

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 9]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1982) OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER
THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

7th Sitting	2 p.m.	Monday, 1982-04-05
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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (77)

Speaker (1)

*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (64)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P.,
Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P.,
Vice-President, Works and Transport

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.
Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
Vice-President, Public Welfare

Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P.,
Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations

Senior Ministers (10)

Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,
Minister of Higher Education

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.,
Minister of Regional Development

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
Minister of National Development

*Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.,
Minister of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection

*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,
Minister of Energy and Mines – (Absent)

*Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

*Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs – (Absent)

*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture

*Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs – (Absent)

*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Education

*Non-elected Member

Ministers (8)

- Cde. U. E. Johnson, M.P.,
Minister of Co-operatives
- Cde. J. N. Maitland-Singh, M.P.,
Minister, Consumer Protection, in the Ministry of Trade
and Consumer Protection
- Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,
Minister in the Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of Economic Planning
and Finance
- Cde. R. E. Williams, M. P.,
Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry
of Agriculture
- *Cde. Y. V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister, in the Office of the Prime Minister
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister, Office of the President
- *Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M. P.,
Minister, Health, in the Ministry of Public Welfare

Ministers of State (3)

- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State for Culture, in the
Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of State for Youth and Sport,
in the Ministry of National Development
- *Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P.,
Minister of State for Construction, in the – (Absent)
Ministry of Works and Transport

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Women's – (Absent)
Affairs and Housing
- Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Education, Social Development
and Culture
- Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Foreign Affairs.

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
Cde. M. Armogan, M.P.
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.
Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.
Cde. E. B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.
Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.
Cde. H.B. Walcott-Nascimento, J.P., M.P., – **(Absent)**
Government Chief Whip

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 – Pomeroun/Supenaam)
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No.7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No.8 – Potaro/Siparuni)
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No.9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No.10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P. - **(Absent)**
Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P.,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P.
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.,
Minority Chief Whip
Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.
Cde. S. F. Mohamed, M.P.
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.
Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh, J.P., M.P. - **(Absent)**
Mr. M. A. Abraham, M.P.

OFFICERS

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

PRAYERS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1982

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1982.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: We will commence and proceed with the consideration of Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1982 as was agreed. We will deal first with the Heads and Divisions for which the Prime Minister is responsible. We will therefore turn to Page 1 and Page 2 of the Estimates.

HEAD 1 – Office of the President and Cabinet

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,843,700 for Head 1, Office of the President and Cabinet, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Deman Persaud: I wish to draw to your attention that these Estimates were not prepared in of Standing Order and the general practice. I am referring to Standing Order 65 or Page 32.

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National Assembly

14:05 hrs

The Chairman: Go ahead.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Standing Order 65(1) states:

“On consideration of the Estimates of expenditure in Committee of Supply, each head of expenditure shall be considered with the appropriate details ...”

I want to stop there because that is the principal point. If you look at all the Estimates in the past and even if you look at the Estimates for as late as 1981 you will see that every item of expenditure was put in the Estimates in detail so that we will know for what purpose the particular sum will be used. But if I only deal with the heading Wages and Salaries, Appropriation, a bulk of \$958,500, we do not know as Parliamentarians who are the people who will receive the money.

The Chairman: Although you see \$958,500, if you look you will see Administrative \$30,000 and then it sets out other matters. And if you go right up to Supervisory Staff and you total \$278,000 right up to \$462,000 you will get \$958,500.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The point I was making there is that while you have got Administrative, you do not have the details like each person that occupies a position within the particular Ministry, their designations were placed on the Estimate and then you could have turned at the back of the Estimate to see what their salaries were. So if as Parliamentarians you wished to question the salary scale or any such thing you would have been able. Let us assume that the Government was moving to present a new form – there has been no explanation whatever – surely there could have been accompanying particulars probably attached to the Estimates to which Members of Parliament could have referred. But there are no such particulars and so we have to use our own imagination and our imagination will not take us to the point to see the details required for effective examination of the Estimates as is expected on this occasion, sir, with all due respect.

The Chairman: Cde. Vice President.

The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Hoyte): Cde. Chairman, my good friend Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud always plunges into the depths of matters legal and ends up by floundering. It is true that the Standing Orders speak of

appropriate details. But what are the details which could be considered appropriate? I spent a great deal of time in the presentation of the Budget Speech explaining the purpose of the change in the format. As early as 1979 I pointed out that the old format was not appropriate to our needs. A Member of Parliament does not want to know that there are two cooks and three cartmen in a Ministry. What the Member of Parliament wants to know are the following things: What is the structure of the Ministry; what is its organisation in relation to the tasks of the Ministry; what is the total employment cost; what is the total “other expenditure” or “other charges”, broken up appropriately so that he could compare the staff of the Ministry and the emoluments which are to be disbursed with the tasks of the Ministry. In other words, one has to be able to see from a management point of view how the Ministry and the whole Governmental system is working. One can put down fifty thousand names showing how many cooks there are, how many cartmen and how many charwomen. That is not for us at this time and in this place. We are trying to get away from the old system which was unhelpful and have presented a Budget in a format and with the details which make sense.

In fact, this Budget has more details which are important to a Member of Parliament and to the public than the old Budget. But as far as the narrow interpretation point is concerned, I think my friend has misread and misunderstood the Standing Orders.

Cde. Ram Karran: The hon. Vice President has already expressed a point of view which he said he had clarified in 1979 or thereabouts. I merely want to say, sir, that it is not only for Members of Parliament that this exercise is being done. But I, as an old man who have been in this Assembly for over thirty years, nearly half of my life, and have been accustomed to certain presentations, recognise that this does not at all help in placing the position as the Minister said, what the Member of Parliament wants. It is what the public wants.

Today, when there is so much retrenchment and all sorts of things, what has caused the Minister to hide the facts, even the additions of these pages have not been carried out, even the totals are not there. There are sub-totals. Look at it and see. Apparently you have not prepared your work. Look at the bottom and see. [Interruption]

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, address me please, let me make the ruling.

Cde. Ram Karran: What I am saying, sir, is that in these days when there is so much retrenchment and all of that going on what do we mean by Other Technical and Craft Skilled, Other Skilled Staff, Confidential Secretaries? Why is the Cde. Vice President, particularly in the top echelon of the Ministry, afraid to put the number of

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people and what are their designations. I remember some years ago when the Government wanted to appoint two persons to a certain post they made one a supernumerary. But if we had an exercise similar to what my friend is suggesting, there would be no explanation at all, although the Estimates would have been befuddled. No legislator, no matter how much experience he has got, would be able to follow this type of presentation. What is wrong with the old system?

Cde. Hoyte rose.

The Chairman: Cde. Hoyte, please take your seat, he is not finished.

Cde. Ram Karran: The position is that the old system in which the number of operatives or technicians were instituted in the column staffing provided for it. The totals were put down and everything was there for everybody. This sort of presentation is a new idea which seems to have come to the Vice President to hide the facts. When you go through this thing here and you look at the total here with the total money spent, you will find that even though they talk of retrenchment, even though they talk of reducing this and that, in some cases the 1982 Estimates are even more than the 1981 Estimates or the Revised Estimates for 1981, although the number of operatives and technicians and all sorts of fancy names he is trying to put on Civil Servants have been reduced.

The Chairman: Anybody else wishes to make further comments on this. I am not going to allow the Vice President to answer and then allow further discussion on it.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: As I was saying, it is not what the Government wants to do.

The Chairman: Are you going on to something new?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: No. I want to put it this way. It is what is the requirement contrary to what the Minister says, despite the fact that he is a lawyer. I am saying that the Standing Order makes it obligatory for details to be put into the Estimate and if the format is being changed it follows that the Standing Orders ought to be amended to cater for the new idea that the Minister is proposing and propounding to Parliament. You have not only the writing of the Standing Orders but you have precedent for a number of years and I feel on this occasion we are standing on firm ground. We can only make an effective contribution in dealing with an Estimate which requires us to be in possession of details if those details are available to us in the format or attached to the

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Estimates so that we can refer to it and properly represent our views on the details of the Estimates of expenditure.

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National Assembly

14:15 hrs

The Speaker: I would like to hear – what does this mean? Shall we consider with the appropriate details, it did not say shall be considered with details, but details are clarified by saying appropriate, there may be lots of details that are not appropriate or relevant.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I think Cde. Ram Karran was striking the hammer on the nail when he referred to the certificates and I remember it very clearly where there had to be two persons employed. I want to say that in the absence of details we will not know. For instance on the same page 11 Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff. Who are the people in the sense? What will be their position? What will be their designation? What will be their salaries – is it salaries equal? We cannot stretch our imagination. Surely the salaries may vary. We must be in a position to say that if a man is performing a particular function as a Parliament in accordance with the Constitution and Standing Orders require parliamentary sanction before payment etc can be effective and without those details we cannot contribute.

Cde. Hoyte: I would like my friend Cde. Ram Karran to put his money where his mouth is. He alleged that I have no book-keeping qualifications. That is unimportant because a politician does not have to have book-keeping qualifications. But is he willing to stand up and bet a thousand dollars? Well how much you have.

The Speaker: Cde. Hoyte don't worry with that.

Cde. Hoyte: I want him to put his money where his 'unqualified' mouth is.

Cde. Chairman, it is a pathetic performance that a seasoned member like Cde. Ram Karran has not taken time to study the estimates and forms before he launches into an attack. He says that people do not know how many employees there are in the various categories and yet the numbers are there. If one were to look at, I say Ministry of Information at folio 36, one could see that in the Administrative Section of the Ministry there are 11 persons employed, comprising one head of section, 5 senior policy and general administrative staff and so on right down. Every number is there. Then he says that I haven't done my work well because there are no totals. Yet if he had taken the time to look at these estimates and study them he would have seen every sub-total and every total.

He says the total is not at the bottom of the page. Who says the total must be at the bottom of the page? The sub-totals are set out and below there are the details. I wonder if he will be gracious enough to admit his error.

Cde. Chairman, it is so difficult to get out of the colonial mould. We had a type of estimates which was appropriate to a different kind of governmental organisation and a different set of governmental activities. I took a lot of time when preparing the Budget Speech to deal with this matter and I hope that my Comrades of the Minority Party would have read the section to understand what the new format is all about. The change in the style of the estimates is nothing that has come suddenly, this is something which was signaled since 1979 and every year since then there has been some change leading up to the far reaching changes in this year's format which provides a managerial approach to the formulation of the estimates (that is a matter for the government, that is not a matter for you) I said also, Cde. Chairman in the Budget Speech that it was to facilitate a better understanding by members of this House and the public and yet both Cde. Ram Karran and Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud got up and said that the estimates are not only for members of this House, but also for members of the public. I can only give an explanation, I cannot supply intelligence.

The Speaker: Cde. Persaud, at this stage I would not be able to say whether the budget details are appropriate or not. As it goes on I may be able to answer that question.

HEAD 1 – OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,843,700 for Head 1 – Office of the President stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Sub head 121, comes under Senior Policy and General Administration. Only that one.

Cde. Ram Karran: I would like to ask a small question Sir, on subhead 210, that is on page 2.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Single item Sir, 11 persons are employed. I would like to know if the eleven persons hold equal status, if their salaries are the same, if not what are the status of the eleven persons who constitute this particular head described in the estimates as Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff.

Cde. Ram Karran: I ask this question Sir on upkeep of the residence. It stands at \$220,000 although that is an increase of \$180,000 when the annual maintenance seem to have been around \$40,000 in the previous years. Why have we got such a big jump especially since I will observe later in the course of the estimates that another sum of money seem to have been set aside for similar work to residence.

The Prime Minister (Cde. Dr. Reid): Cde. Chairman, the number mentioned in this particular instance, eleven refers to Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff. That will be graded up from Permanent Secretaries down to Assistant Secretaries – the Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff, hence there will be differences in their individual salaries.

The other question is on the next page, Upkeep of Residence. In recent times Cde. Chairman, because of the problems in the Electricity Corporation and other like situations the upkeep of the residence has to be done in a different way so that there can be power at all times in certain places for the work that has to be done. Hence we have to get several small generators and things of that kind, pumps and so on to keep the work going and all this have been put under the upkeep of the residence and that is why we have this new amount upkeep of the residence.

Head 1 – Office of the President - \$2,843,700 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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14:25 – 14:35 hrs

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:25 hrs

HEAD 2 – GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$52,000,000 for Head 2, Guyana Defence Force, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, I note that there has been a reduction of expenditure under this Head.

The Chairman: Under what item are you talking?

Cde. Collymore: Under subheads 123 and 703. There is a reduction of \$10 million as compared with the estimates for 1981. What we on this side of the House would like to point out, where this particular Head is concerned, is that we are apprised of a plan by Government to increase the personnel in the Guyana Defence Force by 400, troops mainly. We are suggesting that the Government should desist from this. We are asking the Government to forego the hiring of more soldiers per se and we are saying that rather than hiring more soldiers it expands the People's Militia on a community basis.

On this side of the House we have been repeatedly calling for the expansion of the Militia and I personally have said in the general debate that you do not have to pay militiamen. If it is going to be on a community basis you are going to have a very adequate defence force. The Government will not have to pay fancy salaries. We know that a soldier's basic salary is \$326 and with 400 you will have a minimum of \$1.5 million. If you add all the other allowances and benefits it will come up to over \$2 million. It is an area of savings and we commend it to the Prime Minister.

We also ask the Prime Minister what steps are being taken by the Government to defer further reconnaissance flights by the Venezuelan air force --

The Chairman: No, no. We are dealing with the disciplined services, wages and salaries.

Cde. Collymore: I am coming to subhead 703, which deals with Defence. I have moved from 123. I should like to commend the Prime Minister and to ask him if the Government is taking the necessary steps. He does not have to give me details. Just give the assurance that the Government is taking steps to deter further reconnaissance flights.

The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, said in his Budget Speech that 80 such flights had taken place and one penetrated as far as Timehri. This is cause for alarm. We want to know what is being done because this is dangerous.

There is also another aspect of our defence potential that I would like to get into. We have received information that some of the personnel on the frontier are kept there for months and months and get home sick. They are then inclined to take radical and irrational decisions. My information is that there was a soldier who was there for six months and he wanted to come to town. The administration there refused permission. He threatened to open fire on the Venezuelans forces by using a heavy artillery piece. If he had not threatened to do that he would not have been brought to town. He was put on a plane to Georgetown and immediately S.O.S., that is, Struck off Strength. I should like the Prime Minister to enquire into this and find out what is going on there because we would not like any soldier on the border to open fire on the Venezuelans with heavy field pieces.

I should also like the Prime Minister to inform this House if there have been any casualties on the frontier. We have reports that several soldiers have been killed in clashes and the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, actually said that there have been incursions on our territory. If there have been incursions on our territory, I would assume that our G.D.F. soldiers would repel those incursions. I want to know if there have been any casualties because we have information that Guyanese soldiers have been killed.

Lastly, I should like the Prime Minister to say what is now the status of Brigadier McLean of the Defence Force. We on this side of the House do not 'buy' the story that he was attacked and choked and robbed.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, I shall begin with the last part. The Chief of Staff is still the Chief of Staff of the Guyana Defence Force and in charge of the Disciplined Services. As we all know, he was ill for some while and is still on leave but he is well on the road to recovery. I am informed that we have no casualties on the borders. That is an interesting circumstance. The discipline of the force is a matter for the Brigadier General, the Chief of Staff. He decides how he will deal with his men in minute details. I am not, I would say, qualified to interfere in that kind of exercise without having all the circumstances and all the details before me.

It is a serious problem to us when our neighbours overfly our territory and I am glad to know that the minority party is also interested in these overflights because they

can become very difficult for us. They can cause great disturbance for us, great frustration and great fear for our people. Thus we try to prepare ourselves.

This moves me on to his first question, so to speak. It is necessary for us to prepare ourselves as much as possible with men, materials and equipment. But in his first question he criticises this kind of expenditure. I would like him to know that we take care not only of the disciplined forces in the Guyana Defence Force but also the Guyana People's Militia and it is good to know how deep is his interest in words. I would just like him to transform those words into deeds so that we can expand the People's Militia. We still feel the need for this permanent force to give guidance and substantive direction, especially under our present circumstances and I do believe that now this is clear to our friends they will co-operate not in the interest of the Government but in the interest of this dear land of Guyana.

[Applause]

Head 2, Guyana Defence Force - \$52,000,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 4.

DIVISION 501 – PRESIDENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$33,500,000 for Division 501, President, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, we come here to the Guyana National Service and I should like to speak under subhead 3, National Service.

Under this subhead we see that the Service is seeking \$24.5 million. We note that in 1981 the sum of \$27.1 million was spent. In keeping with the trends set in the general debate I should like to propose that now is the time to scale down this cadillac style institution. We cannot afford it and I am suggesting to the Prime Minister that he should look into it to see whether heavy cuts cannot be made. For instance, at the time when this institution was set up we were getting over \$3,000 per ton for sugar. We cannot afford it now. It is too massive, too elaborate, too costly and the Government is saying it would like to save money, and cut down expenses.

We note that actually very little austerity has been practised here. From 1974 to 1982 this institution received \$175.7 million in taxpayers' money. In the same period of

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time that institution provided income of approximately \$7.8 million. It means that it is more or less a military institution and contrary to what the Government is saying it is also for training and commercial purposes. We are suggesting that the Government look into the National Service with a view to cutting down expenses severely. We on this side of the House are saying that Guyana does not need three armies. We are proposing that the Guyana Defence Force be the established standing army. We are also proposing a cheap people's army of the Militia. We are opposed to Guyana National Service being made into a third army. We are also saying that from figures which we have in our possession, it would appear as though our Guyana National Service is being camouflaged as something else.

