. Minister, there has been a significant increase here. Can the Hon. Minister say whether this increase is catering for the payment of VAT? Secondly, can we have an idea of what is the unit charge for electricity in this region?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the principal reason for the increase in the 2017 allocation is to provide for the use of a computerised tomography (CT) scan machine which the region has now acquired. With regard to the tariff in Region 6, this information will be provided at the earliest opportunity.

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$1,661,873,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$148,000,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Project code 1204000 – Buildings – Health: Referring to the description of the project, which includes extension of the maternity ward, construction of the CT scan room and high dependency unit at the New Amsterdam Public Hospital, can the Hon. Minister advise me? There is a structure that is being built as an addition to the New Amsterdam Public Hospital in front. Is that the structure that we are talking about as the high dependency unit? If it is, then I would like to ask the question on whose advice is a high dependency unit being built, basically, out of the Hospital setting? What happens when a patient collapses during bad weather? There is no connection to take the patient to the theatre, to the intensive care unit or to the x-radiation area.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that, for that particular activity, the extension of the maternity ward and the other activities that are listed here, whilst it is an extension, patients are not exposed to the public but there is a covered walkway that links these two locations. It is not as described by the Hon. Member.

5.34 p.m.

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, I am speaking specifically of the High Dependency Unit. I am seriously asking the Minister to seek professional advice where this is concerned. If more money is going to be spent on this Unit, the location is not the right place.

The second thing I am asking is that professional advice be sought before the shape and structure of the New Amsterdam Hospital is altered. That Hospital was built taking into consideration aerodynamics and everything else. Hon. Minister, I am asking that we seek advice before we do the alteration and cause more harm to the rest of the structure.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for the suggestions and advice proffered and to assure him that it will be taken into account.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Dr. Mahadeo, this is the last question you will be allowed. I will put the question after this. Please proceed.

Dr. Mahadeo: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I will ask if the Hon. Minister could lay over to the National Assembly the furniture and equipment which will be bought for health - for example, the Skeldon Hospital urgently needs incubators - and where they would be placed so that when my constituents ask me questions, I would be able to answer.

Programme: 765 – Health Services - \$148,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, this is the time when we will take the break.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will return at 6.30 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 5.38 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 6.38 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Please be seated, Hon. Members.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 77 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$233,356,000

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: The contracted employees moved from \$26 million to \$31 million but the staff complement remained at 29. One, could the Hon. Minister provide to the House the reason for this increase? Two, could the Hon. Minister provide the top five paid contracted employees?

Minister within the Ministry of Communities [Ms. Hastings-Williams]: Mr. Chairman, the increase in the amount caters for the annualisation of salary and the upgrading of the Typist Clerk to Registry Supervisor.

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, the second answer was not provided. But let me ask, for which category of employees is the annualisation and how much? The annualisation of salary is paid every year.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I will answer the second part, the top five. The top five are the Clerk II - \$67,851; Captain/Engineer - \$75,086; Caretaker, \$66,816; Accounts Clerk II -

\$64,882; Clerk II (G) - \$64,882; and a Driver/Mechanic - \$63,664. The salary increases that were given were across the board.

Mr. Croal: Hon. Minister, we were just told that the top employee is paid \$67,851 and we are referring to 29 employees for that amount or less. There is an increase in payment to contracted employees by about \$5 million. If we do the Math, something is not right.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Sorry for that wrong information, Mr. Chairman. There is a Civil Engineer at \$210,230; Electrical Inspector - \$110,024; Overseer - \$78,537; Accounts Clerk II - \$73,506 and a Clerk II (G) - \$64,882.

Mr. Croal: Thank you, Hon. Minister. I will move on. Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: There is almost an \$8 million increase on this line item. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to the House the justification for this huge increase and to what the increase is allotted then give us the overall breakdown for this allocation?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Mr. Chairman, the reason for the overall increase is one rotation of taking the RDC meeting to the Upper Mazaruni and for consultations with the residents.

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

Mr. Croal: Yes, Mr. Chairman, just a follow-up on the same line item.

Mr. Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Croal: The Hon. Minister indicated the increase is for the Upper Mazaruni as well as one other. Could the Minister provide a breakdown of the items and the allocation for each?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Mr. Chairman, fuel to transport Councillors to and from Upper Mazaruni to Bartica and return would be \$1.080 million; provision for meals and accommodation for the same Councillors - \$4.8 million; meals for RDC meetings - \$1.5 million; transportation of Councillors who live around Bartica - \$120,000; stipend for Amerindian Toshaos, Deputy and Senior Councillors - \$9.9 million; stipend for Regional Councillors - \$1.5 million; payment for utility bills for the Regional Chairman (RC) and the Regional Vice-Chairman (RVC) - \$480,000; attendance of RDC meetings in communities and agencies by RC and RVC - \$3 million; refreshment for RC's office, provision of trophies and other activities - \$1.5 million; visits by RDC Councillors to communities - \$600,000; extraordinary meetings of the RDC - \$1.8 million; Regional Women's Affairs Committee -

\$250,000; fuel and maintenance for RDC vehicle - \$250,000; and regional administration meetings - \$960,000.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, I would like to ask, with the allocation of \$9.9 million assigned to Toshaos' stipend, does that cater for an increase for 2017 in the stipends? If not, could the Minister provide a reason since, at the last National Toshaos Council (NTC) meeting where sectoral Ministers were all invited and seated, the Toshaos raised the issue of an increase in their stipend?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The simple answer to the question is no. It is not provided for in this Budget. When a decision is made, provision will be made.

6.48 p.m.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Under the same line item, could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House, with respect to travelling for the councillors to attend meetings, why there is no provision for the working of the committees of the RDC?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am advised that provision is made for the committee meetings under this budget. Whenever the councillors attend RDC meetings, committee meetings are held for such committees as health, education, *et cetera*.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, it was not my intention to get an answer about the attendance of the councillors' committee meetings, when they attend RDC meetings, but to actually execute the mandate entrusted upon them by their elections. For example, the Works Committee, I would like to implore on the Hon. Minister that she needs to ensure that the committees are adequately resourced to represent the region.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I must make this plea to every Member. We are here to ask questions and not to make statements. Statements were for the debate and the debate is over. Let us try to keep it directed at the questions and line items which we must address.

Hon. Minister is there a comment you wish to make on what was just said or there is nothing. Thank you.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I would like to ask a question on the same line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency. Of the amount provided for the councillors, could the Minister

disaggregate for this House what sums are to be provided to ensure that the committees of the RDC are able to conduct their responsibilities in 2017?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The main fact that there is an increase in the total allocation and sums of moneys have been allocated to cater for the councillors to travel to communities, this is so that when the councillors attend the RDC meetings, they could also attend the various committee meetings of the RDC which would be held at the same time. So it is provided for in this budget.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Hon. Minister advise the House as to how many meetings of the RDC does this allocation cover? Is it for meetings of the RDC held once per month? Does the allocation covers when the councillors have to attend the meetings of the tender board and the other bodies that do not meet once per month only?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Bi-monthly meetings are conducted and the average is six or seven meetings per year, if the funds are available.

Ms. Teixeira: Follow up: Why is it that the RDCs of Guyana, excluding the interior regions, are restricted to meetings every two months and moneys are not provided for them to meet once per month?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I think I said that provisions are made in this allocation for the RDCs to meet bi-monthly. I agree that we would like to meet every month, but we all know the geographical locations, the cost for transportation, *et cetera*. Taking those factors into consideration, we have to work with what we have.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, the money projected is the same as last year and the year before. There were three budgets in 10 months and each one only caters for six meetings per annum and if possible, where necessary and where moneys are available, seven, eight or nine meetings are held. After three years, would the Government not have increased the funding for the RDC as elected bodies of this country to meet once per month as per other regions? Could the Minister say why there was no consideration within the last three years?

[Hon. Members from the Government side: *[Inaudible]*. You are the fresh start, so why after three budgets – 2015, 2016 and 2017 – this matter has not been rectified?
[Interruption]

Mr. Chairman hit the gavel.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, if Members are going to make speeches I will not allow them to speak on this matter. We must stay within the rules. We cannot do this. There are questions under line items to ask and that is what we must be doing.

Dr. Westford: Line item 6281, Security Services: There is an increase of just over \$10 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what is responsible for that increase?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The amount caters for the increase in additional guards at the following locations: RDC office, RDC stores, RC quarters, REO quarters, Youth Choice Building, regional workshop, Amerindian Hostel and at the Administrative Office at Kamarang.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under the same line item, could the Hon. Minister please state what the unit rate is as per 2016 versus 2017?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The RK Security Service is the company that provides the security services and there are different rates for weekdays, weekends and holidays. It is \$275 per hour on weekdays and \$413 per hour on weekends and holidays.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: Could the Minister indicate to this House whether amounts from this allocation will be allocated to support village councils, Toshaos or teachers from the villages, who, from time to time, provide services to the elderly by collecting pensions from, for example the Upper Mazaruni from Kamarang. If this is not catered for under this line item, then could the Minister tell this House whether provision from this sum will be allocated to improve the delivery of pensions to the elderly and the pensioners in the various villages across the region, particularly in the Amerindian villages?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Yes, we do. We have here “assistance for villages” and we would usually assist with fuel, whenever teachers have to conduct school business or uplift salaries, *et cetera*.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, in the interest time, under line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings and line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister please make available a breakdown of the buildings as well as the other infrastructure?

In addition to laying over that list, could the Hon. Minister highlight the most expensive ones?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Whether they are expensive or not, all are important. I will read and lay over to the House the list. Maintenance of Storekeepers' living quarters, Bartica - \$6 million; maintenance of living quarters, 7th Avenue, Bartica - \$3 million; maintenance of Administrative Duplex living quarters, Mongreppo Hill - \$3.5 million; maintenance of Amerindian Hostel, Bartica - \$2.5 million; maintenance of Regional Administration building - \$2 million; maintenance of Amerindian Hostel, Kamarang - \$3 million; maintenance of Imbaimadai Guest House - \$3 million; and maintenance of Paruima Guest House - \$3 million.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Minister, I wish to commend you, but I would like to ask further... I was in Bartica six weeks ago and the residents there were complaining that a lot about contractors from out of the region who were in receipt of contracts. I would like to ask the Minister what arrangements are in place for residents and contractors of Bartica to benefit from the allocations.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I do not know which line item that comes under, but that has been recognised and...

Mr. Dharamlall: On a Point of Order, I was specifically following up on the two line items where tens of millions were expended.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you Hon. Member for that clarification. That has been recognised and we have started capacity building of local contractors so that they can benefit from contracts within the region.

7.03 p.m.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: Hon. Minister, I notice that the cost has not gone up in any great way; it is the same as last year. However, could the Minister say whether the RDC has a policy that when patients are brought out from the villages, if the region compensates for the fuel and/or the subsistence to bring the patients out? Is that amount catered for under this heading or is it under another heading?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you Mr. Chairman and thank you, Hon. Member, for those questions. We do cater for them, but not under this head. That falls under health.

Ms. Teixeira: So it is not under the region?

Ms. Hastings: No.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you.

Programme: 771- Regional Administration and Finance - \$233,356,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 771- Regional Administration and Finance - \$1,750,000

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, under project code 2601900 – Furniture and Equipment – Administration: Could the Hon. Minister, tell this House what type of furniture and equipment will be procured and which department in the Administration would benefit from these purchases?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you for the question Hon. Member. We have four computer systems which will be located at the Registry and Accounts Departments, the Regional Executive Officer's (REO's) Secretariat and at the Kamarang Administrative Office.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister provide the House with the amount for the provision at the Kamarang Administrative Office?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Just to clarify, is the Hon. Member asking how much is allocated for the Kamarang Administrative Office and what are the equipment that are going to be placed there?

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Yes, Mdm. Minister.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: One computer system for \$105,000, one filing cabinet \$80,000 and five chairs for \$150,000.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, may I ask the Minister to share with this House why such an inadequate amount for the Kamarang Administrative Centre, when I know that the Kamarang Administrative Centre needs much more than that. Is there a problem with fiscal space?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: There is no problem with fiscal space. This is the provision that we are working with.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: A follow-up Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister tell this House when the region will acquire chairs for the agricultural section and also furniture for some of the buildings in the Upper Mazaruni Sub-region and Kamarang?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you for the question, but agricultural programmes does not fall under this head.

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$ 1,750,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 772 - Public Works - \$158,281,000

Dr. Westford: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister say which roads are going to be done and what is the cost allocated to each of them?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you Hon. Member for that question. This allocation caters for the maintenance of Kamarang to Waramadong Farm to Market Access Road and that is to the tune of \$18 million; maintenance of roads around Bartica, \$10 million; maintenance of Agatash Road, \$6 million; maintenance of Mora point, Kalakun Road, \$5 million; maintenance of roads from Bamford Point, \$4 million; maintenance to Kako- Waramadong Farm to Market Road, \$8 million; and the maintenance to sections of roads to First Street between Third and Sixth Avenues, \$4 million and that is around Bartica.

Dr. Westford: Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister say which are the bridges that are going to be maintained?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Through the Chairman, Maintenance of Bridges along the Kamarang to Waramadong Road, \$5.5 million; maintenance of Wax Creek Bridge, \$5.5 million; and maintenance of landing at Batavia \$5 million.

Mr. Dharamlall: Under line items 6251 – 6255: Could the Hon. Minister please state the works to be executed in the township of Bartica and whether those works were reconciled with the Town Council?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Absolutely, yes, we did.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister please lay over to the House the correspondence between the RDC and the Town Council in verifying that reconciliation?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you for that question. There is no document, but there were discussions held between the two.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you Hon. Minister for being so honest. Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There are six contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister please state the skill set of these employees?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: We have an Overseer, Electrical Inspector, Accounts Clerk II, Clerk II(G), Overseer and another Accounts Clerk II.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, under line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: The expected expenditure in 2017 is \$17.018 million, and under line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service - \$5.6 million, it amounts to approximately \$22.6 million. Could the Minister confirm whether these employees within this programme are the ones who would be expending \$22.6 million on vehicles and whatever else?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: This provision is made for the six persons and for resources that will be provided for them to execute the programmes that they will have.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a follow-up: could the Hon. Minister, therefore, please provide to this House a breakdown of the uses of the types of vehicles? Mr. Chairman, whether it includes boats or all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) as well,

Ms. Hastings-Williams: For Kamarang, there is a generator - \$6.7 million; a water pump - \$3.4 million; 40 outboard engines - \$1.8 million; ATVs - \$ 1 million; mini-excavator - \$1.2 million. For Bartica, there are 75 outboard engines - \$300,000; a generator - \$283,000; Bedford truck - \$283,000; a bobcat - \$18,000; another Bedford truck - \$224,000; and a pickup - \$1.4 million.

7.18 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, under line items 6251 – 6255: Could the Hon. Minister, please state, of the \$108.2 million that is expected to be expended, whether Region 7 has the capacity, internally, to execute those works and secondly, whether works are being conducted

in those areas where there are Amerindian villages or communities and whether these areas would have priority over other contractors?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Yes, we do. The Ministry gives the contracts to the village councils where they have the ability to do the work and it also goes to public tenders.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$158,281,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$31,000,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Project code 1401100 – Roads: Could the Hon. Minister please give a breakdown of the \$15 million and the current status of the \$23.052 million for roads in Region 7?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Through you Mr. Chairman, here is the breakdown for the \$15 million: payment of retention, 1st Avenue Bartica - \$1.745 million and the upgrading of sections of Agatash Main Access Road - \$13.2 million.