National Assembly

14:35 hrs

Cde. Collymore: Now, we have some figures pertaining to 1977 and 1978 and it shows that the agricultural content in 1977 was 5.4 percent of the expenditures and the agricultural content in 1978 was 5.0 percent. It means therefore, that the agricultural content in 1977 was 94.6 percent, and in 1978 it was 95 percent.

Cde. Chairman, to give you absolute figures; in 1978 it was \$.4 million, \$400,00 and in 1977 \$.8 million, \$800,000. That is the agricultural content. That is where they are supposed to plant cotton, black-eye and other things, rear stock and so on. Therefore, what we have here is an army – a third army. This is why we are saying the time is now opportune to look into it to see whether severe austerities cannot be made.

We note also and we are going to ask that the Prime Minister give us, this Assembly, a progress report on the extent of the cotton production which is going on in the National Service. We want him to tell this Assembly what progress is being made, because we note that when the Government was expecting \$11.2 million last year from the National Service, they got \$2 million. For this year the Government is expecting \$1 million from the National Service. What is the extent of the production of cotton seed oil? What is the extent of the production of black-eye peas? What is the extent of the production of fish? We note that they have trawlers now. What is the extent of the other crops production? I would also like him to give us some information on the extent of the massive colossal waste of machinery left to rust at National Service camps. Cde. Chairman, that is all for the time being.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, I believe my friend over there is the shadow Minister for all this kind of thing. That is good. Congratulations to him.

Cde. Chairman, in the world in which we live we need to start early to prepare our young people for all sorts of activities. In the past our British masters did not need to do that because we lived on the periphery. Today we have to face the world as the people of Guyana would have to face it, not the British people facing it for us. If you travel around this world, in every country that has a purpose in this world, you will find them beginning very early to train their young people in every useful type of activity, and this is what the National Service is doing. It is interesting to see how much more is done in some other countries. But under our present circumstances, we must work with our own concrete situation and we cannot afford more than what we have stated in this Budget. It would be very dangerous if we see ourselves not being able to afford this and turning this money off to other things.

When I was in the United States at school, all the Americans in training with me were going through other training that was not available to foreigners. If you visit North Korea or any of those places, you will find the same thing happening. Some are training them and send them overseas to help people to do all sorts of jobs so that they can have experience. In like manner, we are now attempting to train our young people and we are trying to prepare them physically and mentally to come to terms with work at a very early age, and this is part of the preparation. In that preparation, there is a necessity to do as well, some military exercise, and we make no apology for that. It is good for our young people to go through some little experience of military discipline. With that, we are doing agricultural and some other technical activities and they learn to handle machine, to do mechanic work, to try to service all those machines and so on, as well as they learn industrial activities. For instance, in the cotton industry, there is not only cotton growing, but there are ginneries and they have to learn to operate them. It takes time to learn all this kind of thing, and it will cost us something trying to train our young people, but we cannot afford not to teach our young people. I would wish that we could have done more for our young people, some of them who have had no opportunity to go to school, and this is their only chance. Hence, they do work there. But it is also useful that in their learning experience, they have under cultivation now, some 2,000 acres of cotton.

For people who are learning to develop their country and learning to grow some of the crops which have become new in this time, that is for me, an achievement because you must begin at some point. In the black-eye production, we are trying to grow the pulses. We will mention some of the pulses we have under cultivation. We have 800 acres of black-eye, in peanuts, we have 100 acres, and I think if you travel around the country you will find them with the largest acreage growing in any one crop in any one place. So we should support them in any way we can and do not try unduly to criticise these young people and so damage their determination and their courage. It is the young people who have engraved in the rocks of Tumatumari. “We can’t lose.” We must support them so that we do not lose.

Division 501 – President - \$33,500,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 5.

HEAD 3 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC CORPORATIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$29,800 for Head 3, Ministry of Public Corporations stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Chairman, once again in keeping with the general trend in the General Debate on this side of the Assembly, we would like to move complete deletion of the monies referred to in subhead 110. I am speaking on subhead 110, subhead 121 and 161. Cde. Chairman, we querying the reasons and the rationals behind this Ministry of Public Corporation in view of the financial strictures now prevailing in the economy. We are saying that this Ministry should be dismantled. We note that the Ministry is counterposed to the Guyana State Corporation and we do not see the rational and we do not see any reason for it to continue to exist at this time. We note also that there is a Ministry of Public Service. I will come to that later. That is counterposed to the Public Service Commission. We on this side say this is gross waste and this is where we can make cuts. This is the reason why we are urging that it be deleted. We feel that the Government should consider scrapping the two Ministries. Scrapping Guystac --

The Chairman: Cde. Collymore, we are dealing with this one. When we come to Guystac if there is such a Head, we will deal with it.

Cde. Collymore: We are moving on this side of the Assembly, the deletion of \$29,800 for the Ministry of Public Corporations as being totally and absolutely unnecessary.

Cde. Ram Karran: Before the Prime Minister replies, I want to make this observation, that this head of establishment seems to have only entertainment allowances to play with. There is no other operatives or technician or anything. What does he do all day, just play with the allowances? I second the motion, moved by my friend.

The Prime Minister: I thought you were saying something, I did not know that you were just seconding the motion. Since it is my flexibility to accept or not to accept, I wish to inform the Assembly that I do not wish to accept the motion.

1982-04-05

14:45 – 14:55 hrs

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:45 hrs

HEAD 3 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC CORPORATIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$29,800 for Head 3, Ministry of Public Corporations, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 3 – Ministry of Public Corporations - \$29,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 10 – PUBLIC AND POLICE SERVICE COMMISSIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$533,170 for Head 10, Public and Police Service Commission, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short question. In this Estimate we are talking about detail and there is no explanation. If you look at 121 you will see that in 1981 we had 18 and in 1980 as well – Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff. My observation is that that number has been reduced to one. I am sure that that kind of cutting of staff, this is more than proning and trimming this is slashing. It requires an explanation and I think a little legend on the right hand side would have helped us. Is it that when these people were there they were not working, they had no work to do? What is the position now that you have dropped seventeen people and retained one?

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, the P.N.C. Government is determined that we have as much training as possible for our people and so when circumstances were different there was a large number of persons who had to undergo training. With our present difficulty only one is identified for 1982 and I trust that while we cannot have that large number some of the training will be done on the job with other workers who need training. So they will spend this year doing on-the-job training attachments and so on. We can only afford to train one person normally.

Head 10 Public and Police Service Commission - \$533,170 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 26.

DIVISION 505 – OTHER SERVICES NOT UNDER MINISTERIAL CONTROL

Question proposed that the sum of \$150,000 for Division 505, Other Services not under Ministerial Control, stand part of the Estimates.

Division 505, Other Services Not Under Ministerial Control - \$150,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 27 and 28

HEAD 13 – OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,416,300 for Head 13, Office of the Prime Minister, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ramkarran: I want to ask a few questions on the following head – Upkeep of Residence (Prime Minister). I would like to know where this house is.

The Chairman: Please tell me what you are talking about.

Cde. Ramkarran: 210, Sir. Where is the honourable Prime Minister's house and if we have to maintain the President's house why do we have to maintain the Prime Minister's house, and if we do does the Prime Minister receive an allowance for his home, and is this the Green house? The second question is, we have a subhead, Emergency Expenditure of \$175,000. What is the emergency expenditure? You do not budget for emergency. Do you? Then we have further down on 278 – Remuneration of Staff – Prime Minister's residence. What staff are we talking about? Is it clerical, operative or technical staff? Or is it the cooks and bottle-washers?

The Prime Minister: Cde. Chairman, if the Government of Guyana or the country of Guyana has a Prime Minister then we must have some staff to assist in some of the things that have to be done and so he is right. We must have some domestic staff. That is easy to answer. Cde. Chairman, on the other question – emergency expenditure, it is difficult to detail that because you know somethings that happen so haphazardly and you must be in a position to have the means of using some funds for any emergency that occurs. In the communities people sometimes get into difficulties and they might have little projects that need a little stimulation. The Prime Minister needs to be able to do something in his own right as given to him through the Budget. The other one, Upkeep

of Residence. Fortunately for the people of Guyana I have been living in my own house. There is a residence identified for the Prime Minister but under our present circumstances we cannot afford to have that residence and I am given a normal allowance like any other person for the residence at Supply. So that money that is put down there has not been used for the Prime Minister. It is in the Treasury. Thank you.

Head 13 – Office of the Prime Minister - \$1,416,300 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 15 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$6,169,500 for Head 15 – Public Service Ministry, stand part of the Estimate.

Cde. Collymore: I rise to speak on all the subheads pertaining to this particular Head 15. I would like to move the deletion of the sum of \$6,169,500 for this particular head. Cde. Chairman, we are saying on this side of the House that when this particular sum is taken in company with sums allocated for capital expenditure it is a fantastic amount to spend on this Ministry and we are saying that this Ministry is useless and all the aspects of the Ministry pertaining to what is necessary could be done by Public Service Commission and by the Ministry of Education, whatever aspect could be taken out of this Ministry which is necessary, scholarships, etc. could be done by the Ministry of Education and training could be done by P.S.C. and we are saying therefore, there is not need for this expenditure to be incurred and I therefore move the deletion.

The Chairman: I am advised that you cannot move the deletion. You can only vote against the Head.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: You can move a reduction.

The Chairman: That Motion has gone already.

Head 15 – Public Service Ministry - \$6,169,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 35.

1982-04-05

14:45 – 14:55 hrs

DIVISION 508 – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karram: I wish to identify items 1 and 3 and if I may continue, my friend may want to speak afterwards, the honourable Prime Minister a minute ago has been telling us about training. They are training at National Service, they are training people in the Prime Minister's office and here we have a whopping amount of nearly 2-2½ million dollars – scholarships and training courses.

(Cde. Ram Karran continues)

I have no quarrel about training people because we need to train people for the development of our country. But it would seem to me that this is a new item. Perhaps it was shown elsewhere in previous Estimates or is it that the Government has now gotten up and found that there is need for this whopping sum to be used for training in a year of austerity, as my friend said, in a year when thousands of people are retrenched and thrown out of their jobs.

We go further to subhead 3, Public Sector Manpower Training. We have nearly \$1 million where none was spent before. The legend states: “To provide for a Public Sector Manpower training programme.” Aren’t we over-training? These large sums of money could have been used to provide food for the mouths of empty bellies of a large number of children who are suffering from their parents being retrenched aside from the large numbers of those who will be coming out of school. We must train people but we must train with some justification of the need. Is it that the Government has thought of all these things and still decide, contrary to what is best to the community, to spend such a large sum of money for training? In the course of these Estimates we will come across other training programmes. I think the hon. Prime Minister or whoever is speaking for this Head ought to be able to explain to the Assembly the great need for this whopping sum of money to be spent under this Public Service Ministry.

My friend in speaking on the general issue has mentioned – and you will recall – that this is something new, the Public Service Ministry. The Public Service was administered by the Ministry of Finance in years gone back. In fact, before that, it used to be done by the Financial Secretary and Treasury. It is true that our Service has expanded, but has it expanded to the extent that we will spend \$15 million on just the Public Service Ministry. Aren’t we going a little too far?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 1, Scholarships and Training Courses – Foreign. I want to ask the Minister whether those people who have been given foreign scholarships are returning bearing in mind that some time ago in Parliament that question was raised. I think it was also published in the press that some people who received scholarships and probably entered contracts with the Government were not returning to the country. I have not read or heard in the Parliament whether this situation has changed and whether, in view of the Government’s experiences in the past, whether greater care and greater caution are exercised in allocation of scholarships to people.

Cde. Ram Karran made the point that people are being retrenched. In view of the fact that people take scholarships, I am wondering whether greater care and caution should not be exercised and whether that situation has improved or it has worsened, whether court proceedings have been instituted and whether there has been any result in those proceedings.

The Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister (Cde. Y. Harewood-Benn): To answer the last question, we have been monitoring the situation and, in fact, I have to report an improvement. The Members of the Minority would have been seeing, I think, in consecutive Sundays newspapers the information that we have gotten back accountants, engineers and so on. As a matter of fact, we have gotten a 72 percent return last year which is a definite improvement and an increase. So our measures have taken fruit. I think, though, they will bear even more fruit if everybody concerned would indicate that it is a good thing to come back to Guyana, the land of our birth and positive efforts should not be made to discourage people. You know people do that for their own ends.

On subhead 1, I am happy to indicate that not one cent of that \$2.4 million represents money that we have to spend. That is just imputed cost of awards that we get. We take training very seriously. We are going to spend as much as we can possibly afford on it because it is a long term investment for the benefit of our country. Again, I would like to assure Members of the Minority right now that the \$2.4 million is an imputed cost, we do not have to spend any money. We have put it there towards the over-all cost of our training.

Similarly, subhead 3, again that is money that was given to us under the USAID programme. Incidentally, that programme closes this year. Neither of the two subheads mentioned really would deprive any of our children of anything that they need, anything that they deserve.

The Chairman: Cde. Ram Karran, if you had read the legend you would have seen that.

Division 508, Public Service Ministry - \$15,653,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 36 to 38.

HEAD 16 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,433,600 for Head 16, Ministry of Information, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: I wish to refer to subheads 259, 260, 305 and 701. On subhead 259, Publishing and Publicising, I wish to draw the responsible Minister's attention to the fact that were we to look at 1979 and 1980 and up to the approved Estimates of 1981 there seems to be some regularity in the spending incurred under this subhead. But in the Revised Estimates, I notice that there was a hefty increase for last year 1981 of some \$972,000 for publishing and publicising. I notice also in the 1982 Estimates that the Government is requesting \$600,000 for publishing and publicising which amounts to exactly \$130,000 more than was requested in 1980. It seems to me that this increase that is reflected in the Revised Estimates should be explained in view of the fact that it is so huge. The increase required for 1982 also would require an explanation primarily because such expenditure, in my opinion, does not reflect and coincide with the difficulties and hard times Guyana is presently experiencing. In fact, I wonder if the Government would be substituting for food more propaganda, much of which is unnecessary. I am not saying to delete it totally, but I think this is an area where we can very well do with some less expenses because, as one of my colleagues pointed out, there are a lot of people who are in tears and short of food. I do not think one can really justify this steep increase in expenditure just for publishing and publicising.

I also think the same argument holds good for subhead 260, Public Relations Programme. Below subhead 261 Advertisement, you will that several items in italics have not been properly explained though there is no vote for money in those directions. In other places in the Estimates one would find, for example, expenditure for the Guyana News Agency --

The Chairman: What you are talking on, not subhead 261?

Cde. Mohamed: Not 261.

The Chairman: Well let us go on to subhead 305.

1982-04-05

15:05 – 15:15 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:05 hrs.

(Cde. Feroze Mohamed continues)

Cde. Chairman, the legend on 305 says that subhead 6 of 1981 is being reflected now, under that subhead I notice that what was required last year was for library and publications and the sum required was \$5,000, now with another name, print and non-print materials. I notice that \$230,000 is being required as steep increase from the \$5,000 that was requested in 1981 and naturally this would necessitate an explanation since the legend definitely does not explain why this increase should be given and if you turn to 701 contribution to international organisations. The explanatory note says that part of that contribution goes to News Agency to the tune of \$114,500. The last time we understand that the News Agencies are made up primarily of the I.P.S. the A.P. and probably one or two others. I am not questioning that this year, though I think it should be questioned. I am asking now if against the background of an acute foreign exchange problem facing Guyana resulting in so much hardships for our people, whether the Minister would not consider this expenditure for news agencies or with a mind to save foreign currency to help us out in this particular moment because I do not think there is tremendous value or advantages for us to send this huge amount just for news agencies purposes and I wish to ask and invite the Minister responsible to say whether they would not want to consider saving some foreign exchange by having another look at this matter.

Cde. Benn: Cde. Speaker, on the first 259, I have to make a correction. The note says see note below and the note reads provided for under subhead 21. In the 1981 estimates it should in fact read provided for under subhead 34 in the 1981 estimates, that means 259. In reference to the Official Gazette, we have had to increase its cost, we have to recover the cost of the Official Gazette, it costs \$10.25 per copy to print and since we are thinking in terms of self reliance we are asking that the people pay the correct price so that to the Official Gazette.

Next, 260 Public Relations Programme. You are saying that there is an increase. Is there really? I am not so sure that it is. I do not think there is an increase, in fact there is a decrease if I am seeing correctly.

The Speaker: I think what he wants to draw your attention to is that in 260 the approved estimates was \$300,000 and the revised estimates was \$1,90,000.

Cde. Benn: There was an acceleration, I think I mentioned that in this Assembly some months ago when a similar question was asked. You know the exercises that have had to be carried out. We have had to acquaint and alert and educate and inform our people especially about Venezuela, a situation that Cde. Collymore recognises very very seriously now. We had to spend some more money on that, perhaps this year we would have wanted to spend even more, but again in terms of recognising the situation we have had to scale down.

The next one 305. The note reads provided for under subhead 6, please add in subhead 9 and 23. I think that will explain it, subhead 6, 9 and 23. On the question of 701, the Comrade indicated that he did not see the need and necessity. Here I think we will have to differ on the question of importance of subscribing to these organisations. I think that they are useful, they are necessary and sometimes there are things Cde. Speaker, that despite the paucity of funds that we cannot afford not to do. When we subscribe to IPDC, ITT and other institutions like that we have to keep ourselves informed, remember we are living in an interdependent world, so while you may out of your wisdom consider that it is not necessary. I really have to disagree with you. We have examined the pros and cons and we have found that it is necessary.