Mr. Dharamlall: And the current status of the \$23.052 million?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The status of the roads that were catered for in the 2016 Budget includes construction of the Caribisi Hill Roadways, about 90% completed and the construction of a pedestrian pavement, 100% completed.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Hon. Minister what the retention period is for those roads in 2016?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am being advised that the retention period is up to March for the Caribisi Hill Roadways.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could I, therefore, ask the Hon. Minister if the \$15 million will cater for a rollover or the entire amount budgeted for 2016 will be paid by the end of this year?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am being advised that the retention will have to be rolled over to 2017.

Mr. Dharamlall: Therefore, could the Hon. Minister please state how much of the \$24.724 million has already been paid?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Hon. Member, I am advised and we would lay this information over because I do not have it presently.

Mr. Croal: Project code 1500900 – Sea and River Defence: Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether this sum allocated represents all of the revetment works to be done within that area or is this being done in tranche.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: This does not cater for all but for sections. It is for the construction of a revetment at a section of Agatash, River Bank, Bartica.

Mr. Croal: As a follow-up question, what percentage of the area would this work represent?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: It is an ongoing work and we are doing it section by section and we would lay that information over to you.

Programme: 772 – Public Works - \$31,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery - \$1,197,068,000

Mr. Dharamlall: Could I ask the Hon. Minister, under line items 6111 – 6116, what accounts for the seven new jobs and the \$53 million increase as a result?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: There would be more than seven jobs. There have been teachers appointed as Assistant Mistresses (AM) or what we call Trained Teachers, eight teachers transferred out of the region, one Assistant Mistress reappointed, one Teacher transferred out of the region, 14 Temporary Qualified Masters (TQMs) appointed and 12 Temporary Unqualified Masters/Mistresses (TUMs) appointed.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, on a Point of Order. The Staffing Details states in 2016 that there are 432 employees in education in the programme in Region 7. As of 2017, it would be 439 employees, seven new employees and the salary bill has moved from \$425,094,000 to \$478,395,000. That is all I was asking the Minister. What accounts for the increase of seven new jobs and the \$53 million as a result?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: It was a net increase because if the House checks some persons went out and some came in, some went up and some went down, in terms of their positions.

Mr. Dharamlall: As a follow-up question... Mr. Chairman, could the Prime Minister please allow me to speak?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, please go ahead.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you. Could the Hon. Minister please state what the teachers' staff complement is in Region 7 and what is the current status of that complement?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I have an entire list, some of the statuses are Administrators, some are AMs, *et cetera*. I could lay it over.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you for the laying over, but the amount or the number, if it 150 versus what you have currently.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The average ratio is one teacher to 35 students and the list that I have is not in numerical order, so I would lay over that information.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, as a follow-up question. Could I ask the Hon. Minister, under line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances, whether teachers are still being paid their Remote Area Incentive?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Yes, every six months.

Dr. Westford: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister enumerate for us what infrastructure is going to be maintained and the cost attached to each?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Could you please repeat the question, Hon. Member?

Dr. Westford: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could I have the infrastructures that are going to be maintained and the cost attached to each one?

7.33 p.m.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: We have catered in this amount for cleaning and weeding of compounds - \$8 million, maintenance of solar in schools, teachers living quarters in the upper Mazaruni and Bartica - \$9 million, maintenance of fence at St. John the Baptist Primary

School for \$6 million, landscaping of compound at Two Mile Primary School - \$3 million, landscaping of the compound at Hill View Nursery School - \$3 million, repairs to trestle at Jawalla Primary School for \$4 million, maintenance of the fence at Three Mile Secondary School - \$6 million and maintenance to the walkway Issano Primary School - \$1 million.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6292, Dietary: Hon. Minister, could you please provide a breakdown of the school that will benefit from the \$236.6 million?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The schools that are catered for under this line item Bartica Secondary School dormitory, Three Miles dormitory and the Desrey Clementine Caesar (DCC) Secondary School at Waramadong.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could I follow up by asking the Hon. Minister what amount in Waramadong Secondary School is sourced from local suppliers versus the external suppliers?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am unable to give you the percentage exactly because we take from the communities whenever there are available. For example, we would buy from Paruima when produce are available from the communities.

Mr. Dharamlall: I happen to like the upper Mazaruni as does the Minister of Regional Development. Could I therefore ask the Hon. Minister, because when I was in Government we had started to help these schools to be self-sufficient...

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

Mr. Dharamlall: Could I ask the Hon. Minister what interventions are being pursued by the regional administration to ensure that the Amerindian villages supply as much as possible to the school so that the economies of the Amerindian villages can benefit from the resources budgeted here?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Dharamlall, was there a line item on that?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes. It is line item 6292, Dietary.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: We are in constant consultation with the communities. We do encourage them to plant and being a former head teacher at Jawalla Primary School, I encouraged them to plant. The buying the produce is not catered for here, but that caters for the school feeding programme which is sponsored by the Ministry of Education.

Programme 773 - Education Delivery - \$1,197,068,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme 773 - Education Delivery - \$114,660,000

Dr. Westford: Project 1204100, Buildings – Education: Could the Hon. Minister say what are the amounts allocated for each building that is mentioned in the legend?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Rehabilitation of Paruima Primary Schools to the tune of \$28.2 million, extension of Chinowieng Primary School to the tune of \$8 million, construction of sanitary block at Two Miles Nursery School to the tune of \$5 million, completion of primary school of Arau - \$1.7 million, construction of sanitary block at Jawalla Nursery School for \$5 million, construction at living quarters Bartica, Seventh Avenue - \$20 million, enclosure of living quarters at DCC Secondary School at Waramadong - \$10 million and enclosure of living quarters at Imbaimadai - \$10 million.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Minister please state under Project 1204100, Buildings - Education, whether the Amerindian areas, which that the Minister outlined the councils, would be contracted to execute those works?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I think I answered a similar question under the previous building. Yes, we do. Whether we have the ability as, I said, we give the contract to the local village council.

Ms. Teixeira: Project 1204100, Buildings - Education, follow up: What does the Hon. Member mean by ability? Is it that the communities are invited to tender for these works?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am being advised that they are free to tender, but because we know these Amerindian village councils do not have documents such as compliance and all the things that we need, we would give them on a participatory basis after we consult with them.

Ms. Teixeira: Is the Hon. Minister aware that there are laws which make provision for the Amerindian communities to proceed to tender without compliance?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Yes.

Ms. Teixeira: Is it a factor in their tendering?

Programme: 773- Education Delivery - \$114,660,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 774 - Health Services - \$525,462,000

Dr. Westford: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say which buildings are going to be maintained and at what cost?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: It is to replace sections of ceilings, floors, windows, publishing at the doctor's quarters in Bartica to the tune of \$4.5 million, works will also be done at the surgeon's quarters Bartica to the tune of \$5 million, Bartica Hospital complex to the tune of \$5.5 million, works will be done to the servicing of roof, wash and paint, repairs to external walls at Four Miles Health Centre to the tune of \$6 million, works will also be done at Kangaruma, middle Mazaruni to the tune of \$2.5 million, work also will be done at Itaballi Health Centre to the tune of \$3 million, Karau to the tune of \$3.5 million, Batavia - \$2.5 million, Agatash for \$2.5 million and Paruima for \$3 million.

Mr. Dharamlall: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister please outline the procurement plan for the \$70 million expenditure under the line item for drugs and medical supplies?

Mr. Hastings-Williams: I think you have the line item wrong. Did you say line item 6211? Drugs and medical supplies come under line item 6221.

Mr. Dharamlall: Sorry. I said line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: I am being advised that \$11 million stays in the region and the balance is warranted out to the Ministry of Health.

Mr. Dharamlall: Would I be correct to say that this goes against the stated public policy of the Government to have the regions execute procurement of drugs and medical supplies directly. If so, why is it so?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: It is not a contradiction of the Government's policy. It just retains a certain amount of money in the cases of emergency within the region and the rest is warranted to the Ministry of Health for economies of scale.