The Chairman:

HEAD 16 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,433,600 for Head 16, Ministry of Information stand part of the Estimates.

Head 16, Ministry of Informatin - \$5,433,600 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 39.

DIVISION 509 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$400,000 for Division 509, Ministry of Information stands part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: On subhead number 2 – production of film and film units. Here again it is something which I have been speaking about for a long time but during the section dealing with current expenditure I notice that there has been a drastic reduction of expenditure in areas pertaining to the film section. I notice here also that you have a reduction, but I wish to advise and invite the Minister to consider a further reduction

because here too you would require foreign exchange to bring in films and film units. I am saying to keep whatever you have going. You may find it useful to bring in films for the film unit but I am saying further, save a little exchange because you need that for other directions more beneficial and I wish to invite the comment from the Minister responsible for that.

Cde. Benn: Cde. Speaker, let me assure the honourable member we are as aware of the problem of money scarcity and we recognise the foreign exchange constraints. We are not going to do anything that will exacerbate the situation.

DIVISION 509 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$400,000 for Division 509, Ministry of Information stand part of the Estimates.

Division 509 – Ministry of Information - \$400,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

1982-04-05

15:15 – 15:25 hrs

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

15:15 hrs

HEAD 42 – MINISTRY OF WORKS

Question proposed that the sum of \$10,592,900 for Head 42, Ministry of Works, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: I just want to make the observation which I made earlier, namely, that this and several other Heads are bereft of explanation. You quite rightly pointed out to my attention, Your Honour, at one stage that I did not read the legend, but here we have no legend at all.

The Chairman: You can't read anything.

Cde. Ram Karran: That is what makes it necessary for the hon. Minister to try to assist this side of the House. For instance, subhead 126 is partly for Juniors, Apprentices and Learners of Buildings Trades, Maintenance and Custodial Services. I should like him to explain what he means by "custodial services", whether we are taking care of the prison warders and so on. I notice that lower down the page, under Other Charges, they seem to have discontinued the subheads Issues of Stone, Issues from Unallocated Stores and --

The Chairman: Let us go on to the next subhead, Materials, Equipment, Supplies, if you have a question to put.

Cde. Ram Karran: I have no question.

The Chairman: There is only one question then?

Cde. Ram Karran: I want to ask the Minister whether the policy is to run down the Central Stores because we seem to be running down the employment opportunities. We are setting up companies. Are these companies going to keep stock of stores and so on?

The Chairman: Cde. Vice President, there is one question – custodial services.

The Vice President, Works and Transport (Cde. Naraine): Custodial services, security services. Cde. Ram Karran is quite correct. There are no Central Stores now.

Head 42, Ministry of Works - \$10,592,900 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 108.

DIVISION 526 – MINISTRY OF WORKS

Question proposed that the sum of \$12,010,000 for Division 526, Ministry of Works, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: Sir, I want to ask a question.

The Chairman: Call the subheads.

Cde. Ram Karran: Subheads 8 and 24.

Subhead 8, Institution Building. We are told that it is “To provide for the construction of highway laboratory, repair of mechanical equipment and training of technicians”. I should like to ask the hon. Minister if it is not a duplication, because I am aware of the fact – and I think the Minister is aware of the fact – that there was in the Ministry of Works a laboratory for examination of materials for road construction. Only a few weeks ago I was at the University of Guyana where I saw them carrying out exercises similar to the type of exercises that would be carried out in the examination of material for road construction. I wonder if we are not spreading our wings in too many directions. Perhaps the University of Guyana might be able to carry out some of these experiments. What has happened to the road laboratory which was sited at Kingston a few years ago? This is again a whopping sum of nearly three-quarters of a million dollars, but it seems to deal both with Mechanical Equipment and Training of Technicians.

You know, sir, that this House has frowned on omnibus votes. You yourself have on several occasions expressed the view that Ministers ought to give the House proper guidance. How much of this three-quarters of a million dollars will be used for the building, how much for the laboratory and how much for the repairs of mechanical equipment? How much for the training of technicians?

I drew your attention, sir, to a large sum of money which the hon. Prime Minister explained was for the acquisition of a lighting plant and lighting plant pumps so as to keep the Residence where the President lives with all those amenities, but I notice that

another large sum – in fact, a larger sum of \$300,000 – is to be voted “To provide for works on the Residence and Office of the President”. Is this not a duplication? Maybe the hon. Vice President – we have so many of them – overlooked this they put it in twice. I hope that it is an error so that this money can be used to provide some food for the empty stomachs.

The Chairman: Vice President Naraine.

Cde. Naraine: Cde. Chairman, there is a small material laboratory at Kingston in the Ministry of Works and there was also a smaller one at Ruimveldt where bituminous material was tested but, because of the expansion in road construction and the need to do other types of tests on materials for construction of sluices, building, drainage and irrigation projects and because there was need for the laboratory to do work for even private persons who may need services on soils from time to time, it became necessary for these two laboratories to be combined into one and for them to be given much larger accommodation. The new building therefore was included in what might be called a sort of omnibus project which was financed by U.S.A.I.D. This was to upgrade many facilities in the Ministry of Works and Transport and also Plant Maintenance and Hire Division. It included for this building and new equipment to be put in the laboratory. This building is being constructed at Sophia.

Sophis – The repair and rehabilitation of a number of pieces of equipment – heavy duty equipment mainly – and the training of operators, mechanics and other supervisory staff in the Ministry.

The question of the University having a laboratory, that is also true, but that is mainly a laboratory for teaching, while this laboratory is mainly a bread and butter laboratory where work is being done mainly in relation to construction.

The details that Cde. Ram Karran asked for are as follows:

Repairs and Rehabilitation of Equipment: As I said these are heavy pieces of equipment – large draglines, bulldozers, bitumen plant, etc. There will be 26 pieces to be repaired at a cost of \$2.51 million. There is upgrading of a number of workshops and some money will be allocated for the purchase of some tools for these workshops. This will account for \$3.64 million. The highway laboratory just mentioned will get \$1.05 million. Training of approximately 750 persons will cost \$300,000. There is a grant for the payment of the consultants who are supervising the project and who will be utilised

particularly on training and mechanical repairs. That will be \$1.64 million. These give a total of \$7.2 million in loans and \$1.64 million in grant.

In relation to the Residence and the Office of the President, this is a capital subhead. The other subhead we had was for the operation and maintenance of certain facilities necessary for the Residence. This subhead is under Capital and it is for some improvements that are necessary and some rehabilitation work at the Residence. It is also to finish off some minor work at the Office of the President.

Division 526, Ministry of Works - \$12,010,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

1982-04-05

15:25 – 15:35 hrs

National Assembly

15:25 hrs

The Chairman: Pages 110 and 111.

HEAD 43 – MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,986,000 for Head 43, Ministry of Transport stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: May I raise a short question sir, on page 111, subhead 404? The Minister has in the legend sir, “provided for under Head 46, subhead 18 in the 1981 Estimates”. He says here, sir, “Road Traffic and Soil Survey” but now it is Maintenance of Roads. Isn’t there some difference?

Cde. Naraine: It should be 28 instead.

Cde. Ram Karran: I see. But the Minister can perhaps explain why the maintenance cost has gone up half a million dollars.

The Chairman: Cde. Vice President.

Cde. Naraine: Cde. Chairman, the increase on this Head is mainly because there are a number of roads in the Georgetown area maintained by the Central Government. For instance, we have Vlissengen Road, Sheriff Street, Kitty Avenue, Ruimveldt Avenue, Home Stretch Avenue, Carifesta Avenue, and some of these roads need maintenance and extensive repairs, and it is hoped that during this year we will have those heavy maintenance done on them.

Head 43, Ministry of Transport - \$2,986,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 113 and 114.

HEAD 45 – CIVIL AVIATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,113,000 for Head 45, Civil Aviation stand part of the Estimates.

Head 45, Civil Aviation - \$3,113,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 116.

DIVISION 528 – MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT

Question proposed that the sum of \$20,088,000, for Division 528 stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Deman Persaud: I would like to speak on subhead 3 and 4. On subhead 3, sir, the Fort Island stelling needs more than repairs. I am sure the Vice-President will concede that point. Adventure is in a very bad way. My response to the provision is that it will undoubtedly prove inadequate to deal with what they feel is a very serious situation, bearing in mind that the lives of people are involved everyday in the use of these stellings. I am sure the Vice President has visited these areas and he knows what I am talking about. At Fort Island, I recall someone telling me that one of these days you will hear the boat pulling the whole stelling away – to put it in the people's language. I think a serious examination should be made of all our stellings and specifically those which have been identified in the Estimates.

On subhead 4, sir, Reconditioning of Ships. I think our ferry services are in shambles. Right now, the ferry boat that operates between Georgetown and Vreed-en-Hoop, on many occasions, that boat has to be pulled by tugs and what have you. My information – and reliable – is that on many days the boat is being worked on one engine only. I am sure the Government has – the time has reached and probably passed when the Government should have had a comprehensive look at our ferry services throughout the country. Not only is the boat overcrowded, despite the fact that we have got the bridge, but the boat itself is found to be in a very bad shape and in bad condition. If I may speak for the people on Essequibo after very strong representatives – several letters from the people on Essequibo – The Mallali is leaking, the hull is leaking. That is information gotten from the passengers in the boat. The people are put to tremendous inconvenience boarding that boat at the wee hours of the morning. Sometime ago two boats used to operate between Adventure and Parika. I understand currently it has been reduced to one. I am also informed, Cde. Chairman, that on Sundays there was a mid-night boat. A 12 0'clock boat as it was described. I understand that that service has been discontinued. That has been my information as recent as last evening. We are very concerned about these media of transportation bearing in mind that we must not isolate

Essequibo from the Capital. I am sure that all concerned would like to keep Essequibo close to Georgetown so that people will be in incessant contact and touch with us. But indeed Cde. Chairman, if they are not provided with the kind of facilities that are so vital to bring them to town when they have to come, surely those people are going to be pushed to greater depression and frustration. I would like to very sincerely, call on the Vice-President to look at these services.

The Berbice, Cde. Chairman, is very inadequate. Sometimes you pontoons, and sometimes you do not have them. On many occasions the lines to get to the Berbice ferry is really frustrating. Something has to be done, and what I think we need at this point --

The Chairman: Yes, but we are talking about the re-conditioning of ships. That is not talking about ships, yes, Cde. Naraine.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Is reconditioning of the ships and probably provide additional ships and greater services.

The Chairman: That is somewhere else.

Cde. Naraine: Cde. Chairman, in the sum provided, \$300,000 for Stelling, what is proposed this year would be to finish the Adventure Stelling and to do some minor repairs at Stanley Town and Fort Island. I accept that Fort Island needs some major works, but regrettably we would not be able to do that this year because of the constraints on funds. I had met the Regional Chairman and some of the people at Fort Island sometime ago and we were hoping to work out some self-help project whereby we could do some improvements, particularly to the facilities for the farmers since the major complaint, as I understand, concerns the facilities for shelters for the farmers when they bring their produce to Fort Island to catch the steamer. I am still hoping that we will be able to do this work on a self-help basis. We accept that extensive work will have to be done on Fort Island and as the funds are available, this will be done.

The reason why we have to proceed with Adventure is because that work was started last year and one of the buildings is not yet fully roofed. So this work has to be completed. In relation to the re-conditioning of ships, I would like to inform Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud that the Kurupukari is due for major over-haul this year and two reasons why it has not gone into dry dock as yet are one because of the availability of dry docks, there seems to be a queue up for ships to go into the dry dock.

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(Cde. S. Naraine continues)

The second reason is that all the spare parts for the engine have not yet arrived. As soon as these parts are here and available arrangements will be made to dock the ships and have it properly repaired. We do not anticipate that very major work will be done on Pomeroun and North Cote this year. But major work will be done on the Kurupukari and these would flow into next year for completion. I would like to explain a question that was raised in relation to the Boat, Makouria. It is intentioned that two large boats should run the Parika/Adventure and Parika/Leguan run but the Mallali had extensive damage done to one of its rudders and though it is still running between Leguan and Parika on one engine we could not run it to Adventure because it is a more winding route with a lot of sand-banks and we may very well lose the second rudder. But a rudder is being manufactured at G.N.E.C. and as soon as that rudder is replaced it will go back to the Parika/Adventure run. In the meanwhile we will see whatever additional steps need to be taken on all the routes because you will notice this year, as the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance said the Transport and Harbours Department has to see its own way and, therefore, it will be seeking out revenue from wherever they can. Thus if there is need to run additional trips and get additional revenue I am sure that Department will do so.

Question proposed that the sum of \$20,088,000 for Division 528, Ministry of Transport stand part of the Estimates.

Division 528 – Ministry of Transport - \$20,088,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 117 – 119.

HEAD 47 - PLANT MAINTENANCE AND HIRE DIVISION

Question proposed that the sum of \$6,804,900 for Head 47 – Plant Maintenance and Hire Division, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 47 – Plant Maintenance and Hire Division - \$6,804,900 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 120.

DIVISION 529 – PLANT MAINTENANCE AND HIRE DIVISION

Question proposed that the sum of \$9,900,000 for Head 529 – Plant Maintenance and Hire Division, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Ram Karran: I would like to ask the honourable Minister to look at subhead 403 on page 118.

The Chairman: We are on page 120 now.

Cde. Ramkarran: I am dealing with rehabilitation of mobile mechanical equipment and ask the Minister to look back on that item that we have passed and in looking over the whole thing whether a mistake has not been made. All over the place. What has happened? The P.N.C. has broken up everything. Everything is being rehabilitated, even the President's House. Mobile mechanical equipment. What is this? We are spending \$1,600,000 to rehabilitate. All through the Estimates we have got rehabilitation. Is the honourable Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance really examining what is taking place in this country. Sir, when you spend other people's money you must be very careful. I think the Public Works Department, as we used to call it in the old days the Public Waste Department ...

The Chairman: A Ministry which you headed at one time.

Cde. Ramkarran: With respect to Number 3 we are told by the honourable Prime Minister that we are training people in National Service to handle equipment and big machines. We were told by the Vice-President for Works that we are training people. We know we have the Technical Institute in New Amsterdam. We have one in Georgetown and we propose to build one in Essequibo. I am not opposed to training. I think this is a little bit of Empire Building. Everybody wants to train because there is a lot of money in it. What is this training? We are told in several heads below there. Now Craft Training Centre. Where is this going to be? This is a virtually new, only a few years ago. What is happening? You spent \$3,000,000 in 1981. The Revised Estimates say \$2,000,000. You have other money to spend. What are we spending this for when people do not have work? The first thing to do is to find food for them.

Purchase of equipment, Sir, Item 4. For whom? For what? What sort of equipment? This is Plant Maintenance and Hire Division. The Minister who left this Ministry was telling me the other day he got all the old vehicles running on the road. In

fact he is proud of his own. We still want to buy vehicles for a Plant. The Plant should make vehicles, not buy vehicles. I do not know what is happening. This is really Empire building on the part of the honourable Minister. I guess as you go higher and become Vice-President you have got to spend more money, even if the money is not there.

Cde. Naraine: The rehabilitation of mobile mechanical equipment is what it says – the rehabilitation of this equipment. I think Cde. Ramkarran, when referring to another item referred to the operation and maintenance. Now, in relation to the Craft Training Centre this sum of money is mainly for building and certain facilities that we have to put at this training centre. We are very anxious also about training being given in other institutions. I would like to point out that this training is going to be operated very closely in relation to Coldingen Workshop Complex and it is not a duplication of training given at one of the technical institution. Here the training will be for more matured operators, people who will be operating the big machinery costing ½ - ¼ million dollars. Also as equipment becomes more and more improved there is need for training people as to the need for these new types of equipment. Coldingen will be manufacturing parts also. We will not reach the stage where we will be putting cars on the assembly line but we are manufacturing parts for equipment and here again we have to train people.

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So this is training of a more mature type and is very necessary. It will be worked in conjunction with other training institutions that we have established throughout the country.

I would like to mention, Cde. Chairman a thing that we do not really recognise. The value of mobile equipment in the country is probably worth more than \$1 billion and when we put up a few little workshops here and there you cannot call them empires. A comment was made that many pieces of equipment along the roadside are not repaired. The fact is that we do not have the capacity in terms of trained people, in terms of workshops and in terms of spare parts to do so. Now we are making an attempt to provide the workshop facilities and to train the people and to manufacture some of the spare parts we need so that we can get rid of this deficiency that presently exists.

The last question is on the purchase of vehicles. In any fleet there will be need for replacement of vehicles as they become too old to carry on, so this modest sum is put here. The cost of a land rover may be \$70,000 and the cost of a car is over \$30,000. We are thinking of more than a few vehicles. So it is not a mammoth number of vehicles we are going to purchase with this sum.

Division 529, Plant Maintenance and Hire Division - \$9,900,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 16 and 17.

HEAD 8 – AUDIT

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,293,600 for Head 8, Audit, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Narbada Persaud.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Chairman, under this Head I have one question, subhead 709, Staff Training and Adult Education. This deals with the sum of \$30,000. The legend states: “To provide for expanded training programme and preparation of audit manual which would be used for training. This question of preparing an audit manual has been in the air for some time. My question to the Cde. Vice President this afternoon is how early will the completion of the preparation of this manual take place? Is the officer who has been employed particularly for the preparation of this audit manual still employed and is he still involved in the preparation? If so, how long more will he take?