7.48 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Is the Hon. Minister confirming that the region does not have storage capacity for drugs and medical supplies?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: The answer to that question is yes. We do have.

Ms. Teixeira: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies: Hon. Minister, the budgeted amount was \$61.9 million for 2016 and \$64.4 million was spent. Could you say where the additional money came from? Was it from a supplementary or from virement or other sources?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Hon. Member, as you would see, the region was allocated \$64 million and we were able to spend to the tune of \$61.9 million and it was warranted... I am being advised, Hon. Member, that the warrant is to the tune of \$59 million to the Ministry of Public Health. Hon. Member, could I lay over that information when I have it?

Ms. Teixeira: I do not need a laying over for this one. I will need it for my supplementary question, but not this one. What you had was a budget of \$61.9 million which was approved by this Assembly, but \$64.4 million was spent, a difference of two point something million. I am asking: Where did the additional money come from? Did it come from a virement within the RDC, within the health services, or a supplementary financial paper? I would come to the next point when you answer that.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Thank you for your question and the clarification. I am advised that it was to the virement, not through any supplementary.

Ms. Teixeira: Could you say which subhead was used to vire from, which this virement came from?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I am being advised that the money was taken from the line item that caters for fuel and lubricants.

Ms. Teixeira: Unfortunately, that would be a head that you would use, but you have made your decision. Line item 6221, again, could the Hon. Minister, as Minister Bulkan had agreed

earlier, advise us on how much of the money that was given to the Ministry of Public Health? You said it is a virement of \$56 million. How much of those drugs did you receive? Did you receive all the drugs that were requested on the crib or partially?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: I do not have the detail presently, but we are going to lay it over to the Assembly.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Mr. Dharamlall: My final question. Line item 6281, Security Services: The region budgeted \$102,603,000 in 2017 for security services versus \$80,297,000 in 2016, an increase of almost \$255,000,000 across the programmes. Could the Hon. Minister please state if in Region 7 there is a security fear and that is why there is a 25% increase? Is it an increase in rates or is it an increase of some sort? I do not know.

Ms. Hastings-Williams: It is an increase from 10.5% to 14% under the line item 6281 – Security Services and I do not see a fear about an increase from 10.5% to 14%. However there is an increase in the locations of the Four Mile Health Post, Kamarang Hospital and the Bartica Hospital.

Mr. Dharamlall: Just to clarify before the Hon. Minister, I have said across the region, it is a \$102,603,000 increase in security for 2017 versus \$80,297,000 in 2016. All I had asked the Minister is why there is the 25% increase. Is it attributable to a fear of increase crime or what are other reasons?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Through you, Mr. Chairman, at the moment we are dealing with security service for health, not across the region.

Ms. Teixeira: It is regrettable that when serious questions are asked it becomes a joke. Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: We heard about the rates of electricity that was given yesterday for Mahdia and the contribution from the Minister of Public Infrastructure. Could you say if this is contributing to the increase of the allocations from the electricity from \$21.1 million to \$23 million?

Ms. Hastings-Williams: Through you Mr. Chairman, are you comparing Mahdia in Region 8?

Ms. Teixeira: I am.

Ms. Hastings: We would discuss that when we come to Region 8.

Ms. Teixeira: Sorry, I jumped ahead.

Ms. Hastings: The increase here is catered for the increase of facilities at the medic's quarters, nurse's hostel, the REO's quarters, doctor's quarters, dentist's quarters, the bond steward quarters, Sister's quarters and the senior medic's quarters at the Bartica Hospital and around the region.

Programme: 744 – Health Services – \$525,462,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 744 – Health Services – \$81,436,000

Programme: 744 – Health Services – \$81,436,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have completed consideration of Agency 77, Region #7 and according to our schedule a break was due at 7.30 pm. I was wondering if it was for half an hour and I wonder if Hon. Members are in agreement that we could continue. Hon. Members would be free to leave the room at intervals if they so wish and we would continue with the work. I take it that all are in agreement with that suggestion.

Agency: 78 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$132,288,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: There was a decrease of five employees, but yet the contracted allocation increased by over \$3.5 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain this?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the position, the appointment of a Deputy Regional Executive Officer (DREO), is mainly responsible for the increase in the 2017 allocation.

Mr. Croal: Two questions. With an increase of that allocation, could the Hon. Minister provide to the Assembly the salary of the Assistant Regional Executive Officer (AREO)?

Secondly, the top five employees under this category and their emoluments under line item 6116, Contracted Employees?

8.03 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the salary for the DREO is \$260,000. The top five categories under that heading, I will respectfully ask to lay over this information.

Mr. Croal: It has been the trend for other regions. We have been getting the information on salaries. He is going to lay over the designation as well as the total emoluments. Moving on to line item 6281, Security, this has almost a 100% increase. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what is the reason for this large increase, the security provider for this programme and when does the current contract mature?

Mr. Bulkan: The allocation provides for 24-hour security at the Regional Chairman's residence, the REO as well as the administrative office in Mahdia. The security provider is RK Security and the contract ends at the end of December in 2016.

Mr. Croal: Could the Hon. Minister indicate which the new locations on this category are because there is an increase?

Mr. Bulkan: In addition to those locations names, security is also provided for the shade houses. I am advised that previously neither the Regional Chairman nor the REO were provided with security, and these are additions to the RDC building.

Mr. Croal: My final question under security. Could the Hon. Minister indicate if the Ministry has tendered nationally for a new security service? What would be the mechanism in place for the next tenure?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the national tenders have been advertised. That has already been initiated.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: There was an increase of \$4 million. Could you give us a breakdown of where intended for this \$12 million and the allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: I will ask to lay over these details for the Hon. Member please.

Mr. Croal: Just a follow-up on this very line item. Just now we asked a simple question in terms of salary, the answer was not given. We asked for a simple breakdown of where

intended. The REO must have that information. He did not get it out of a vacuum. I find it appalling that we do not have that information to provide it to the Assembly.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Croal, I think we are abusing the opportunity that we have.

Mr. Croal: Why do you say so, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman: Please resume your seat.

Mr. Chairman: Do you wish to speak on this matter Hon. Member?

Ms. Teixeira: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Please go ahead.

Ms. Teixeira: I would like to ask you to look at Standing Order 75(2) which allows us in this House that any such debate... This is on the Estimates, Sir.

“... shall be confined to the policy of the service for which the money is to be provided and shall not deal with details of any item or Sub-Head that may refer to the details of revenue or funds which that service is responsible”.

We are dealing with policy issues. If an REO of a region does not come and be prepared, do we not have a right to say that it is wrong, in this House, Sir? This is about performance.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Ms. Teixeira you have made a point. What the Speaker is saying is that language which is calculated to evoke responses which are going to throw this House in an uproar must be avoided by Members and descriptive phrases or words which can do that should not be allowed. It is very simple. Freedom of speech has a limit.

Ms. Teixeira: Mr. Chairman with due respect, the word “appalling” is not an unparliamentary word.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member if you have a question to ask here, please...

Ms. Teixeira: Yes. I do have a question.

Mr. Chairman: Do ask your question.

Ms. Teixeira: I have been waiting to. Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: I notice that in 2016 \$25,598,000 was approved by this Assembly but \$28,999,000 was spent. Could the Hon. Minister say where did the additional money come from for this heading? Was there a supplementary financial paper? Was it vired? If it was vired, from which head was it vired?

Mr. Bulkan: The additional sources came from a supplementary, the sum of \$3.4 million.

Ms. Teixeira: Could you also advise us on the usage of his amount of money? We know that it is to pay the Toshaos a stipend and it is also for RDC meetings. Could you say how many RDC meetings were held in 2016 that this money covered?

Mr. Bulkan: There was a total of five RDC meeting to date for 2016.

Ms. Teixeira: Could the money that has been allocated now in 2017 accommodate more meetings of the RDC as the coastal regions or are they restricted to five and six as in the other interior regions?