The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance (Cde. Hoyte): Cde. Chairman, the manual will be completed in the fourth quarter of this year. The officer who has been employed specifically to compile the manual is still in Government’s employment and his appointment will come to an end when his task is completed.

Head 8, Audit - \$2,293,600 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 147 and 148.

HEAD 60 – ECONOMIC PLANNING

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,079,000 for Head 60, Economic Planning, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. N. Persaud: Page 147, subhead 122, Economist. I wish to ask the Cde. Vice President to state whether both of these posts have been filled. If they have not been filled, how early he thinks he will get them filled. If the answer is in the affirmative then I wish to ask him to relate the filling of the vacancy with the sum of \$3,510.

Page 148, subheads 230 and 232. Subhead 230 deals with Consumer Expenditure Survey. I have in my notes here that last year when I spoke of this I was told by the Cde. Vice President that the work started on a new basket of items with a view to starting a new consumers’ index. My question to him this afternoon would be: is the work having been started since last year on the new basket of items, been completed? If the work is completed, then may I ask what is the present position in so far as the new consumers’ index is concerned.

Subhead 232, Population Census. I recall again asking last year specifically how early we would be able to be told in this country what our population is. You will recall

that the census was carried out in 1980. The answer given last year was that the analyses had to be done regionally and that was hoped to be completed during the year 1981. My question repeats itself this afternoon. First of all, is it completed? If not, how early? If it is completed, when will it be published?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 231, Agricultural Statistics. With the emphasis on local food and local production, I think there has been a complete absence of agricultural statistics in this country and this is a fact. We have been accustomed in this Assembly to getting Reports from the Agricultural Department giving certain statistics. When you are given a report you get an opportunity of analysing the performance locally in the country, in the production and all of that. I observe from this Estimate that the sum last year was \$99,400. It has been reduced to \$40,000. It means that the importance of statistics in the agricultural field is being de-emphasised. We need it. We would like the Vice President to tell us what is the position, if the statistics have been released and where the reports are to be obtained. I want to urge again that reports of this type ought to be made available to Members of this Assembly. We are entitled to it. We have not seen any. Last year I recall making that point and on to the current time I have not seen any report. It is extremely difficult to pick up accurate agricultural statistics.

The Chairman: Cde. Hoyte.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Chairman, the allocations under subhead 231, Agricultural Statistics, are made in relation to specific programmes every year. This year we are going to undertake two programmes. One would be a survey of the fisheries industry, that is, gathering data in relation to the fisheries sector, and the other relates to the livestock industry. I think Members must also bear in mind that there has been a great deal of de-centralisation and many of the people involved in activities in the regions who were formerly based at the centre are now physically in the regions and the allocations relating to them have been transferred to the regions. Under this arrangement, not only is there a greater regional involvement and a regional responsibility, but also a great saving in cost. The agricultural statistics are being gathered and I think it is true to say that with each passing year the techniques are being sharpened and the volume and quality of the data have been improving.

Let me deal with the questions raised by Cde. Narbada Persaud. The two posts of economists have not been filled. In fact, technically there is only one post vacant. The incumbent of the other post is on pre-retirement leave. We are not in a particular hurry to fill the post because there is a great deal of re-organisation going on both in the Ministry and within the State Planning Secretariat.

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(Cde. Hoyte continues)

We are establishing within the State Planning Secretariat, as I said in the budget speech, a capability to handle the project cycle. We are in collaboration with a Yugoslav firm establishing a project cycle unit. We have to ensure that we do not have any duplication of activity between the project cycle unit in the State Planning Secretariat and the work which the Economists will be doing in the Ministry of Economic Planning.

The member raised a question under subhead 230 – Consumer Expenditure Survey. This survey is ongoing. You do not compile a new basket, so to speak overnight. One has to do surveys, one has to do investigations, one has to gather a lot of raw data and those data have got to be refined. Also, there has to be a number of test on the ground, so to speak, before one can come out and say, well we have got a new set of goods and services that people buy which can serve as the foundation for a new C.P.I. This work is being done by the Statistical Bureau. In the course of this year we hope that the survey will be completed and the field work started.

Cde. Chairman, the member raised a valid question on the population census. I pointed out last year that the processing of the data was being done regionally. It was not being done in Guyana. It is being done at the Regional Centre in Barbados. We still have a lot of data. We cannot send that data until it is requested and the agency in Barbados apparently has not been able to cope with the flood of work which it has to do on behalf of all the Caricom countries. So we are patiently in the queue. I cannot tell him when the agency in Barbados will say to us that it is in a position to handle all the tons of paper we have piled up there in the Ministry. Thank you Cde. Chairman.

The Chairman:

HEAD 60 – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC PLANNING

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,079,000 for Head 60, Ministry of Economic Planning stand part of the Estimates.

Head 60 – Ministry of Economic Planning - \$3,079,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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Comrades, it is now four o'clock and we will take the suspension for thirty minutes.

Suspended accordingly at 16:00 hrs.

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On Resumption

Assembly in Committee of Supply

The Chairman: Page 149.

DIVISION 535 – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC PLANNING

Question proposed that the sum of \$9,258,000, for Division 535, Ministry of Economic Planning stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Chairman, subhead 9 and 11. It is noted on page 38 of the budget speech presented by the Vice President that the Bicycle Plant and the Leather Tannery have been completed. No mention however was made about the Shoe Factory and about the Cement Plant. At 9 I see request is being made for \$300,000 and the legend reads to pay liabilities for shoe and leather tannery equipment. I would like the Cde. Vice President to inform us this afternoon what is the position with the Shoe Factory. Whether it is completed or if it is likely to be completed very shortly. And I would also like to ask the Vice President that in pricing the finished product due consideration should be given to the cost of living in the country. Cde. Speaker, as far as 11 is concerned, we see again that the sum of \$60,000 is being sought here. I notice in the legend that it is stated to provide funds for outstanding payments to Reid Crowther and Guynec for cement project and supply study. The question again is similar. Cde. Chairman, what is the position with the Cement Plant, whether it is completed. If not, how soon it is likely to be completed.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, subhead 17, the sum requested here is \$2.5 million. I have always advocated from this side of the Assembly that if we can be self sufficient in anything, every encouragement should be given. I think the Vice President ought to give us a little bit more information with respect to this vote, bearing in mind that if this plant is to be successful we will require new materials. I think it is not unknown that the two existing mills of Weiting and Riether and I think Maharaja. They have got the capacity of refining our crude oil, but our importation bill is still large. Things like rice ban which probably will be used in this vegetable oil plant. I do not think we have adequate supply, if my information is correct and I am subject to correction. I understand rice bran is being exported to Trinidad for foreign exchange.

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That is my information. I am concerned particularly Cde. Chairman, because we do not want the vegetable oil plant to be a white elephant. My information too Sir, is that the Palm Oil Project is neglected. Some time ago there was move on probably a small hand operating plant which was set up there where the crude oil could have been refined right at Wauna.

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(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

We have not had any report nor is any mention made in this year's Budget Speech in respect of what progress has been made there. I am sure that all these factors --

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, let us deal with the vegetable plant.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I am just giving you the facts to show that if we had the plant that would be good but we need certain raw materials to be sure that the plant functions and they are not there. We are very concerned. I am sure that the Vice-President will be disposed to tell us exactly what the position is.

Cde. Ram Karran: If I may ask a very short question. This is in relation to subhead 19, where we are going to spend \$2 million on the State Planning Secretariat. In the legend we are told that it is transferred from Division 506 on page 29.

I want to make the observation that the State Planning Commission, of which we have been hearing so much in recent years, seems to be an organisation that has come to stay. In fact, they seem to be the people – we are hearing this all around – who stop increments and who are the super bosses over the Vice-President so far as financial matters are concerned. They seem to conduct incentive schemes and that sort of thing. Such an important body ought to have been put up in these Estimates in the same way as full-fledged departments so that we could see who are the technicians, the professionals, the manipulators – all the fancy words that the hon. Vice President used in these Estimates.

It would seem to me that \$2 million is a little too small an amount to provide for the strengthening of the planning capabilities. How many people are there now, aside from the professionals? Sub-head 19 is "To provide for the expenses of the Commission and Associated Organs". What are the expenses? Wages, salaries, travelling and meal allowances? What are the associated organs? I should think that the Associated Organs would more likely come under the Vice-President, Economic Planning, and his Ministry should carry it so that we could have a clear-cut idea of the expenses of this important – or unimportant – body. I don't know if the Ministry is going to decide this.

The Chairman: Cde. Hoyte.

Cde. Hoyte: Cde. Chairman, to reply first of all to the question raised by Cde. Narbada Persaud. The list of capital projects in the Budget Speech is meant to be illustrative. I do not intend – and never intended – to give a list of all the projects we are going to undertake this year in the capital programme. The leather tannery is completed, as I said, but the tannery project is separate and distinct from the shoe-making project. I hope, before we finish here, to bring some samples of the leather we are now producing at that tannery so that comrades could see the kind of work that is being done. The equipment for the shoe-making aspect of this project is here and this sum is requested to pay for the equipment. Work will proceed this year to finalise the shoe-making component of the project. I cannot say what the price of the product will be. That has to be governed by economic considerations. This is an economic enterprise which is being managed by Guyana Stores Limited, but I would hope, like the comrade, that the prices will be competitive in all the circumstances.

Subhead 11, Cement Plant. Comrades will recall that some years ago we undertook a study to establish the feasibility of establishing a cement manufacturing facility in this country. It was to be a joint project with the Government of Barbados. The project in the end was not considered feasible and was placed in abeyance. We cannot manufacture cement on our own because we have not yet found limestone deposits in this country. We have never discovered any. Maybe there are limestone deposits somewhere but, unfortunately, we have not discovered deposits to serve as a basis for cement manufacture.

One of the questions addressed by this study was that of importing clinker for grinding; but, here again, that is always a hazy proposition unless one can guarantee the source of clinker. We have not been able to guarantee any source. So the sum here is really to make the final payment for the study which has been commissioned.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud was correct when he said that there was at the moment excess capacity for manufacturing edible oil but I think we have to look beyond the present. The vegetable oil plant will be utilising not merely copra but rice bran, cotton seed and the wild nuts which we have in abundance in this country. [Interruption] Also oil palm and a variety of other inputs which the traditional mills, which are copra specific, cannot utilise.

In addition, comrades will know that there is a drive on now to encourage people to rehabilitate their coconut plantations and I think that the Cde. Minister of Agriculture may have something more to say about that. But we are looking forward to self-

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sufficiency based on utilisation of all the resources we have for edible oil. I wish to assure him, too, that the Wauna project is not abandoned. In fact, it is being very actively pursued and oil from the nuts there is being made, at San Jan in the Demerara River.

My good friend, Cde. Ram Karran, continues to be as incorrigible as ever. The State Planning Secretariat is an organ of the State Planning Commission. You will recall, Cde. Chairman, that we laid in this House and debated the State Planning Bill and the regulations which were subsequently made under that Act. It is envisaged that the Commission will have many organs to be served by what I may call the Secretariat where the professional planners and economists will be gathered together. This sum of \$2 million represents, as he himself said, the allocations for wages and salaries and the cost of running the Secretariat. It also includes the cost of some physical work that has to be done to the building to enlarge the accommodation and also to provide some financing for some of the associated organs.

The regulations laid in this House spelt out what the associated organs are. We have said time and time again that we do not see the Commission as a centralised bureaucratic institution attempting to plan by diktat.

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Attempting to plan for the people in region 1 or region 9 for example. We feel that there has to be a great deal of decentralisation, so within every region, there will be built up over time, a planning capability and each planning organ within a region is going to be an associated organ so that planning will have to start in the region and information will flow up to the centre. Of course, information will flow back to the region in a two way flow or what my technical friends call the iterative process.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: There was a short question I think which the Vice-President omitted. I said I was subject to correction, that we were exporting rice brand to Trinidad. I do not know if that is true. Probably he could let us know because my information is that we are.

Cde. Hoyte: I could not say, Cde. Chairman. Maybe the Minister of Trade or the Minister of Agriculture will be able to answer that.

Division 535, Ministry of Economic Planning - \$9,258,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 150 and 151.

HEAD 61 – FINANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$6,318,700 for Head 61, Finance, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 61, Finance - \$6,318,700 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 152 and 153.

HEAD 62 – ACCOUNTANT GENERAL

Question proposed that the sum of \$13,635,500 for Head 62, Accountant General, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 62, Accountant General - \$13,635,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 154 and 155.

HEAD 63 – CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,182,400 for Head 63, Customs and Excise stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Chairman, subhead 125 and 126 on page 154. I note from the total current revenue of \$614 million, the amount of \$246 is hoped to be derived from Customs and Excise. Obviously, Cde. Chairman, this is a very great portion of the total amount. Up to last year we were told about the large number of vacancies – that existed in the Department of Customs and Excise. This Government Department is not like one of those departments of the other Ministries. It is a Department that has to do with the collection of money. Now, I would like to enquire noting here at 125, that Clerical and Office Support has been reduced in strength from 86 to 39, a very deep and steep decrease, whether this reduced staff will be able to cope effectively with the job? Similarly, at 126, Cde. Chairman, semi-skilled operatives and unskilled, is reduced from 130 to the low figure of 75. My information is, Cde. Chairman, that at 126 where we have the semi-skilled operatives and unskilled – and again it goes back to the format, the new format – that the Customs guard falls under this category. If that information is correct, Cde. Chairman, and we know for a fact that the customs guards are involved in the actual rounding up of certain types of taxes, here we have a grave reduction. Although up to last year the Assembly was reminded of the great number of vacancies, here out of that limited number we are now going from 130 to 75. My question, Cde. Chairman is whether this steep reduction in these numbers will not really affect the collection of money so much need in this country at this time?

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Chairman, may I indicate that with 120 vacancies during 1981, the Customs and Excise Department was able to collect \$48 million more than was originally targeted in the Estimates. Only those vacancies which are considered absolutely critical and essential to the operations of the Department have been filled or are going to be filled, and are in the process of being filled. The Department has gone through some degree of re-organisation. The process of re-organisation is still ongoing and I want to set my friends mind at ease that irrespective of the reduction – and note Cde. Chairman, that the reduction has to do with Clerical and Office Support, principally,

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and also with Semi-skilled Operatives and Unskilled – in other words in re-organising the Department, we are maximising the capabilities of fewer bodies and we are proving as we did last year, that we could use fewer bodies properly deployed and properly trained, and collect more revenues. I want to assure my friend that nothing at all is going to interfere with the technical and managerial capabilities of the Department in working towards the target again this year.

Head 63, Customs and Excise - \$5,182,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 156 and 157.

HEAD 64 – INLAND REVENUE

Question proposed that the sum of \$7,606,900 for Head 64, Inland Revenue, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 64, Inland Revenue - \$7,606,900 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 158.

HEAD 65 – PUBLIC DEBT

Question proposed that the sum of \$144,000, Public Debt, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 65, Public Debt - \$144,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

16:55 hrs

The Chairman: Page 161.

DIVISION 536 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$71,160,000, Ministry of Finance stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: On Subhead 10 and Subhead 18. On 10 we are all concerned about transport services in this country and there is no doubt that people are suffering greatly in this country to travel. The loss of manpower is due to a great extent to inadequate transport facilities. We need our buses to be better maintained, better kept and indeed we need better transport services generally in this country. Everyone is suffering.

The Chairman: It is only because we are moving so quickly that I am not stopping you.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I was making the point that while we would like to support any vote to improve the services I noticed this is only to set up a service place. We will expect something more positive in view of the criticisms and observation, not only from those of us in the House but from particularly all the people in the country. Under subhead 10, I am sure we would have been failing in our duty if we do not call on Government when this spate of blackouts, which has been renamed load-shedding, will come to an end. In fact, it is getting worse every day. I do know – I do not want to name specific areas but some areas have been experiencing blackout literally every day. I was surprised to learn people on the East Bank suffer from blackout every day even though there is a power station on East Bank. Cde. Chairman, I think Government must tell us exactly what is the position. We heard talk about the turbine being repaired, then we heard talks about the engine being repaired. I think the time has come when you must tell the nation what is being done to ensure that we have power in the country because not only will people suffer from the social aspect but production generally will be affected consistently in this country by severe blackout. I think we should be told exactly what is being done, how this money will be spent and what kind of assurances the nation can get from Parliament.

Cde. Sallahuddin: Cde. Chairman, I am sure my colleague would have observed that in both instances if he will permit me to answer for both subheads because essentially they are service oriented and we were talking about whether Government transference. Now I am sure Cde. Persaud would have experienced that during last year the loans for the Guyana Transport Services Limited was in the tune of 4.3 million dollars and that in the estimates this year it is only 1.3. A difference of 3 million dollars. Secondly, that with respect to subhead 18 that it was close to 21 million dollars last year to the G.E.C. and this year it is but 10 million dollars. Essentially, Cde. Chairman, we take the point that we need to preserve the quality of the services, even though we recognised, we appreciate and we agree that the quality of service is not what we expect or what we desire but so long as we recognise that it is necessary to keep these essential services we have to make financial provision to keep them going. Suffice to say, however, that by the very fact that we are making available to these agencies almost half or less than half of what we got from the last year is an indication that both agencies are expected to do much better for themselves this year.

Division 536 – Ministry of Finance - \$71,160,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 162 and 163.

HEAD 68 – MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATIVES

Question proposed that the sum of \$979,800 for Head 68 – Ministry of Co-operatives, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Dalchand: Subhead 280, page 163. I would like to ask the Minister if he can tell us what is the present position with the Co-operative Societies,

The Chairman: Just before you go on – there are some typographical corrections so far as the amounts are concerned. They have been circulated.

Cde. Dalchand: What I am asking is if the Minister can tell us what is the present position? It was promised last year that all Co-operative Societies would have been audited but the information I have is that very few have been audited and there has been some squandermania going on.

Cde. U. Johnson: Last year, Cde. Chairman, the Minister who was answering for the audit of Co-operative Societies I am not too sure whether he said, at that time it was National Development because the provision came under that Ministry, since the

previous year but he could not have rationally said that all Co-operative Societies would have been audited. If we were to look at the total number of Co-operative Societies and then if we were to look at the percentage of all the societies which were functioning, well I do not think he could have said all those societies could have been audited. In 1980 there was an audit of 159 societies. In 1981 there was an audit of 217 societies. In 1982 we hope to increase this percentage by 25 percent and that is why the sum of \$100,000 is put into the estimates because it is intended to help those societies which have not been able to raise the audit fees. Now this sum is paid into the Audit Fund and from that money is paid to the relevant auditors. So in fact, Cde. Chairman, I do not think that statement of the Comrade of the Minority party is quite accurate.

HEAD 68 – MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATIVES

Question proposed that the sum of \$979,800 for Head 68 – Ministry of Co-operatives, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 68 – Ministry of Co-operatives - \$979,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 164 – Division 537.

DIVISION 537 – MINISTRY OF CO-OPERATIVES

Question proposed that the sum of \$300,000 for Division 537 – Ministry of Co-operatives stand part of the Estimates.

Division 537 – Ministry of Co-operatives - \$300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Comrades, I understand that by agreement the Vice-President for Public Welfare and the Deputy Leader of the Minority, up to Division 525 will not be proceeded with now. That will be done later on. Tonight probably. So we will proceed with Environment and Health, Head 37, Pages 90 and 91.

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17:05 – 17:15 hrs

17:05 hrs

HEAD 37 – MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SUPPLY

Question proposed that the sum of \$7,980,000 for Head 37, Ministry of Environment and Water Supply, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 37, Ministry of Environment and Water Supply - \$7,980,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 92.

DIVISION 523 – MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND WATER SUPPLY

Question proposed that the sum of \$7,400,000 for Division 523, Ministry of Environment and Water Supply, stand part of the Estimates.

Division 523, Ministry of Environment and Water Supply - \$7,400,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 93 and 94.

HEAD 38 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,162,000 for Head 38, Ministry of Health, Central Administration, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 38, Ministry of Health, Central Administration - \$3,162,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 95 and 96.

HEAD 39 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

GEORGETOWN HOSPITAL

Question proposed that the sum of \$13,686,000 for Head 39, Ministry of Health, Georgetown Hospital, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. J. Jagan: Page 95, Subhead 140, Senior Technical. I would like to know if the medical services are any closer to a solution of the problem of staffing doctors for those suffering mental diseases. I understand that one of the Psychiatrists attached to the Georgetown Public Hospital is leaving. If my information is correct, I am told that we have only one other Psychiatrist attached to the service at the Mental Hospital in New Amsterdam. Certainly, with the increase of mental diseases as a result of all the frustration and tension, I think that quite a bit of psychiatric treatment is necessary. I know from my own experience that I am amazed at the number of people I bump into who are suffering from various forms of mental diseases. Certainly I think the Minister knows the time required for each patient and certainly one or even two doctors cannot handle the situation.

Under the same subhead we have Other Specialist Medical Officers of Health. I have asked the Minister on several occasions the question, is the service properly staffed with sufficient ophthalmologists? He always assures me that the Georgetown Public Hospital has great treatment for those suffering from eye disease. I had to mention to him personally the other day that I have colleague who went in for an appointment. He was never examined by anyone. He went in a couple of weeks ago and he now has an appointment for July. I had asked the Minister what happens if you have something urgently wrong with you because no one sees you, you have to wait on an appointment. We hear all the time that we have a permanent ophthalmologist. I think they tell us that sometimes there are two attached to the Public Hospital. That has never been my experience. My experience is that people have a very, very hard time to see the ophthalmologist because one of them is a private practitioner and goes occasionally and the other one seems to disappear some of the time. I do not know if he spends two days at the hospital. But this is my information and this has been my experience in sending people for this purpose.

I also want to mention that one hears the People's National Congress Government constantly boasting about free medical services. Again I ask, are the services free? Is it not true that people have to pay medical fees for specialist examination? That has been my information, that the services are not free in many respects. Many patients have to pay specialist fees, hospital fees, surgical fees and at the Georgetown Hospital and any other hospital, in-patients and out-patients frequently have to buy their own drugs. This, of course, is a serious problem. I mentioned it during the debate on the Budget Speech, that the cost of drugs in the private dispensaries is something phenomenal. It is unbelievable what people have to pay for drugs. Therefore, when the Ministry of Health and the Government says and boasts that medical services are free, they must make it a reality. I say it is not a reality until people can get services free. This also applies to

other specialist services like X-rays. I am told by doctors that many patients now have to pay X-ray fees which are considerable. Perhaps the Minister could bring me up-to-date on these.

I also wanted to refer under subhead 126 on the same page to the question of Maintenance and Custodial Services relating to the Georgetown Hospital. I believe those of us in this room who go to the Georgetown Hospital to visit patients would have the same experience I have when I go into the wards to visit friends – one of horror. I have learnt to breathe through my mouth, I cannot bear to breathe through my nose as the smell is so horrible. Like other people, I sort of dim my eyes because it hurts to see how ugly the interior of our hospital is. It is so ugly and when one looks at the beds and sees the horrible sheets, it is sickening. All the equipment is dirty, the walls and the floor, and when you pass the toilet it is unbelievable how --

The Chairman: Yes, Cde. Jagan, where is that relevant to subhead 126?

Cde. J. Jagan: Maintenance and Custodian Services.

The Chairman: It deals with Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled – Juniors, Apprentices and Learners of Building Trades, Maintenance and Custodian Services.

Cde. J. Jagan: Maintenance and Custodian Services. I am saying that the building of the Public Hospital is not being properly maintained. That is the point I am making. The latrines are not kept properly in order. The furniture and equipment are not painted, the floors are not cleaned in a way that gives one a feeling of hygiene and a feeling that things are sanitary. In other words, when one enters the hospital, one gets a most unpleasant reaction.

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17:15 – 17:25 hrs

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:15 hrs

(Cde. J. Jagan continues)

That is for the person who goes for ten minutes or one hour. What about the patients who have to live under these miserable conditions? I am urging that greater attention be given to the maintenance of the Public Hospital, so that we the citizens who visit our friends and relatives need not be ashamed when we enter the building, knowing that much more could be done. Page 96, can I go on to 203 or are you cutting off at 161?

Under item 203 which deals with the dietary. I want to bring this to the attention of the Minister – I appreciate that they are trying to reduce expenditure. The revised estimates for last year showed \$1.87 million for dietary, but this year they have reduced it to \$1.75 million. I think that is an impossibility because the cost of food has gone up considerably and I cannot see a reduction unless it means people getting less in quantity or less in quality. The food costs from 1981 have risen considerably and it is only logical to assume that if food costs in general have risen that the amount required for 1982 would be higher not lower. I do know that with this recent shortage of flour and bread, patients have been suffering tremendously in many of the Hospitals. They are not getting proper food and the shortages have reaped havoc in our public institutions.

I want to refer too to 301 which deals with drugs and medical supplies and to point out again that there are shortages of drugs. I understand there is a grave shortage of vaccines. I understand too that the Government is importing drugs from Holland, drugs which have been refused by Medical Authorities in Curacao and Suriname. In fact, my information is that Holland is dumping drugs that are unsatisfactory on our market and I would suggest we show caution in respect to this.

I want to refer to something that I find a little odd, 304 office materials and supplies show an increase from \$60,000 last year to \$100,000 this year which I find a little difficult to understand, in view of the fact that essentials like drugs have been reduced by almost \$1½ million. The amount for drugs and the amount for dietary as I pointed out had been reduced, so why are office materials and supplies going up? I want to mention too that the amount at 301 for drugs and medical supplies is quite a drastic reduction, \$3.24 last year to \$1.5 million this year. Does that mean that you have found a source of cheap drugs or is it the Dutch produce drugs or is it that there will be fewer drugs available for our patients. That is an important aspect for us to keep in mind.

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Speaker, 195, subhead 140, I would like the Minister to clear my mind on this for in 1981 the approved estimates was \$1,13,860, the revised estimates is \$1,365,370, the estimates for 1982 is \$2 million, but it is coupled here with a reduced staff of 165 to 135, thirty in this respect. Along the head, you can find a reduction in the staff shown on the area there, there is no legend to accompany the reason for the increase. It could be possible that there had been acting appointments and persons have been confirmed. In this respect, the legend ought to identify it so that the Members of Parliament can follow exactly how it is that there is an increase in the estimates with reduced staff.

The Chairman: Cde. Van West Charles.

Cde. Van West Charles: Cde. Chairman, in relation to the question on the Psychiatrist in the Government Service, I am not aware of information of a Psychiatrist leaving, therefore, I cannot really comment on that. However, what I would say is that the Psychiatrist we have in any service are geared for the chronic cases. Any medical officer that is trained can also handle psychiatrist cases. In relation to Ophthalmologist, we have two full time, one part time and come May, the Commonwealth Foundations is supposed to be sending another Ophthalmologist. In relation to medical fees, once you are treated at the Georgetown Hospital by personnel employed by the Government Service, the services are free, if you are treated by a private Doctor and you will like to utilise the services of the Georgetown Hospital you will have to pay for those services. If you are seen by a private Doctor outside whom you pay to see and he sends you to the Georgetown Hospital, you will have to pay. That is the only way people pay for back up services.

The Chairman: Cde. Jagan's point was that Doctors at the Hospital charge.

Cde. Van West Charles: I do not know of that. In relation to maintenance. Her comments in terms of the environment of the wards at the Hospital. That is a blatant lie.

The Chairman: No, Cde. Charles.

Cde. Van West Charles: I apologise Cde. Chairman. In terms of latrines, I do not know whether Cde. Jagan understands what is a latrine. You can never find a latrine in a building. In the hospital we have toilets with septic tanks. A latrine is an outhouse.

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17:15 – 17:25 hrs

Dietary – within the Ministry of Health there are two farms, one at Mahaica, and one at Fort Canje which will be producing food vegetables, poultry etc, and that is why the cost as reflected is decreased.

Drugs and medical supplies. As I mentioned before in my intervention in support of the Cde. Vice President's speech, we are having an improved procurement system. I do not think the members of the Minority should worry about the quality because the quality certificate is supposed to be sent. The drugs are going to be checked by our Quality Control System in the Government Analyst Department.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:25 hrs

(Cde. Van West Charles continues)

Vaccines are bought through the Pan American Health Organisation. There is no shortage of vaccines. As a matter of fact, last year we improved on our vaccination systems throughout the length and breadth of Guyana.

Office Supplies for the Georgetown Hospital. The Ministry, as I mentioned, is restructuring. We are going to have an improved information system and that is why we are having an increase in Office Supplies. In relation to Cde. Belgrave's question subhead 140, Increased Salaries. This is a result of the increased salaries and more specialist staff in the Georgetown Hospital.

Head 39, Ministry of Health, Georgetown Hospital - \$13,686,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 97 to 100.

HEAD 40 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH – OTHER PROGRAMMES

Question proposed that the sum of \$26,473,900 for Head 40, Ministry of Health – Other Programmes, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Chairman, I should like to ask for some clarification on page 99, subhead 126. It seems a bit vague here where it speaks about Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled Juniors, Apprentices and so forth. There is also an item Boathands, Drivers, Chauffeurs and Other Operatives Associated with Transport Equipment.

Under this category dealing with transport I wonder if I can question the functioning of the Pomeroon Medical Services. I should like to say that these services in the Pomeroon/Akawinni and Wakapau area are very important as it is a community of over 20,000 persons, a predominantly farming community and these services have not been up to standard. I was once operating this service as a captain. I was there for two years in the early 60's but this service has not been operating as it should. I wonder if the Minister is aware that the boat is not working and I wonder whether something can be done about it. What I should also like to say is that this service depends on the operator and dispenser. It depends on their efficiency and their ability. I am prepared to give the hon. Minister advice on this matter if he likes to have it.

Mr. Abraham: Mr. Chairman, page 97, subhead 121, Administrative. The Members of this House, all of us here, are all aware that a brand new hospital was recently commissioned in Aishalton in the South Rupununi. My information is that the hospital is still not fully staffed. Could the hon. Minister say when the hospital will be getting its full quota of nurses and doctors. I understand the present doctor is presently hospitalised after having been choked and robbed one night outside Hotel Tower. I understand he is so scared that he is planning to leave the country. But, sir, that is by the way. How early will the Aishalton Hospital be staffed?

The Chairman: Dr. Van West-Charles.

Cde. Dr. Van West-Charles: In relation to Cde. Basir's question, Akawinni is an area which is not staffed because we had a difficulty in acquiring personnel. However, we have been able, along with the Ministry of Education to satisfy the social services in Akawinni by sending a husband and wife team. The wife is a nurse and the husband a teacher in Akawinni.

The boat has not been completed. We have just got an engine and that will be furnished with the necessary facilities. I accept his proposal. We can discuss. He knows the area. As long as the suggestions are acceptable to us and reasonable, we will accept them.

In relation to Aishalton Hospital, the hospital has some amount of staff. The project ear-marked for the hospital is to support the whole regional system in that we are going to bring people outside of Aishalton but what we hope to do is to send our senior personnel into Aishalton where we can train people on the ground because we have been having a problem of bringing people out of the hinterland and they do not want to return. What we are doing is establishing training programmes at specific institutions so that they can train the people there. They can learn on the spot and service the institution.

It is true that the doctor is in hospital at the moment. He had an accident but there is a medex at Aishalton who can service any medical problem that might occur.

Head 40, Ministry of Health – Other Programmes - \$26,473,900 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 101.

DIVISION 524 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Question proposed that the sum of \$15,444,000 for Division 524, Ministry of Health, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. J. Jagan: Mr. Chairman, subhead 17, Georgetown Hospital Feasibility Study. There is a sum of almost \$200,000 to be voted for a feasibility study. To my recollection we have heard for many years about the building of a new hospital. We have been told that there was a lottery, the money from which was going to be used for the new hospital, but I do not see anything happening about the new hospital. Could the Minister tell us how much money from the profits of the lottery has gone over to the hospital and what are the prospects? What is the prognosis of having a new hospital for the City of Georgetown?

The Chairman: Cde. Van West-Charles.

Cde. Van West-Charles: Cde. Chairman, the feasibility study was carried out as a result of the IDB/PAHO system. What happened was that the figures which were supplied by the study were exorbitant and prohibitive. Notwithstanding that, the money that comes from the lottery is used for the rehabilitation of various sections of the hospital. At the moment the physiotherapy department and the intensive care unit have been rehabilitated as well as the children's ward. We are carrying out rehabilitative works at the moment. We have had further discussion with the Pan American Health Organisation and they have sent us another hospital architect who will look at some of the buildings we have, retain them and then expand on these buildings. We are now in discussion with PAHO who are supposed to be sending the architect back to us this year for the final drawings.

Division 524, Ministry of Health - \$15,444,000 – for Division 524, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 12.

HEAD 6 – MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS,
PARTY AND STAFF RELATIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$139,000 for Head 6, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Party and State Relations, stand part of the Estimates.

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17:25 – 17:35 hrs

Head 6, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, Party and State Relations - \$139,000 –
agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

1982-04-05

17:35 – 17:45 hrs

National Assembly

17:35 hrs

The Chairman: Pages 13 and 14.

HEAD 7 – PARLIAMENT OFFICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$332,800 for Head 7, Parliament Office stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I would like to ask two short questions, sir. I want to speak on subhead 305 and subhead 701. Cde. Chairman, we on this side of the Assembly with the exception of Dr. Jagan and possibly Cde. Ram Karran, have not been receiving Official Gazette. Sir you will agree that for any Parliamentarian to function properly, it is necessary that all necessary information pertaining to the Parliament are sent to us. The Parliamentarian is in a totally different position, he has to look at the Bills, regulations and under several legislation, certain orders are subjected to negative resolutions, and if any Parliamentarian is to function then he must see those orders when they are made within the time provided in the very many statutes to take the necessary action. The role of a Parliamentarian, Cde. Chairman, is not one that he is thinking of himself, it is not an individual function, but it is a function that affects the nation, and particularly when you sit on the opposite side of the Assembly, you have to ensure that all that you need to know that you know, and if Gazettes which are official and legal documents pertaining to are not supplied I cannot see how the Government can seize supplies without telling the Parliamentarians. I think it was a great discourtesy in the first instance. I enquired why we were not receiving Gazettes, I did not wait until now to raise it with the Assembly. I want to ask the Cde. Vice-President to look into this matter so that we can be supplied regularly with Official Gazettes bearing in mind the points I have alluded to with respect to the necessity for us to see them.