Mr. Bulkan: The provision caters for a total of six meetings of the RDC in 2017.

Ms. Teixeira: Could I ask one more question?

Mr. Chairman: Hon Member Ms. Teixeira, do you wish to...?

Ms. Teixeira: It is just one last question on this heading if you will allow me. Mr. Minister, could you advise us if the region asked for a larger allocation under this head to allow it to meet more often? Was it a request?

Mr. Bulkan: To the best of my knowledge, in practically every area, greater allocations were requested but the sum stated here is the provision that has been allocated for this line item for these activities for 2017.

Ms. Teixeira: My issue Minister, I asked you a very specific question: Did the region request \$30 million or is this an allocation from your Ministry?

Mr. Bulkan: The region did request a larger sum than what is provided for in these Estimates.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Could the Hon. Minister disaggregate the allocation to share with this Assembly what amounts were budgeted for council meetings, what amounts were

budgeted for the stipends of the Toshaos and if any were budgeted for the RDC committees so that they would not be handicapped any longer but so that they can conduct their activities as mandated? It is line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency.

Mr. Bulkan: The details that are requested the disaggregated amounts will be laid over to the Assembly.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Could the Minister put timeline when he will lay over the documents or the information? I will now move to line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants. I notice an allocation of \$5 million for 2017. Would the Hon. Minister share with this Assembly the breakdown across the two subregions and also what activities will benefit from the usage of Fuel and lubricants?

Mr. Bulkan: This allocation is for Programme 1 and the budgeted sum is to cater for fuel for the use of the generator at Mahdia Power.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$132,288,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, I doubt that you saw me get up to ask a supplemental but you went ahead. I would really wish sometimes that I was bigger so that people could see me at first glance.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$10,500,000

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Project 1209100, Furniture and Equipment – Staff Quarters: Could the Hon. Minister please share with this Assembly what type of furniture and equipment will be purchased and to benefit who or which staff of the Administration?

8.18 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: The items are beds, dining sets, refrigerators, suites, wardrobes, stoves, microwaves, washing machines, fans and air conditioning units.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I will appreciate if the Hon. Minister could provide me with the details of which Staff Quarters will be benefitting from this purchase and at which location?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the furniture and equipment are for use by the REO, the Deputy Regional Executive Officer (DREO) and the Assistant Regional Executive Officer (AREO) at the locations in Mahdia as well as Kato.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Project code 2504700 – Furniture and Equipment - Administration: I notice that there are furniture and equipment to be purchased again, to the amount of \$2 million. Could the Minister detail this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: This is for the Administration building in Mahdia. The equipment to be procured would be solar systems, shredders, computers, chairs, projectors and cupboards.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: A follow-up on project code 2504700: Could the Minister share with me why there was not any provision for furniture and equipment for the Kato Sub-Region Administration's office?

Mr. Bulkan: The furniture and equipment are for both Administrative buildings at Mahdia as well as Kato.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: With respect to project code 1209000 – Buildings – Administration - I notice that there is \$3 million for the construction of a security hut and payment of retention. Could the Hon. Minister share with this House what amounts are provided for the security huts' construction and where these security huts are to be located? What amounts are held for retention and for which project?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that some of the retention is \$1.3 million and the sum of \$1.7 million is allocated for the security huts in Mahdia.

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$10,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 782 – Public Works - \$187,672,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: This increased by \$1.6 million but there was a decrease by three employees under Contracted Employees. Could the Hon. Minister explain this anomaly?

Secondly, who are the top five Contracted Employees and their designations?

Mr. Bulkan: The Staffing Details would show that, under line item 6115 - Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled, there has been an increase by eight. These are persons who have now been transferred from line item 6116 to the pensionable establishment. This would help to account for the increase in the 2017 provision or allocation.

Mr. Croal: A follow-up: They are speaking specifically to line item 6116 and the allocation for that line item has increased. There was a decrease by three employees. Since we are also referring to line item 6115, there was an increase of eight employees. Could the Hon. Minister indicate the designations of those newly appointed employees?

Mr. Bulkan: The previous question under line item 6116 would have been as a result of the increase in salaries. The new employees under line item 6115, I am advised, are all Labourers.

Mr. Croal: The Hon. Minister did not provide the top five so I will ask him to lay that over.

Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister provide to the House where is catered for maintenance under this Programme and what is the allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: Maintenance of Buildings: The allocation is \$6.78 million for the Mechanical Bond in Kato; Staff Quarters in Mahdia - \$3.45 million; an additional \$5,070,000 for Staff Quarters in Mahdia; Staff Quarters for the Mechanic in Mahdia - \$3 million; Engineers' Quarters in Mahdia, various activities, damage to the louvre frames, columns, replacement of the breaker panel, repairs to the plumbing system and the ceiling, termite treatment, repairs to the floor, totalling \$5.7 million, giving a total of \$24 million.

Mr. Croal: As a follow-up on the accommodation at Mahdia, a number of accommodations were mentioned. Could the Hon. Minister provide the designations of those, except the Engineer, who are being accommodated? Secondly, are those persons from outside of the region or are they from the region?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that it is a combination of both – approximately 60% of persons from outside of the region and the remaining within the region. In the first instance, it is for staff and family of five. It is a similar five persons for the second Staff Quarters. It will be the Driver/Mechanic and the Engineer.

Mr. Croal: As follow-up on this same line item about accommodation, since you have a hybrid, could the Hon. Minister provide guidance in terms of provision of accommodation?

Secondly, what are the terms and conditions for their accommodation? Will they be paying a rental? Are they paying utilities?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that, currently, these staff are required to pay 10% of their salaries for the accommodation that is provided.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6241: I noted that there is an allocation for Kato. Could the Hon. Minister say to this House whether the accommodation allocated to or assigned to the Vice-Chairperson is included in the amount?

Mr. Bulkan: No, Mr. Chairman. The repairs to be effected under this line item are for repairs to the mechanical bond and not to the Vice-Chairman's residence.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Could the Hon. Minister disaggregate the provision for maintenance of road with respect to Sub-Region 1 and Sub-Region 2 and what amounts are allocated for Sub-Region 1 and Region-Region 2?

In the interest of time, could the Minister layover the projects that are to be done under this line item?

8.33 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, of the budgeted sum, the majority or approximately 80% is for the maintenance of roads in Sub-Region 1 and the remainder for Sub-Region 2. As requested by the Hon. Member, these details, the roads and the respective amounts, will be laid over with the Clerk.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Can the Hon. Minister share with this House why only 20% of the roads are allocated under this provision for Sub-Region 2, knowing that, in the Budget, it was announced that Mahdia is going to be a town in 2017. What are the preparations with respect to infrastructure?

Mr. Bulkan: I venture to say that the Hon. Member would be very pleasantly surprised the next time she goes to Mahdia to note that all the internal roads in Mahdia have been upgraded to concrete roads, an allocation of almost \$800 million that was provided for in the 2016 Budget.

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$187,672,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$32,283,000

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Under project code 1401200 – Roads - may the Hon. Minister lay over to the House the roads to be constructed?

Mr. Bulkan: This information will be laid over as requested but it is for repairs to the roads from Paramakatoi to Tuseneng, Kato to Kurukabaru, Kamana to Kanapang and, in Sub-Region 2, Pamela to Tukeit.

Mr. Croal: Project code 1100800 – Bridges – Payment of retention: Where is this retention for? And can the Hon. Minister, having confirmed where, confirm if the works have been completed?

Mr. Bulkan: That would have been for the bridge that was constructed at Itabac.

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$32,283,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$781,104,000

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, with respect to line item 6113 – Other Technical and Crafted Skilled - I noticed that there is a reduction in the amounts provided. Can the Hon. Minister share with this House the reason for this reduction?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the reason for the reduction is for the reduction of staffing by eight persons who chose not to renew their contracts.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I have a follow-up to this line item with respect to the response provided. Can the Hon. Minister tell this House what impact the reduction of non-renewal of the contracts will have on the education delivery? Can the Minister also say the locations that are affected by the resignations or non-renewal of contracts?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that there were two resignations from Paramakatoi, and six teachers from Mahdia. Until they are replaced, I think it is fair to assume that it would have an impact on the delivery in the meantime.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I have a follow-up question. Can the Hon. Minister say what areas or fields, in terms of the teachers' delivery of education, are going to be affected? Is it Mathematics, English or Science?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that these are primary school teachers and I believe that the custom is that these teachers would teach across all of those disciplines and subjects.

Mr. G. Persaud: Thank you, Sir.

Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Would the Hon. Minister share with us the designations of the additional 12 employees and can he lay over the designations, dates of appointments and emoluments for the 22 listed contracted employees?

Mr. Bulkan: Sir, I am advised that the categories of the additional new employees are cooks, cleaners and maids and these are all for Paramakatoi.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6134 – National Insurance: There is a particular reason why I am really homing on the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) but I will get there later on. The allocation for 2016 is \$11,296,000 and revised is \$11,296,000. Being requested for 2017 is \$7,208,000. Can the Hon. Minister say to us why this drastic decrease in the allocation, particularly when the revised 2016 stood at \$11.296 million?

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Hon. Member. It would be noted that, with the exception of the contracted employees, which the staffing has gone up for, for the other categories for which the NIS is being paid under these line items, the staffing has reduced. In the case of line item 6115 –Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled – it is from 67 to 53; line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled from 41 to 33 as well as in line item 6112 – Senior Technical. So, this would be responsible for the reduction in the allocation for NIS in 2017.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - I noticed that there is a \$90 million allocation. Can the Minister lay over to this House the amounts for Sub-Regions 1 and 2 and the projects that this money would be expended over?

Mr. Bulkan: For line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings - the request is noted for this information – the list of projects and the respected sums allocated to each - to be laid over.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Line item 6265 – Other Transport, Travel and Postage: Could the Hon. Minister say whether there is adequate sum included in this amount for the transportation of students to the various secondary schools in the region?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the increased allocation is intended to make provision for the transportation of students in and out as well as for 27 new teachers who are expected to be travelling in 2017.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: I have a follow-up question. Since there is adequate amount for school children, can the Hon. Minister assure this House that the students who go to the secondary school in Sand Creek will be transported by air, as has been promised?

Mr. Bulkan: The answer to that question is yes. This has been done and the intention is to stick with that practice.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: There is a movement from \$4 million to \$11 million. Can the Hon. Minister explain that increase?

And if he can take the other question at the same time, line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships) - can the Minister lay over the training activities, the target groups and the cost for each training activity?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Hon. Member is aware that the tariffs in Mahdia, I believe, are the highest in the country; it is a \$100 per kilowatt hour. The increased provision is to cater for electricity charges for the information technology (IT) laboratories that have now come on stream in Mahdia and provisions are made for that in 2017.

Hon. Member, the second question you asked for, what line item is it?

Mr. G. Persaud: It is line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships).

8.48 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the provision is for the training of teachers in both of the sub-regions.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$781,104,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$65,665,000

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, project code 1204400 – Buildings – Education: Could the Hon. Minister provide the details that the expenditure provided here would cover?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, as stated in the legend, there would be a few retention payments and these apply to the Port Kaituma (PK) dormitory, construction of the industrial arts classroom in PK, construction of the sanitary block in PK, the Deputy Education Officer's (DEO) quarters in PK as well as the construction of the nursery and primary school in Micobie. The new activity is construction of a primary school in Kaibarupai, construction of a sanitary block at the Chieung Mouth Nursery School as well as a sanitary block at the Itabac Nursery and Primary Schools.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, project code 2504500 – Furniture and Equipment – Education: I notice there is a \$17 million provision made here. Could the Hon. Minister say to this House where the furniture and equipment for the schools will be located?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the furniture and equipment would be spread across schools throughout both of the sub-regions.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: A follow-up, Mr. Chairman: If \$17 million in furniture would be spread across the vast area of Region 8, I would like to ask the Minister if he could lay over the details.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I think in the interest of time, it would be better if this information is laid over for the benefit of the Hon. Member.

Mr. G. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, project code 1209100 – Furniture and Equipment – Staff Quarters: Could the Hon. Minister please lay over the beneficiaries of the furniture and equipment?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, these would be the teachers' quarters in both sub-regions.

Ms. Teixeira: Hon. Minister, project codes 1209100 and 2504500: Both refer, in the list in Volume 3, to solar systems. Could the Hon. Minister advise us where the solar systems are going and the capacity? Are the systems just to provide lights or do they have more capacity to operate other machinery?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that, in addition to providing lighting, the solar systems are also powering a television with a compact disc (CD) player at a number of locations in both sub-regions.

Ms. Teixeira: Are these the same size 65 watts that were purchased for the Unserved Areas Electrification Programme in the interior?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that it is not the 65-watt household system but that the capacity is greater. I am advised that the system is 450 watts.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery - \$65,665,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$308,744,000

Mr. Chairman: I must tell Hon. Members that we have five minutes remaining for this segment.

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There is an increased allocation here. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the increase is for? I will do a follow-up as soon as he quickly answers.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the bulk of the increase is to allow for increases in the Maternal and Child Health Programme that is now being conducted in the region, and an increase in the Vector Control Programme as well.

Mr. Croal: As a follow-up, is there any provision for increased mobile visits from community to community?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, yes, the very Programmes require visits to communities across the region.

Mr. Croal: Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: Could the Hon. Minister indicate whether all the allocation has been expended under this programme? Second, could he confirm whether the allocation that was given in 2016 was adequate for the region?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that, of the \$30 million that is projected to be spent by the end of 2016, \$27 million was for drugs procured by the Ministry of Public Health and

the remainder by the region. The budgetary allocation of \$32 million in 2017 is anticipated to be adequate for the needs of the region.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Croal, this must be a short question. I must put the question now.

Mr. Croal: I will ask it in a sentence form. Could the Hon. Minister therefore confirm that we will have no complains of shortage of any drugs in Region 8 in 2017?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, unfortunately, the question is an unfair one. I am unable to anticipate or foresee that.

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$308,744,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$94,052,000

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$94,052,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 785 – Agriculture - \$21,401,000

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister indicate, as part of the line item 6261 - Local Travel and Subsistence - how many agriculture officers the Region has and where they are posted?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that the budgetary allocation is to provide transportation for five agriculture officers who are attached to the Ministry of Agriculture in Kato.

9.03 p.m.

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Mr. Chairman, I notice that the Staffing Details under this agency and Programme 785 have no staff employed or attached to the establishment, but there is an allocation of \$21.4 million for the operation of this programme. My question is whether the

Minister is sure that there is no duplication of expenditure with respect to the agricultural officers who are attached to the Ministry of Agriculture?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the officers are attached to the Ministry of Agriculture, but are deployed in the region and their activities are funded *via* those particular programmes and the \$21 million that is allocated under are the agriculture programme in the region.

Programme: 785 – Agriculture - \$21,401,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 785 – Agriculture - \$3,600,000

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: Project code 1702000, Agricultural Development: Could the Hon say if the \$13 million allocated for 2016 was expended? Also whether the 2017 allocation of \$3.6 million for the construction of greenhouses... what type of the plants will be grown in the greenhouses and can he identify whether any part of the \$3.6 million allocated will go to the Irish Potato Project, which is a big project that was announced in the budget?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the 2016 allocation was expended and that the sum of \$3.6 million, which is the 2017 provision, is not for the project that the Hon. Member mention, but rather it is for five greenhouses in Paramakatoi, Chenapau, Kurukabaru, Itabac and Mahdia. They will be used as nurseries for the cultivation of lettuce, cabbages, pak choi and other vegetables that have been successfully cultivated in 2016 and will continue in 2017.