Under subhead 701, we are members of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association which membership we do not oppose, but during 1980 and 1981 and probably on other occasions, we have not accepted invitations from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association despite the fact, Cde. Chairman, that tickets are paid by the Association – return fare – when you go to these conferences the host country pay all other expenses and all that has to be given to members that may go from here is out of pocket expenditure. It is necessary for parliamentarians to be exposed to the C.P.A. and similar international institutions. We have not had so far, in this Assembly, an explanation why we have been refusing those invitations.

The Chairman: Cde. Ramsaroop.

Cde. Ramsaroop: Cde. Chairman, I undertake to look into the question of the re-issuance of Gazettes to the Members of Parliament who are now not the recipients of such issues. With respect to our attendance of C.P.A. conferences and other kindred meetings, may I indicate to this Assembly that that is a matter for the Branch to decide and it will certainly be presumptuous of me to arrogate to myself the decisions of the Branch whenever it meets to take those decisions.

Head 7, Parliament Office - \$332,800 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 121 and 122.

HEAD 48 – MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$15,456,000 for Head 48, Ministry of Higher Education stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: I wish to speak of subhead 704, Education Subventions. Looking at the legend, I note there carefully, the different institutions that fall --

The Chairman: In the corrections that were given to you, you did not observe that those things were deleted – the amounts? A correction was circularised.

Cde. Mohamed: I have not seen that.

The Chairman: Well, that is not my fault. Anyway go ahead.

Cde. Mohamed: What I was about to ask, Mr. Chairman, on this subhead, was whether the subventions to the University of Guyana has been reduced as it would appear to me by a huge sum of \$56,000? If this is correct then I would ask the Minister to give an explanation for this reduction considering of course, that as a member of the Board, it is my view that the University of Guyana would require far more money than we are giving at this stage. It would appear to me further, that being fully aware of the personal problems, staff problems, and equipment problems that hung the University of Guyana, one would have thought that we would have been able at this stage to see an increase because no one can deny that the personal question of staff shortages is indeed a big problem there at the University.

I have been informed, subject to correction, that some of the programmes have been suspended, in my view programmes which I think should not have been suspended, for example, programmes in pharmacy and medical technology. I would like to ask the Minister whether this is so and why this is so, and if this is so, to say that we do not think that is working in the right direction at this moment of our development. That head also involves ideological education. Now I know that several institutions here mentioned are engaged in ideological education. What I would like to enquire from the Minister, is specifically how will the money be spent in terms of ideological education? What types of programmes were conducted over last year? I notice that there may be an increase this year and maybe the Minister will tell us what expansion is being conducted in the direction of ideological education. I also wish to enquire from the Minister whether the Ministry of Higher Education is keeping very close to the other institutions that fall under its preview with respect to ideological education because again I have been informed that in many instances in some of the programmes, I feel there is an absence of ideological education and in fact there is somewhat a sort of a resistance to those implementation in some of these institutions that we assist.

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17:45 – 17:55 hrs

National Assembly

17:45 hrs

(Cde. Feroze Mohamed continues)

I would like to ask the Minister considering that the last time he said that Government believes in Marxism and Leninism. In Marxism better and more careful attention should be given to ideological work pursued by the other bodies and indeed to more towards an emphasis to promote this type of work in terms of ideology.

The Minister of Higher Education (Cde. Chandisingh): Cde. Chairman, the question asked by the honourable Member, Mr. Feroze Mohamed, first of all referred to the subvention for the University of Guyana. He supposed quite correctly that the subvention has been somewhat reduced and the reason for the reduction is because of the general financial stringencies which we as a people in Guyana face at this moment. Certainly, I would like and I am sure all of us would like to see increases at all of our institutions, such as the University of Guyana. But in times like these we have to seek to secure the development of our programmes even with reduced financial allocation wherever possible and in order to effect this approach it is the intention and expectation that staff, for example, will be more efficiently and effectively utilised. As a matter of fact we note there has been salary increases which were made earlier this year for the University of Guyana and it is our hope that with these increases to areas in which we still have shortages of staff the position could be remedied at least to some extent. So, Cde. Chairman, that is the explanation for the reduction. The reference to whether the reduction in the subvention represents a reduction in the programmes, well here again I do not think this is the correct information. As a matter of fact we are seeking to run programmes, all the programmes that are considered to be relevant and of direct benefit to Guyana. Cde. Mohamed referred specifically to certain programmes, for example, pharmacy, and my information, unless I stand corrected, my information is that this programme has not been suspended.

Certainly, we would like to do much more and even with the more limited resources, so to speak, I think the reduction is relatively marginal. The University will need to seek to utilise its staff more efficiently, as I indicated earlier, in order to even expand in certain programmes particularly in the field of science, technology and agriculture as one example. Then he referred to ideological education noting that there were several institutions with ideological education and he asked how will the money be spent for the types of programmes carried out last year and what expansion we have in mind. One of the main institutions for ideological education is the Cuffy Ideological Institute and efforts are being made at this time to improve some of the facilities at Cuffy

Ideological Institute, to recruit staff of higher quality in keeping with the expanded programmes that we envisage during this year. For example, last year I would say that the work was much more limited in this sphere at Cuffy Ideological Institute than is intended this year. Approximately 200-250 persons went through courses at Cuffy Ideological Institute last year and for this year the programmes so far that have been developed, and active work is going on to finalise some of these programmes, number something like 21. We are hoping we will be able to carry out about 21 programmes this year involving something like 600 participants, but not only quantitatively. The ideological work at Cuffy involves apart from development educational programmes, courses now for military and para-military cadets. For example the Guyana National Service has recently run a course in collaboration with Cuffy or rather the Cuffy Ideological Institute has run a course for the G.N.S. for centre administrators and other officers and because of the success of that course the G.N.S. is very anxious that other courses should be held at the institution. So eventually all of their officers at different levels should pass through this type of course. We are also, at Cuffy, planning to have a longer course which is likely to be of two years duration and we are hoping that when this is finalised – of course work is already being done, preparatory work is being done – this course will be equated with the first two years at the University of Guyana in the field of political science. We are also arranging for courses in collaboration with GUYSTAC and GUYSUCO and such other institutions so that managerial personnel will have an opportunity to go through the ideological orientation that we consider very essential for persons in these categories since we are moving towards the creation of a socialist society. So these are some of the areas. Now the Kuru-Kuru Co-operative College is another institution. This institution, of course is more specialised in the area of co-operative education, equipping persons who will be better able to manage and run co-operative societies. We are examining also the content of these courses to see whether the content correspond with the relevant needs of the co-operatives and so on. But Kuru-Kuru also carries out courses and does research on the whole question of co-operativism, the broader principles of co-operativism.

Furthermore, the Kuru-Kuru Co-operative College is engaged now in the educational training of personnel for the Local Democratic Organs, since the system of local democracy which is being put into place is premised upon people who understand what the system is all about and how they can play their roles in the system and also improve upon their system. Thus Kuru-Kuru is playing a more specialised role. I should also like to refer to the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education for the ideological education in the Guyana National Service. Here again, very constructive preparatory work has been done and the Guyana National Service is in the process of setting up an ideological unit.

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(Cde. Chandisingh continues)

It is through this unit and in collaboration with this unit that the Ministry of Higher Education will be exercising the necessary monitoring supervision and influence with respect to ideological orientation within the Guyana National Service. So these are some of the areas.

I think that that covers the areas for explanation of ideological work. But even more than that, I should indicate that study is now proceeding with a view to bringing together both Cuffy Ideological Institute and the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College to form what is likely to be called the Centre for the Study of Socialist Theory and Practice, so that there may be two campuses. It will involve in time research work which is very sorely needed at this time. Cde. Chairman, I wish to assure the Member, Cde. Mohamed, that the Ministry of Higher Education is keeping very close to the other institutions within its purview, for example, the Workers' Education Unit, the Adult Education Association and so on. We are, naturally, in the process of seeking to perfect some of the programmes in terms of content and so on. These institutions themselves have been examining their work and are seeking to move out, in some cases, for example, Workers' Education Unit of the Georgetown area and develop courses outside. So that the Ministry is seeking to bear its responsibility in this respect.

He asked whether there is any resistance. I am not aware of any real resistance as such, but perhaps what can be said is that there is need, and we have seen the need, for greater collaboration and co-ordination of our efforts since there has been the tendency for many institutions to work on their own. By way of an example, let me cite the formation recently of the Adult Education Committee. I am not talking here about the Adult Education which is a non-Governmental organisation which is largely funded by Government. But the whole field of adult education needs greater co-ordination and rationalisation and thus this Committee has been set up comprising very high level representatives from various other Ministries and Agencies, including the University of Guyana Extra Mural Department, which have some bearing on adult education. It is hoped that this Committee which has just started to work will help to identify some of the weaknesses and advise the Ministry in the whole field of adult education.

Adult education, of course, has as one of its components also ideological education. Similarly, with respect to co-operative education, a Committee on the same line and with the same aims and principles is shortly to be established.

Finally, on the question of content of programmes and so on of ideological education, I can only repeat in gist what I said on the last occasion, last year. That is that we view ideological education not simply as the repetition of abstract formulas, ready-made formulas. We seek rather to apply the general principles of socialism to the concrete conditions of our circumstances. It is the easiest thing to merely read from a book written by someone expressing general principles, but the difficult part is really to apply those principles in the concrete, specific conditions of one's own country and situation. It is this approach we are taking and we hope that the Ministry of Higher Education will be instrumental in furthering the cause of ideological orientation of our people in order to help to construct, to transform and develop the socialist society in Guyana and, furthermore, to strengthen the resolve to defend their native land.

Cde. Mohamed: There is just one small question based on the answers given by the Minister of Higher Education. May I ask him whether the Cuffy Institute was always a Government institution or is it a recent development? If it is recent, how recent is it?

Cde. Chandisingh: Cde. Chairman, the Cuffy Ideological Institute has not always been a state institution and this is a recent development which came about during the course of last year.

Head 48, Ministry of Higher Education - \$15,456,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 123.

DIVISION 530 – MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,850,000 for Division 530, Ministry of Higher Education, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, subhead 1, University of Guyana. Here I notice that last year \$3 million was approved by this Assembly. I am looking at the explanation of the 1981 Estimates. It showed that that \$3 million was to be used for the completion of the library extension programme, the completion of the Health Science building and works for the Faculty of Agriculture, which I agree with the Minister is very important, I notice also that the Revised Estimates indicate the expenditure of \$1.2 million. Estimates indicate the expenditure of \$1,200,000 of the money voted. This year we are being required to vote for \$600,000 and I notice here that the legend states: "To provide for the completion of library extension and for equipment". Several things come to mind. It

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would appear then that the money voted last year either was not enough or it was not used for what it was intended for in terms of the library extension of the University of Guyana. Secondly, in view of the inadequate explanation provided by the legend, may I ask whether we can now assume that there is the completion of the Health Science building and the works on the Faculty of Agriculture. I would think so in view of the stress that is frequently made about the importance of agriculture. If these things have not been completed, on the other hand, perhaps the Minister will have an explanation for the Assembly.

I wish next to turn to subhead 3, Critchlow Labour College. Last year I gave total support for this vote to assist the Critchlow Labour College to repair or rehabilitate their building. I notice that they did not take up the money. Perhaps after the vote they changed their mind. Again, I notice that this year \$60,000 is being put aside for the purpose of the rehabilitation of the Critchlow Labour College building.

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(Cde. Mohamed continues)

Why is it that there is a reduction from \$100,000 to \$60,000. Is the T.U.C. changing its mind about the extent of what they wanted last year or does it fall in the same category of cuts and obviously if it is not a reduction of what they had in mind, then it means that this is not going to be the final amount and obviously we will be called upon to give the C.L.C. far more. I wonder if the Minister can also say whether discussions on this amount was conducted with the C.L.C. to find out whether they will be satisfied with \$60,000, since one cannot deny that the C.L.C. plays an important role in the work they do.

Subheads number 4, 5 and 6, they appear here as new subheads and at the same time in our view they are important, they deal with important subjects which we think have a role in this society. We have no objection to the expenditure in the field of National Science and Research nor with the work of the Institute of Applied Science and Technology nor with the National Bureau of Standards. However, you would agree with me Cde. Chairman to say as new subheads, whilst we do have certain broad ideas of what these things are going to do that indeed the Minister would want to explain a little more in view of the importance of these bodies to our developmental work here in Guyana. He may want to explain what concretely these bodies are being involved in and whether they have any concrete programmes which this money will help to complete or to help along, so the Minister may want to give us some better ideas about the work or programmes of these bodies at this stage.

The Chairman: Cde. Chandisingh.

Cde. Chandisingh: Cde. Chairman, the first subhead 1, University of Guyana. The \$600,000 being provided this year will complete the library extension. If my memory serves me well, something like \$150,000 of this amount will be paid to the contractors, the rest of the money, or the greater part of the \$600,000 as the legend says is to provide really for equipment such as racks, desks and tables and that sort of thing and we are hoping, the University of Guyana rather I should say is hoping, to provide these bits of equipment locally.

The Comrade is quite correct when he says, as is very clear from the 1981 approved estimates, that the sum of \$3 million was approved in 1981, but it was

necessary in common with several other agencies to take some cuts last year and so the actual amount that was provided was just around \$1 million or there about and so nothing could have been done with respect to the Health Science Building. This is one of the areas which we are still concerned about, but in view again of the financial strictures, we are not in a position to do anything about it at this time.

With respect to agriculture. I would like to mention that the facilities for the Faculty of Agriculture have always been of some concern to me and at the moment I understand that a couple of temporary structures are being put down which would assist in some way to provide some additional facilities for the Faculty of Agriculture. On a long term basis, without seeking to give details, there is some negotiation and discussion going on with the European Economic Community and my information is that certain project documents are now being worked out. On the assumption that those discussions and negotiations come through as we hope and expect, then the Faculty of Agriculture will have very adequate facilities in due course. This is not something that will happen this year.

If I may go to subhead 3, Critchlow Labour College, why the reduction. For last year the sum of \$100,000 was voted. My information is that the Critchlow Labour College was unable to utilise this amount. There might have been problems in getting estimates and so on, architectural estimates for surveys, and so the College according to my information was unable to really utilise this full amount. Thus what was done was to refloor the J.H. Pollydore auditorium which consumed roughly \$40,000. The amount being voted I think will not be adequate to cover all the rehabilitation work that the Critchlow Labour College would need to do. One of the main problems, as I understand, is that the roof of the Critchlow Labour College is in a bad condition and more recently there was some electrical fault which could have been very serious to the building had it not been discovered very quickly and so some of the expenditure undoubtedly will be used for this aspect of the matter. I think Cde. Chairman, that the C.L.C. should get its plans and set its priorities to see how best, at least in the first instance, it can utilise the \$60,000 that is being provided for this year.

With respect to subheads 4, 5 and 6 Cde. Mohamed said it appeared that these were new subheads. I would like to draw to his attention that these are not really new subheads as such, it is only that this year they appear under division 530, Ministry of Higher Education. In the past, for several years now, these subheads appeared elsewhere in the estimates, actually, the National Science Research Council, the Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Bureau of Standards and for that matter Guyana Metrication Board fell within the purview of the Ministry of Economic Planning and Finance.

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It was around the middle of last year that the subjects of scientific research and these particular agencies were transferred to the Ministry of Higher Education. He did ask, however, that a little more explanation of the programme would be helpful and if I may briefly say something about these programmes: First, the National Science Research Council is a body that was set up by Act No. 26 in 1974 and this Council comprises persons from different fields of scientific and technological areas, also the business community, consumers --

The Chairman: I don't know whether you should continue because they are not interested in what you are saying.

Cde. Chandisingh: There are other agencies. This is the umbrella organisation that is authorised to advise Government on policies relating to science and technology, research and development relevant to the needs of Guyana, to advise Government on priorities and approaches to institution-building so that we may develop our capabilities in science and technology and so that is the umbrella organisation. Falling within this umbrella Council there are certain units. The most developed of these units thus far is the Institute of Applied Science and Technology. This Institute, as Comrades may know, is located on the Turkeyen campus and despite the fact that it is relatively new – since 1979 the Institute has occupied these premises – the Institute has been already successful in conducting research and in developing materials embracing a wide field which not only is helping to develop local materials and thus to save Guyana foreign exchange by way of importation, but also in the long run I think we will be able to earn foreign exchange as a result of the work of the I.A.S.T.

The I.A.S.T., Institute of Applied Science and Technology has actually been laying the infrastructural foundation for science and technology research and development capabilities. It has been building up staff and conducting staff training, acquiring equipment and, as already indicated, it has already chalked up a number of achievements to its credit. It is co-operating with the University of Guyana in research and development projects and it is also performing services for, and collaborating with, other agencies and Ministries. For example, the Ministry of Energy and Mines, which embraces the Geology Commission. The I.A.S.T. is collaborating with the Geology Commission in seeking to reduce our shell from shell beaches to limestone using locally manufactured wood-fired kilns. It is collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture, and with the Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation. In that connection, the Institute has

developed certain pigments which are used in paint production. It is developing a local chalk which will be made entirely from our local resources. It is developing in the areas of natural products, mineral sciences, analytical research for various agencies. It is developing, for example, a pilot project for the extraction of oil from lemon grass which will be used for the production of perfumes and scents that go into soap making and so on.

In the field of alternative energy, the I.A.S.T. has already been experimenting with and developing skills for burning charcoal and also biogas, in which simple structures are put down so that the farmer, for example, can use the biogas digester, put the manure from his cows into the digester and out of it comes gas for cooking, which goes into the stove. At the same time fertiliser is used to fertilise green crops and vegetables. Cde. Chairman, I see you looking at the clock. I do not think we need to dwell more at length on this matter but I think from those few examples the Member Cde. Feroze Mohamed will have gathered that the I.A.S.T is performing, and will continue to perform as we develop, a useful purpose.

As Comrades will notice, \$900,000 is specific and that is coming from a U.N.D.P. – Guyana Government Project, which will again help to develop the capabilities of the I.A.S.T. to conduct research and development at higher levels and more extensively.

The National Bureau of Standards. I should mention that really speaking we have not yet developed fully a Bureau of Standards. Rather, what exists at the moment is more of a Standards Unit, which is rather in embryonic form, the embryo of a National Bureau of Standards. It is really a nucleus of a National Bureau of Standards.

This year, as we know, the amount allocated has been increased from \$100,000 to \$200,000 and I would not want to suggest that this is going to result this year in a full-fledged National Bureau of Standards, but work has been done of a preparatory nature and it will take some time before Guyana will be in a position to fully develop a Bureau of Standards that is capable of doing the sort of work that is necessary to ensure quality control and all sorts of other aspects of metrology that are very necessary for us as an exporting nation. Already draft legislation has been prepared and I dare say some time this year it will be brought before Parliament, but an examination is still going on at the moment to look at the whole structuring of such a Bureau and the links it will have with other analytical bureaux such as the Analyst Department and so on. So this institution, as I said, is developing in this way. I think, Cde. Chairman, that I have answered the questions asked by Cde. Feroze Mohamed.

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Division 530, Ministry of Higher Education - \$3,850,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 22 and 23.

HEAD 11 – TEACHING SERVICE COMMISSION

Question proposed that the sum of \$292,380 for Teaching Service Commission, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 11, Teaching Service Commission - \$292,380 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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The Speaker: Pages 124 and 125.

HEAD 49 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
AND CULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$8,729,400 for Head 49, Ministry of Education Social Development and Culture stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Now, I am told that there is a correction at the last item on page 124. Delete “Personal Pensionable Allowance in lieu of Consultation Practice” and insert “Part-time Staff” against subhead 141.

Yes, Cde. Feroze.

Cde. Feroze Mohamed: Well, I wish to begin by asking the Comrade Minister of Education Social Development and Culture to pay attention to subhead 121. I wish to speak particularly about the salary section of the Ministry. I raise this point, particularly too, because much complaints have been coming in by teachers who are finding a tremendous amount of problems with respect to getting the matter solved whenever they approach this section. There are bottlenecks – it would appear as if there is some amount of inefficiency going on in this section. Perhaps the workers are over-worked but there is no question about it, many teachers are very much frustrated whenever they have to approach this section. I wish to enquire from the Minister whether he is aware of this development, and also to ask him if he is aware of what efforts are being made to rectify the major problem that exists within the salary section of the Ministry and which is creating so many problems for teachers who are so affected. In the first place, I do not understand why there must be so many teachers with complaints with respect to their salaries, why that place always seems to be jam-packed with people coming in for complaints only to be harassed and told to come the other day and so on. I think it is not good and it only compounds the deepening frustration of the teachers in this direction and it is something that I think the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry’s personnel ought to be looking at with more seriousness.

On page 125, subhead No. 925, Mass Games. It is a subject that has occasioned much debate in this Assembly, but also a subject that one must continue to refer to especially nowadays when the standards of education are declining at all levels within our education system. Some of the effects of Mass Games which I wish to underline are: the disruption of classes, the high amount of failures occurring – look at the CXC for

example, and the inability in my view of the Ministry to work out a reasonably accepted programme to take care of those children who were required to go to the Mass Games, and who would have lost a tremendous amount of lessons, and who would have suffered as a result and therefore would need some kind of programme to bring them back into the stream of studies they would have missed as a result of Mass Games. This is a very big question, and it agitates the minds of many teachers who are genuinely concerned with the children with the children's education, and parent also. They are naturally worried. Mass Games provide a good spectacle, but one questions the wisdom and whether that spectacle is enough or worthy enough to evaluate or to some extent, negate the educational process and the learning process which definitely it is affecting in many schools. It is also leading to tremendous other questions negative to the learning process, and I wish therefore, to ask the Minister of Education to reconsider this and in fact urge him to remove this in this moment of declining standards and tremendous amount of failures, particularly outside examinations.

Now, I wish also to go to subhead No. 505, Professional Consultants. It would appear that this is a new subhead and \$50,000 are being required to pay professional consultants. There is no legend, there is no explanation, and this would clearly require some explanation today. What is meant here by Professional Consultants? Why are they required at this stage? What are their terms of reference? Who are they? Are they foreigners? And if they are foreigners, has the Ministry looked into the possibilities of utilising our own qualified personnels? Or has the Ministry come around to accepting that we do not have the necessary qualified personnels to carry out this consulting work? Obviously, we would be interested to know what is the task of these professional consultants. It appears new for us here, are they streamlining the Ministry which I understand is necessary? Are they trying to put some order in the Ministry which I think is also evident at this stage? But I would like to know the duties and aims, the objectives and what type of work these professional consultants are going to be engaged in.

On subhead No. 506, Data Processing, this too is, as I see it here a new subhead and it will consume \$214,000 and then again the corresponding explanation does not appear, and obviously, Cde. Chairman, one must get a little concerned, a little bit worried when huge sums are required and the Minister did not bother to ensure that proper explanations are given and on that score, I would like to ask the Minister what is the urgency of this data processing at this time. No doubt there is need for some work in this direction but obviously we are looking at the Estimates in a particular context of difficulties in the country and when everyone, I understand, is trying to cut so that we can save as much as we can for more immediate, more urgent and more essential services. I wonder whether data processing here falls within that category. However, I wish to ask

the Minister for additional information on this and also to enquire whether any technology is involved here, or persons are to be used, or whatever information is involved here, since the Estimates is not very clear.

I wish now to turn to subhead 701, Contributions to Internal Organisations, \$700,000. The legend says that part of this money, \$430,000, will be contributions to the C.X.C., and it is on that score I wish to raise some questions with the Minister. Firstly, is the Minister fully aware of the recent results in terms of all the subjects taken by Guyanese students at the Caribbean examinations? If he is then is he satisfied with those results? Because clearly there are many people, many students who are not satisfied in view of the huge failures. The statistics which I have, Cde. Chairman, and this can be made available to the Minister though I do not think that is necessary, and also in view of the fact that Guyanese students are called upon to pay far more for their examination fees, obviously we cannot be satisfied. One of the previous Minister of Education boasted many times in this Assembly, and we all felt proud that Guyana was in the forefront in the Caribbean in terms of passes we were receiving. Then in 1982 and 1981, we are getting results saying that Guyana is driving the flock. We are way behind, we are behind in almost all the subjects taken at the C.X.C. and if we were to look at the major, larger countries, Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana, Guyana is at the bottom.

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(Cde. Feroze Mohamed continues)

Even if you were to look at the smaller islands, not all but many of them we are also getting bad results. Now this is a question for concern. Many people are worried. It is costly to us. We are spending a lot of money and we will have to therefore begin to think seriously how we are going to get the best returns from the money we are putting in the field of education in the preparation of students in trying to see we have enough and properly trained personnel to teach our young people in the fields that they will be taking exams in particularly, the C.X.C. I would like to hear from the Minister the assurance being given about what corrective measures are envisaged or implemented at the moment in order to raise these standards. It is my opinion that all the efforts that are being made will compound the matter, not solve. The bigger class rooms that all of us expect, the lack of qualified personnel, the frustrations in the teaching profession, all of these things are likely to add to the further decline in the future. Naturally, if we are spending money we must be told how we are going to better the situation today. Then I go on to 706, Grants and Scholarships. Again, Cde. Chairman, I suppose I must draw your attention to the fact that no explanation appears. It looks like an error. \$700,000 – Grants and Scholarships, we have to vote for, but not yet and really I cannot find an explanation there. It seems to me again we have to have information to explain why these huge sums are required, at a time when we have free education. It could create some kind of conflict not easily understood if the Ministry does not provide some explanation. Why do need \$700,000 for Grants and Scholarships? Maybe the Minister would help us out to give us full information. Why you have to have \$700,000 for Grants and Scholarships.

Finally, on this page I wish to turn the subhead 709 – Staff training and Adult Education is something you would recall, Cde. Chairman, we on this side of the House have always shown a keen interest in, primarily for the earlier points I made, in terms of the declining educational standards and also in terms of the excessive failures, embarrassing failures we are receiving in some of our examinations, particularly C.X.C. Then one of the things we thought that should be on-going and continually emphasised is staff training and adult education. I think that too is important. I note here that in 1981 \$325,000 were required; \$350,000 were spent but now in 1982 only \$10,000 will be channeled in this direction. Obviously again we fall into that continuing argument that you have to prune and cut in these times but I wonder why they chose this area if that is so. Or is the Minister satisfied that enough training, staff training and adult education has been done and there is no on-going need for it or there is no need at this moment to place emphasis.

If this is the case we totally disagree. We think this is an area that should be emphasised in view of the needs and we ask the Minister, therefore to explain why \$10,000 is now voted for an area of work very important while in the past we used to spend such big amounts, usually spent of \$250 or \$275,000, assuming of course they were always spent for adult education and staff training.

The Minister of Education (Cde. Thomas): Mr. Speaker, permit me to respond to the very first question asked under subhead 21 of Head 49. Cde. Mohamed sought to find out what was the difficulty being experienced by the Ministry in paying teachers' salaries that in some cases resulted in the payment of late salaries. As the Member is no doubt aware we have taken steps to streamline the Accounts Department of the Ministry to ensure that the difficulties which plagued the Ministry for a number of years is lessen. Apart from that, anyhow, as of this year we proposed that teachers who storm the head office from outlying regions should be paid in these regions. As a result the regional sub-treasuries will be used for the payment of teachers' salaries among other matters. I think therefore, that that problem will be lessen and hence the difficulty will disappear with the introduction of the system which allows for teachers to be paid through the Region's sub-treasuries. Then the Member went on to make similar remarks to those which he made last year under subhead 925. As you may recall when he made those remarks about the Mass games. I spent a lot of time explaining to this House that Mass games inculcate in our students the discipline required and necessary for improvement in their work at school. I did point out that it had nothing to do with the high failure and it could not result in that either because students who participate in mass games are not students who have exams in the year that they participated in the mass games. The students are students coming particularly from primary schools at levels below that of S.S.E.E. I do not think I will go over that whole story again this year. Then the Comrade went on to raise the question of the Ministry's request for professional consultants. It is partly strange that he should make such an enquiry because in any developmental ministry, one which has to do with the development of programmes necessary for people's development and development of the society then there must be an exchange of ideas. As a result there is always need for consultancy and people with skills. He did suggest that the reason why we wanted consultants was because there was a paucity of qualified people in the system. Far from it. The Ministry today is better staffed than it was ever before in terms of quality of people working with us and nearness of the socialist thrust which Government has undertaken. I hope that answers his questions on 505 and 506.

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(Cde. Thomas continues)

On subhead 506, I want to say that I understand the difficulty. This Head represents the total of sums which came out of seven Heads under the whole Estimates. It has to do with exams and the processing of exam results. As you know, the Secondary School Entrance Examination, commonly called the Common Entrance, is processed by the use of computers and this sum largely represents payment of the processing fees.

The comrade went on to make a query under subhead 701 and ended up making some observations about the CXC. He said there were high failures in the CXC. and even blamed it on people's participation in mass games. I recall that the question of our students' performance at exams came up year before the last and came up last year again. I made the point on both occasions that the CXC. is not a pass/fail examination. It attempts to award profile points and assess students in accordance with the work they do. In the second place, I accepted the criticism about the percentage passes when compared to other territories and I did explain then that in our case we have free education. Cde. Ainsworth during the course of his presentation did refer to our gross and net involvement in education and made reference to the fact that it is much greater because of our free education position. As a result, we have more students opting to write the exam on a percentage basis while in the cases of Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and other countries, they enter students on the basis of a pre-qualifying test and only the better students are allowed to take the exam. In our case we do not have a pre-qualifying test and our students, once they are in the classes, write the exam. That explains the apparently better percentages.

Apart from that anyhow, if we were to move from the CXC and go to the Advanced Level G.C.E., then you will see a contrasting picture. Apart from our students at the secondary level offering more subjects at the 'A' Levels than any other territory, the results are definitely better. We get more passes, we get more distinctions. Last year I reported to this Assembly that one student offered six subjects at the Advanced Level G.C.E. and returned some five distinctions. For the last exam we had students offering five subjects and returning excellent results as well ... For that reason we have been awarding more Guyana Scholarships than usual.

That brings me right into the question of grants and scholarships. This \$700,000 has to do with the sum of money required for continuing students on scholarship and those students who have just been awarded Guyana Scholarships.

Subhead 709, Staff Training and Adult Education. I understand the difficulty the Member is faced with and it results from the new approach in developing these Estimates, I suspect. Out of this subhead a sum of some \$300,000 represents grants which would go to the Adult Education Association. That subhead has been removed to the Ministry of Higher Education. I think the Cde. Minister of Higher Education did respond to the query about Adult Education. The \$10,000 remaining will be used for conducting workshops at the in-house level and apart from that, we are still going to undertake training and re-training programmes for our teachers and other staff people. You will notice, too, when you come to teacher training that adequate provision has been made for the training of such staff.

Head 49, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture - \$8,729,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Cde. Ramsaroop, I take it you will have the necessary Ministers when we resume.

Assembly resumed.

The Speaker: The Sitting of the Assembly is suspended until 20:00 hrs.

Sitting suspended at 18:50 hrs.

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20:00 – 20:10 hrs

National Assembly

On Resumption

The Chairman: Pages 126 and 127.

HEAD 50 – CULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,045,000 for Head 50, Culture, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Feroze Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, two small questions under this subhead Number 72, Contributions to Local Organisations where the explanatory section says that part of the fund of \$2,000 will be going as aid to artists. Really, I think the sum there provided is extremely inadequate bearing in mind the type of assistance our artist in Guyana today would require. I would, therefore, ask the Minister to consider an increase in this aid to artists because \$2,000 is a measly sum and really cannot do much for the artists of this country. I think in the Budget Speech, a lot of emphasis was placed on the promotion of culture and I think hardly anything would be accomplished in this aspect with the aid of \$2,000. Then on subhead number 706, Grants and Scholarships. I would like to ask the Cde. Minister to give an explanation about these grants and scholarships and whether they have in mind to sponsor any scholarships abroad in terms of people involved in cultural field.

The Chairman: Cde. Thomas.

Cde. Thomas: Cde. Chairman, can I just seek your permission to ask the Minister of State to answer those two simple questions?

The Chairman: Yes. Minister of State for Culture.

Cde. Corrica: Cde. Chairman, in answer to the query of Cde. Feroze Mohamed on 701, when he was specifically dealing with the Aid to Artists, he is saying that the amount is inadequate, but the simple answer to that is we know that it is inadequate, but what we do is encourage and promote artists to be self sufficient to work for sums that they could actually assist in maintaining themselves. What is the other one?

The Chairman: What is the other one?

Cde. Corrica: Yes, Cde. Chairman, this is not for scholarships overseas, but internal scholarships where we bring people from outlying districts for instance the Bara Bina dance group. We need to have persons trained from out in the regions so that they could go back and do some work there with the people there.

Head 50, Culture - \$1,045,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 128.

HEAD 51 – NURSERY SCHOOLS

Question proposed that the sum of \$8,952,000 for Head 51, Nursery Schools, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: Dietary, I notice here that there has been a cut and in my view a somewhat large cut at a time when the situation does not call for such cuts in terms of dietary for our young people or children at nursery schools. Clearly, we are in a crisis today and one of the manifestations of that crisis is the inadequacy or inavailability of food. This is no doubt affecting many of the children in the nursery schools and since I will not want to raise this question at a later stage I crave your indulgence, Cde. Speaker, to also say that this question of school feeding programmes is an immediate question today and the Minister should look at this matter with a mind to start out and expand to School Feeding Programme. Probably at the same stage that it used to be existing in the time of the P.P.P. Government. This is a serious problem because nowadays, especially with the shortages, one receives many complaints about some of the effects of malnourishment in our schools. Fainting is occurring more frequently nowadays in the classrooms, also there is listlessness and sleeping in the classrooms and lack of energy. There were times when a student used to walk with a little sandwich or a little roti, now with the absence of flour and so forth, they can't get that and many of them have to be satisfied with a cup or a handful of water when they can get water or probably a green mango or so. This is a reality, Cde. Speaker, and it is in this respect that I am not satisfied that a cut has been made in terms of the dietary in nursery schools, when at a time, at this time particularly it seems to me the Government may want to start a programme to help the disadvantages, and who will have to suffer a little more, perhaps much more today when you have those shortages occurring.

I listened to the member, Cde. Ainsworth speaking about 18,000 children now being serviced or benefiting from the school feeding programme going on at the nursery

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level. I know last year, the target of the Ministry was to have the programme extended to 15,000 and if 18,000 is the exact figure as I understand, then I am happy to see that the target for last year has been over fulfilled. But obviously it is not satisfactory in our time and since many young people are affected including primary school, I would like to urge for the expansion of the school feeding programme at this stage rather than a reduction as shown here.