Programme: 785 – Agriculture - \$3,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 79 Region No. 9: Upper Takatu/Upper Essequibo

Current Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$162,404,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: There is a decrease by one staff but the allocation has been increased by \$6 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate the reason for the increase and secondly, could the Hon. Minister provide to the House the designations and emoluments of all the new employees during 2016?

Mr. Bulkan: The hiring of a Deputy Regional Executive Officer (DREO) and an Assistant Regional Executive Officer (AREO) are the major reasons for the increase in the 2017 allocations. These are posts that were vacant and were only filled, quite recently, in September 2016.

Could the Member repeat the second part of the question?

Mr. Croal: Could the Minister provide the emoluments of the two posts mentioned and could he confirm whether the two mentioned are the only two new contracted employees during 2016?

As a follow up: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the recruitment process for the DREO and the AREO

Mr. Bulkan: The recruitment of the DREO was by the way of a shortlist of persons and the position was filled *via* the Department of Public Service. The emolument for that position is \$260,000 per month.

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency: In the 2016 revised there is an allocation of \$30.5 million, in 2017 the proposed allocation is 32.4 million and in 2017, there is an increase by \$1.9 million. Could the Hon. Minister relate to this House whether the budgetary allocation in 2016 was sufficient, if not when was this allocation exhausted in 2016? In 2016, an additional 5% supplementary provision was applied by the RDC, why is the \$5 million that was requested not included in the 2017 budgetary allocation under this specific line item?

Mr. Bulkan: The budgetary allocation in 2016 was indeed exhausted before the end of the year. I am advised that it was exhausted in November 2016, so the provision was inadequate for the entire year. Nonetheless, the 2017 allocation, as has been pointed out, is close to a \$2 million increase. It would be expected that the RDC would have to stay within the budget of \$32 million.

Mr. Charlie: Follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister layover to the Clerk of the National Assembly the breakdown of this line item for distribution to every Member. I would be grateful.

Mr. Bulkan: Hon. Member, could you say whether that would be for 2016 or 2017?

Mr. Charlie: That would be for 2017, specifically.

Mr. Bulkan: Noted. This information will be laid over.

Ms. Pearson-Frederick: Line item 6312, Subvention to Local Authorities: In 2016, \$4.136 million was proposed and a revised sum of \$4.136 was allocated. In 2017, I notice there is an increase of \$12.055 million. Could the Hon. Minister give an explanation to the House and possibly lay over the information on what the money will be used for under the Subvention to Local Authorities.

Mr. Bulkan: The 2017 allocation is to allow for the expansion in the local democratic organs. Firstly, the upgrade of the Ireng/Sawariwau Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) to the township of Lethem, which now receives a greater subvention. It is proposed that a new NDC area will be created in Aranaputa. So, an additional \$8 million is allocated in 2017.

Mr. G. Persaud: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricant and 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister say how many vehicles are benefiting under line item 6231 and whether there are boats and engines as well. Also whether a vehicle is assigned to the Regional Chairman as well the Regional Vice-Chairman (RVC)?

Mr. Bulkan: I am advised that the current fleet is three vehicles and three boats. A vehicle is assigned to the Regional Chairman. There is no vehicle currently assigned to the RVC.

Mr. G. Persaud: Follow up: Regarding the RVC and the lack of mobility, is there any action that the Minister would have taken to ensure that 2017 does not see the RVC still not having access to a vehicle?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, of course, there is nothing that would prevent or prohibit the Regional Chairman from sharing his vehicle with the RVC. Of course, the Hon. Member would recall that, when I sat in the very seat that he is now sitting in, I would have bemoaned and lamented that the Regional Chairman of Region 8 did not have a means of transportation. But here it is he...

Mr. G. Persaud: Sir, we are dealing with Region 9.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I can remind the Minister.

9.18 p.m.

Mr. G. Persaud: Sir, a follow-up on that question. I thank the Minister for the suggestion made on sharing. I trust that the REO and the Deputy Regional Executive Officer (DREO) would do likewise too. Thank you.

Programme: 791 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$162,404,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 791 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$ 41,400,000

Mr. Charlie: Project code 1204900 – Buildings – Administration: In the 2016 Budget, \$8 million was estimated. In the 2017 Budget \$18 million is projected. Could the Hon. Minister relate to this House what percentage of work was completed to date under the 2016 Budget for the construction of a living quarter, what is proposed for 2017 and the retention amount to be paid, respectively?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that 95% of the works to the building have been completed and that the retention payment would be \$700,000. The remainder of the allocation would be a sum of \$17.3 million.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Project code 2402300 – Land Water Transport: I notice a sum allocated here of \$19.8 million. In the Legend it states that the project entails the purchase of vehicles, ATVs, boats and outboard engines. Could the Minister be more specific as to the type of vehicle and whether this vehicle is for the Regional Vice-Chairman and how many ATVs, boats and engines would be purchased from this sum?

Mr. Bulkan: The sum is to cater for the acquisition of one ATV for use by the District Development Officers (DDOs) in Annai; purchase of a 4x4 enclosed pickup for use by the Regional Accounting Unit - this is to allow for the payment of salaries; and the purchase of one Aluminium boat and a 25 horse power engine for use in Apoteri.

Programme: 791 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$41,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$42,060,000

Mr. Croal: Could the Hon. Minister provide the designations and the emoluments for all the contracted employees under this category and secondly, in that, identify all the new recruits for 2016?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the new employees would be two Labourers, an Office Assistant and a Cleaner. The other information for all of the employees under this heading will have to be provided, subsequently.

Mr. Croal: As a follow-up: Could the Minister indicate under which line item is the Agriculture Officers being paid?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, as is the case in Region 8, the Agriculture Officers are provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and they are paid for under that Ministry.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6231 – Fuel and lubricant: I notice a budgetary allocation of \$49.7 million. Could the Hon. Minister lay over to this House, in detail, which are the vehicles or other equipment that would use fuel and lubricant from this budget allocation? Thank you.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, could I ask the Hon. Member to repeat the sum that she quoted?

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: I quoted \$49.7 million. Is that correct?

Mr. Bulkan: No. I think there is a mistake Sir. I think it is a different programme.

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: I am looking at line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants...

Mr. Bulkan: Is it Programme 792 Hon. Member?

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Under Agriculture.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, is the programme the correct one?

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricant under Agriculture.

Mr. Chairman: It is Programme: 792?

Ms. Pearson-Fredericks: Sorry. I got the wrong page. Line item 6321 – Fuel and Lubricant - I had the amount wrong, it is \$2.6 million. It is the same question that I am asking, which are the vehicles or other equipment that would be using this amount of fuel?

Mr. Bulkan: The vehicles include three tractors, three brush cutters, four pickups, two water pumps, two motorcycles, three ATVs, four mist blowers, four swing fog machines and these are stationed at locations in St. Ignatius, Annai and Aishalton.

Mr. Bharrat: With reference to line item 6134 – National Insurance, the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) contributions, could the Hon. Minister say why there is a decrease in the allocation for this line item, when there is an increase in the staffing by five, and, also, a total increase in the wages and salaries?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the best explanation that could be offered at this stage is that the Hon. Member would note that there is a downward trend in that allocation from 2016 where the revised figure was lower and it continues to go down in 2017.

Mr. Charlie: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: In 2016, the budgetary allocation was \$8 million and the proposed allocation for 2017 is \$8 million. Could the Hon. Minister say if the Maintenance of Buildings under this programme has been completed? For 2017, in which location will the maintenance take effect?

Mr. Bulkan: Sir, I am advised that the 2016 programme has been completed and that the buildings to be maintained in 2017 include the Veterinarian House in Aishalton, an office in St. Ignatius, Attendant Quarters at Gomes Crossing, Micky Landing and the Takatu Bridge, as well as the dip at Kabakaburi and the nursery at Annai.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$42,060,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$21,000,000

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, project code 1701400 – Agricultural Development: The provision for spray race system and hatchery. Could the Hon. Minister provide further details for this and give the House a breakdown as to what the programme entails?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the spray race system is part of the Foot and Mouth Control programme and the allocation is to provide for the purchase and installation of two such systems, one at Takutu and the other at the Kurupukari Crossing. The hatchery is for St. Ignatius and it is to be used to provide the supply of eggs to poultry farmers in the region.

The budgetary allocation is \$6 million for the two spray race systems and \$5 million for the hatchery in St. Ignatius.

Mr. Charlie: Project code – 1701400 – Agricultural Development: In 2016, the budgetary allocation was \$34.62 million. Could the Hon. Minister say what percentage of this budgetary allocation was expended to date and in 2017, what are the projections? I notice that in 2017 there will be the purchasing of spray systems? Where in Region 9 will those spray systems be and where will the hatchery be constructed?

9.33 p.m.

Mr. Bulkan: For the 2016 allocation, I am advised that the budgetary allocation of \$34.62 million will be expended in its entirety by the end of the year. For the 2017 allocations, the spray race systems, and there are two such, these are to be located at the Takutu Crossing and the Kurupukari Crossing and the hatchery will be located at Saint Ignatius.

Mr. Charlie: A follow-up question under the same line item. Mr. Chairman, I asked the Hon. Minister a specific question as to what percentage...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Charlie, just repeat the question.

Mr. Charlie: What percentage of the budgetary allocation that was allotted under this line item has been expended to date?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, for the 2016 allocation, I am advised that the expenditure, to date, is in the vicinity of 90%, but as I said earlier, it will be expended in its entirety by the end of the year.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture - \$21,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$172,835,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the intended expense is for the over 400% increase on this allocation?

Mr. Bulkan: Sir, I am advised that the budgetary allocation is to provide for more effective monitoring and supervision of projects in the region and more specifically, it would allow for

the payment of five Clerks of Works, one in each district, as well as five Operators and five Labourers. That would allow for the significant increase that has been pointed out in 2017.

Mr. Croal: The Hon. Minister referred to the recruitment of a number of staff there, so why are these persons not being brought on under the establishment or even on contracts?

Mr. Bulkan: Sir, I am advised that, for this monitoring aspect, the persons are not employees on either of those two basis, but that they are employed, specifically, for these projects and the particular activities.

Mr. Croal: As a follow-up under this same line item 6284, could the Hon. Minister indicate the recruitment process to be employed for these persons and secondly, the intended emolument?

Mr. Bulkan: Sir, I am advised that the recruitment process includes a combination of consultations with the village councils where those projects are located, in conjunction with the RDC. The remuneration, on average, is \$120,000 per month for the Clerks of Works and the same amount for the Operators and the Labourers on an average of \$60,000 per month.

Mr. Croal: Mr. Chairman, as a follow-up question.

Mr. Chairman: Your final question Sir.

Mr. Croal: Could the Hon. Minister provide to the House the breakdown of the expenses to be laid over to the House for line items 6251, 6252 and 6255. Secondly, could the Hon. Minister confirm whether he agrees that the recruitment for the persons under line item 6284 will be more on a temporary basis and would they not be better served to be recruited and paid under line item 6117 – Temporary Employees?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, the request is noted for the details relating to line items 6251, 6252 and 6255. This information will be provided and the suggestion, as to the hiring of the employees under line item 6117, it is not considered to be appropriate, it is the service that is being contracted and it is properly located under that line item.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$172,835,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$145,100,000

Mr. Charlie: Project code 1100900 – Bridges: For 2016 budgetary allocation was \$31 million and in 2017 the budget projected is \$27.320 million. Could the Hon. Minister state what percentages of bridges were completed to date in Region 9, and in 2017 what bridges are projected to be constructed and the locations of the bridges in Region 9?

Mr. Bulkan: Sir, I am advised that 95% of the bridges have been completed in 2016 and the 2017 allocation is to allow for the construction of bridges at two locations, namely Rupanau, with a budgeted sum of \$18.8 million and a bridge at Bashaidrun, both in Deep South for a sum of \$8 million.

Programme: 793 – Public Works - \$145,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$925,426,000

Mr. Croal: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There has been an increase of over \$8 million, but yet an increase by one in the staff complement, could the Hon. Minister indicate this difference and secondly, all the new recruitments in 2016 and their emoluments?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, there were the resignations of three persons in 2016 and they were replaced with the new hiring of four Cooks. There is an additional one staff. Indeed the allocation mirrors that of the 2016 provision, roughly.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister?

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman that is the only answer I can provide at this stage; that there were the resignations of three persons and the hiring of four persons - one additional staff.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$925,426,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$105,870,000

Mr. Charlie: Project code 2505200 – Furniture and Equipment - Education: The 2016 budgetary allocation - \$16.5 million and 2017 projected - \$13.6 million. Could the Hon. Minister relay to the House whether all furniture was purchased and delivered under the 2016 budgetary allocation? Which schools, dormitories and teachers' quarters benefited under this project code and in 2017, which of these will benefit?

Mr. Bulkan: Sir, I will ask the Hon. Member to reject the figures that he has provided. I thought I heard him say \$16.5 million in 2016. The figures are actually different. It is \$15.5 million. In the case of the 2017 allocation, subject to correction, I thought that the Hon. Member quoted a figure of \$30.6 million, but the allocation is actually \$12 million. It is a considerable difference, so if we could just have a clarification before we proceed.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery - \$105,870,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.48 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 795 - Health Services - \$412,535,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies, \$73,871,000 was expended in 2016. Could the Minister tell us how much of this money was spent by the region? How much was sent back to the Ministry of Health for their use to procure drugs? Were the money sent to the Ministry of Health the region got its money's worth in supplies and whether there were adequate?

Mr. Bulkan: Sir, I am advised that \$58 million of the budgeted sum of \$73 million was warranted to the central Ministry for the central procurement of drugs. The remaining \$16 million was expended within the region. I am advised that it is emergency needs mainly to do with treating... I do not know the medical name, but I am advised that it is referred to as *bush yaws*, perhaps the doctors... The second part of the question, the drugs that were supplied by the central Ministry the region advises that it is in accordance with what was requested.

Dr. Mahadeo: Could the Minister say whether the reports that he would have got from his regional officers indicate that the drugs and medical supplies for Region 9 were adequate for the needs for the region?

Mr. Bulkan: Yes.

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$412,535,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 795 - Health Services - \$74,500,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Project 2402300, Land and Water Transport: I know that the description projects entail purchase of motorcycles and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Could the Hon. Minister indicate how many motorcycles and ATVs and where would they be placed?

Mr. Bulkan: The information is that there are two ATVs and three motorcycles. There are all designated to be used in the South Pakaraimas. If the Hon. Member is familiar with the territory he would know it extends from Yurongperu to Taushida.

Dr. Mahadeo: Project 2505300, Furniture and Equipment – Health, description, “to purchase analyser.” What kind of analysers and solar systems? Where will they be placed? How many are we purchasing?

Mr. Bulkan: The provision caters for the acquisition of six 95-watt solar panels and these are for use in the central Rupununi. The other items to be acquired under this provision include for five foetal monitors, five electrocardiography (ECG) machines, ten foetal dopplers, ten blood pressure apparatuses, six crash cards, five suction machines, three diathermy machines and these are to be used in central, deep south as well as the delivery kits in Lethem, Aishalton and Karasabai.

Programme: 795 – Health Services - \$74,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

First Vice President and Prime Minister [Mr. Nagamootoo]: I move that this National Assembly be adjourned until Tuesday 20th December at 10 a.m. I wish my colleagues and friends on the other side of the House a happy sojourn to Essequibo. Come back in one piece.

Mr. Speaker: We stand adjourned until Tuesday, 20th December at 10 o' clock in the morning.

Adjourned accordingly at 10.56 p.m.