For subhead No. 302, Field Materials and Supplies, and \$200,000 is required under this subhead, but the recurring problem again comes up and that is, no proper explanation given in the explanatory note, and therefore we do not understand why \$200,000 will be required under this head, and obviously we need an explanation why we are being asked to approve the sum of \$200,000.

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(Cde. Mohamed continues)

Subhead 709, Staff Training and Adult Education. A question was asked recently and I noted the answer given by the Minister, but I wonder whether I would be correct in raising under this subhead the whole question of the training of our nursery school teachers. There can be no disagreement about the level of training acquired by the teachers who are given the responsibility of looking after the very young ones in this country who attend such institutions.

We know also that since this nursery school programme began a year ago not much has been done in the form of training school teachers, resulting in the continuing problem of a low level of nursery school teachers. I think this is recognised also by the Ministry. I know for a fact that last year the Ministry had in mind to train at least 100 of these teachers each year in workshop seminars or at in-service courses. I am now getting the impression – I looked at the vote and the amount there – that they are now going to discontinue this programme of training nursery school teachers at a time when we think that more are needed and this should not be touched. I would therefore ask the Minister to clarify that and to explain whether the Ministry is going ahead with the programme of last year, that is, to continue the training programmes for nursery school teachers.

The Chairman: Cde. Thomas.

Cde. Thomas: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. In response to the first set of queries raised under subhead 203 I should like to point out that, as the member recognised, during last year we surpassed our target aimed at feeding some 15,000 nursery school students and ended up feeding more than 18,000. Apart from that, we have been able to service some 225 schools which are located throughout the entire country, schools on the Corentyne – 34 of them, Rupununi 4, Linden 10, New Amsterdam 10, West Coast Berbice 10. I think it is necessary that I point out, at least for the records of this House, that quietly we have been supplying milk to our nursery school children. This programme is not a talked-about programme. It is not a programme in words as it used to be in the P.P.P. time when they talked about soup kitchens, something which the member referred to but which was never really implemented.

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The vote is less this year because we expect some contribution from UNICEF. Already they have started to help and we anticipate that that help will be continuing. As a result there is very little need at this point in time to increase that provision.

I do not think that I should leave unchallenged the remark about malnourished children and children sleeping in schools. I do not know which schools the member referred to. Probably he is referring to some of those schools in some of the countries which he visits so often, but surely not Guyana. Anyone who is Guyanese and who visits the schools here will say that they cannot identify any cases of malnourished children or improperly clad children. I have been speaking to visitors to this country, officials coming from other countries and they always remark that in Guyana they have seen some of the healthiest children and some of the best dressed children attending schools. He has travelled, like so many of us, and he knows too that our children attending schools are better uniformed than children attending schools in a number of other countries. In these days you do not see children going to school with the symptoms of malnourishment like the system we used to refer to as “white corners”, bare-footed and with patched trousers and shirts and all of that. I suspect he is speaking about some other countries which he might have visited.

Cde. Chairman, permit me to explain what we propose to do with the increase under subhead 302, Field Materials and Supplies, under this Head 51. This sum of money is really intended for purchasing toys and other equipment for nursery school children to play with while at school. I can understand the difficulty because, unlike so many countries, Government has placed a tremendous amount of emphasis on our nursery education programme and, as a result, we think we should continue to equip these schools with material when is necessary for the children’s development. That is why an additional sum is sought.

Under subhead 709, Staff and Adult Education, the Member attempted to make reference to the fact that we started a training programme for nursery school teachers during 1980. He is right. We did start this programme in 1980 and the programme continued through 1981 and will be continuing through 1982. As a matter of fact, we have no intention of curtailing this programme. The teachers who are involved have already started to benefit and we see results from the programme even though they are not quite through with their course. We are beginning to witness the results of their involvement in this programme. The sum appears to be less because, as in so many other cases, the provision for teacher training, as I pointed out earlier, is under the Head which has to do with teachers. Those are all the remarks I would like to make.

Head 51, Nursery Schools - \$8,952,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 129.

HEAD 52 – PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Question proposed that the sum of \$35,828,000 for Head 52, Primary Schools, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: I wish to begin by referring to subhead 121, Administrative. Under this subhead I wish to ask the Minister whether the vacancies advertised in the Official Gazette of the 28th November 1981, namely, 97 vacancies for Headmasterships and 22 for Deputy Heads have been filled. If not all, how many of these vacancies have been filled?

Secondly, I wish to refer to subhead 125, Clerical and Office Support, and to enquire from the Minister whether, under this subhead the 124 clerical and office support staff have been dismissed. Under subhead 126, Semi-Skilled, Operatives and so on, may I ask the Cde. Minister to explain how many teachers have been dismissed who fall within this category, what were the principles employed in dismissing these teachers and to what extent will this reduction affect the education system. Naturally, it is going to affect the education system and, in our opinion, very much so and especially so since up to last year we were speaking of the shortages existing in the education system in terms of the staff. Now we have that problem not solved but aggravated as a result of the number of dismissals. I hope the Minister will tell us the exact figure.

Subhead 302, Field Materials and Supplies. I assume that this refers mainly to school farms and agricultural plots because the legend reads “Provided for under subhead 19 in the 1981 Estimates”. That subhead 19 referred to “Supplies and Equipment for School Farm and Agricultural Plots.”

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(Cde. Feroze Mohamed continues)

I note here that a large amount of money is being required for this head. We have no quarrel with the teaching of agriculture in schools, but I do wish to take this opportunity to ask the Minister and his staff to ensure that under this idea of promoting agricultural education to our youths that our students are, particularly in primary schools, or the tops of primary schools, secondary departments are not abused. There has been incidents coming to my attention, some of which I think I may have spoken to the Minister about, where some teachers take advantage of this question and instead treat these students, not as students of agriculture, but actually as labourers and I think the Ministry should be able to give proper guidelines about the meaning and how they see the implementation and the execution of this idea of imparting agricultural education in a more expansive way to children.

Subhead number 403, maintenance of buildings. You would recall that last year I strongly argued for more money to be spent in this direction and I am happy therefore that the Government is providing some extra dollars for the maintenance of buildings. In view of the fact that the situation with respect to buildings that house children, is so bad, and with each passing month, perhaps each passing year, deterioration is taking place. I must say that inspite of the increase which we are them for, we accept that it is still not adequate enough to do all the work that must be done. We do recognise that all cannot be done in view of the constraints of today, but still because the situation is so urgent and immediate, we would still urge the Government to pay attention to this aspect of education in terms of buildings, school buildings and ask the Ministry and the Minister to see whether more funds can be provided for the maintenance of school buildings.

Mr. Abraham: Mr. Chairman, subhead number 126 specifically. It refers to acting teachings. In view of the current retrenchment exercises now being executed by the Government, may I ask the Honourable Minister if this exercise would affect very much the acting teachers in the Hinterland and more specifically in the Rupununi.

Secondly Sir, there is a tendency on the part of some Education Officers to give their permission for acting teachers to turn out to work and at the end of the first term these acting teachers and I am talking about the Hinterland again look forward to their salary at the end of the term, but look forward in vain. At the end of the second term

there is usually a recurrence. Now, a representation is made to let us say the Assistant Chief Education Officer. The first thing he asks is – was permission given to you from your Education Officer to turn out to work in writing. Unfortunately the teachers would say no. So he is asking that at least there must be some form of approval on the part of the Education Officer giving the teacher permission to work. All I am asking Mr. Chairman, is if the Minister would just perhaps have a word with the E.O.'s in the Rupununi, in the Hinterland generally to give a word of approval to these teachers or Headmasters when employing acting teachers.

Thank you Sir.

The Chairman: Cde. Thomas.

Cde. Thomas: To respond quickly Cde. Chairman, with head 121 first, I will say that the vacancies which were advertised in November will be filled for the coming school year and I wish to point out that these positions are not really vacant in the strict sense of the word, in that there are a number of people capable for holding those offices who were really acting in those positions.

Now for head 125, there is a simple question asked, whether all 125 of those clerical and office support typist clerks will be retrenched and the answer is yes. I may point out in giving that straight answer that we feel that less emphasis should be placed on administration of these primary schools by heads and more attention should be given to teaching. All members of this Assembly will agree that when we were at school, head used to be teachers and the best teachers. In those schools today, with the trappings of administrative offices, a number of these heads have been developing a different approach to schools administration and as a result have with them secretaries and we feel that at the primary level those head teachers can best function without those people, particularly in these times for crisis.

Under head 126 Cde. Mohamed and the Honourable Member sought to find out how many people will be retrenched under this subhead. It is a difficult question for me to answer. I can say approximately four hundred people will be retrenched. I want to point out however, that the Honourable Member need not have any fear because we do not intend to remove acting teachers from hinterland regions, to name them quickly regions one, seven, eight, nine and ten, because in those regions, apart from being short of teachers, we do not want to end up with a situation where we experience some difficulty in having people take up those positions.

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(Cde. Thomas continues)

He said that 400 teachers, all of whom are acting and unqualified teachers will be retrenched. We are not going to retrench trained and better qualified teachers as a rule and we think that this number will not exist in fact because our training college will be throwing out about that number at the end of July. So those positions will be filled almost immediately. You will recall that I said as a rule we are not going to throw out or retrench teachers who are trained. I want to make an observation which I made at the Guyana Teachers Association when we were discussing the retrenched and that observation is, Cde. Chairman, that among our teachers there are some inefficient, ineffective and indisciplined and it is our intention to weed out these incorrigibles, whether they be trained or untrained. So the member should not be surprised if in any region wherever the incorrigible may exist if they, trained or untrained, are also retrenched because the aim is to make the maximum use of the scarce resource particularly if they exist in teaching. At the same time to ensure that we develop a better managed and organised school hence a better education system.

I wish to move on to subhead 302 of the same Head by merely remarking that this whole sum is not for agriculture. As you know, we have moved to a situation where it is envisaged that we need to bring the world of school closer to the world of work and ... in the curricula of all schools, particularly at this point in time even though it is a small increase in agriculture. We feel school farms should pay for themselves and also in footing some of the bills used up in extra curricula activities. The greater part of the sum here requested will go to other school supplies which are of a routine nature. Then we come to subhead 403. I am happy that Cde. Mohamed recognises that we are increasing that vote and this year we proposed to add \$600,000. The sum is still small but we feel it will go a far way in alleviating some of the problems which we experience because of schools which are in need of rehabilitation and restoration. I am sure that I am through with that.

HEAD 52 – PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Question proposed that the sum of \$35,828,000 for Head 52, Primary Schools stand part of the Estimates.

Head 52 – Primary Schools - \$35,828,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 130 and 131.

Cde. Feroze Mohamed: Subhead 122. Just a brief question to the Minister and perhaps just as he answered in the first case under Head 52 he will have the statistics for Head 53 in the event that teachers have been dismissed under this subhead. If he has we will be willing to hear that statistics. Furthermore, I take the point that there will be a cautious policy in terms of dismissing the trained and qualified and no doubt this is a good direction. Still one must say that there is a lot of subjectivity in consideration, I think, of what will amount to indiscipline and many people will have different interpretations of that. However, bearing in mind the point made about the caution in terms of dismissal I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the particular case at the Cove and John Secondary school. One which I am sure he is quite aware of. He also knows that a very trained and qualified teacher was dismissed and it seems also that right down the line from the Headmaster up to the Secretary of the Teaching Service Commission do not think that that dismissal was justified. I raised that matter with the Minister and I raise it now and therefore, I am asking him to see whether something could not be done in this particular case and considering also that while this teacher was trained and dismissed there are also teachers, at least I know of one who is unqualified and untrained with two subjects G.C.E. one being Scripture teaching at the same school. Therefore, over to the Minister.

Cde. Jeffrey Thomas: Permit me to respond to that general question and observation by saying that I am hoping that Member is not fooled by the provision in the Estimates because according to the provision you will see that we do not propose removing any teacher from the Secondary School. That is true. Bearing in mind what I have said before we are really trying to pick up the slack at all levels whether Primary or Nursery, but as a rule we are not going to dismiss teachers from Secondary school unless the fit in the groups I referred to. He raised the question of a teacher who was dismissed from the Cove and John Secondary School. He did raise the matter with me before and I want to give him the assurance that I will have the Officers investigate the matter and if it is found that the Comrade is not in any way guilty of a lesser offence then attempts will be made to have him reinstated. If he is found guilty then obviously we will not be able to help.

HEAD 53 – SECONDARY SCHOOLS/MULTILATERALS/
COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOLS

Question proposed that the sum of \$20,197,000 for Head 53, Secondary Schools/Multilaterals/Community High Schools stand part of the Estimates.

Head 53 – Secondary Schools/Multilaterals/Community High Schools - \$20,197,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 54 – TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,965,500 for Head 54 – Technical and Vocational Schools stand part of the Estimates.

Head 53 – Technical and Vocational Schools - \$1,965,500 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 134 – Head 55.

HEAD 55 – PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS CENTRES

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,624,000 for Head 55 – Practical Instructions Centre stand part of the Estimates.

Head 55 – Practical Instruction Centres - \$1,624,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 135 and 136.

HEAD 56 – TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,977,000 for Head 56 – Teacher Training Institution.

Cde. Feroze Mohamed: Subhead 121, page 135. Cde. Chairman, I wish to draw the Minister's attention that there is at the moment a concern being expressed by several persons working and studying and those who have an interest in these training institutions that there are going to be certain drastic changes with respect to the Teachers Training Institutions.

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The Chairman: I cannot allow you that latitude. There are three appointments. (i) Administrative, (ii) Registry and Library Supervisory Staff and (iii) Other Senior Specialist and Administrative Supervisory Staff, where can there be drastic reductions?

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Cde. Mohamed: I am not speaking about a drastic reduction. I am saying that there is information coming to me and I want to enquire whether it is true that there are intentions by the Ministry to discontinue one of the programmes.

The Chairman: Not on that subhead, find some other subhead to ask that.

Cde. Mohamed: Would it be reasonable to ask that under subhead 122? I am sure the Minister would not have any objection.

The Chairman: It is not the Minister, it is me. Find some other subhead.

Cde. Mohamed: Subhead 122. If they are changing that system or they have intentions to --

The Chairman: Another subhead.

Cde. Mohamed: Let me speak on subhead 203.

The Chairman: Cde. Mohamed, I think under subhead 122 where you see “Education Officers”, add the word “Principal” and where you see “Principals” scratch it out. Leave “Deputy Principals” and scratch out “Headteachers”. It is a correction they want made, that might help you.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Chairman, if you agree that I would be helped under that --

The Chairman: Maybe it will help you not to ask the question.

Cde. Mohamed: Subhead 203. I notice here that there is a welcome increase in Dietary but I do not see the vote for Arable Farm.

The Chairman: No vote, no question.

Head 56, Teacher Training Institutions - \$1,977,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 137 and 138.

HEAD 57 – PROBATION AND WELFARE SERVICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$656,600 for Head 57, Probation and Welfare Service, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 57, Probation and Welfare Service - \$656,600 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 139

DIVISION 531 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$6,496,000 for Division 531, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Mohamed: Subhead 1, Primary and Nursery Schools. Dealing with Primary and Nursery Schools where they are talking about the construction, particularly, of the South Ruimveldt Park Primary School, this is all well and good and we fully support all attempts to build more schools. But under this subhead I wish to ask the Minister what is happening to a recurrent problem which we have been raising in this Assembly insistently --

The Chairman: Cde. Mohamed, I would have stopped you but we are moving quickly. This thing deals specifically with South Ruimveldt Park Primary School. If you want to talk generally about building programmes and so on you would really have to find another subhead. I would permit you because we have time.

Cde. Mohamed: I wish to draw the Minister's attention to the problem of Ocean View Primary School. We are virtually approaching a decade since we have raised this matter here. It is a question people are grieved about. Here it is not reflected, of course, as you rightly pointed out, neither is anything positive being shown in the regional section. We would like to ask the Minister what has happened with respect to a school which the people have been taking up with them, which was promised to the people for approaching probably a decade.

Subhead 3, Teachers' Housing. I notice no vote is there.

The Chairman: Do not let us talk about it, there is no vote.

Cde. Mohamed: Then on subhead 6 --

The Chairman: Do not waste your time and mine.

Cde. Mohamed: Subhead 11, Provision and Distribution of Textbooks. Apart from the fact that \$3 million is required for the provision and distribution of textbooks, still there is a big problem in this direction at the moment. Still there are not enough textbooks to satisfy demand. It would be good if the Minister could say what has happened to the Committee that was set up to look into the question of distribution of textbooks and what efforts are continuing in terms of making available the adequate textbooks for children who would require them. I wish to draw the Minister's attention to one of such cases because there are many. I would just want to say that it is still and on-going and continuing problem affecting young people preparing for exams.

At Leonora Secondary, there are only twenty-six accounts books for ninety-two exam students who would have to write such exams very soon. Those in Forms III and IV who are also studying in the field have not seen the books yet and yet they are presently engaged in studies for that exam. Clearly, but just putting out one example we see the problems. Obviously, we would ask the Minister to give us an explanation whether we are on the way to the solution of this vexing question.

Subhead 19, Assistance to Students. I notice here that there is a reduction in terms of assistance to students. I want to know whether this indicates that you have to assist less students at this point and if so how many less from the amount that was voted, say, in 1981. Also, whether the Minister should not consider that students who get this type of assistance will need more in these conditions. In fact, for a long time they have been asking for more but this has not been forth-coming. Instead of giving more, I notice there has been a cut in an area I do not think a cut should be.

Subhead 26, National School of Dance. I note here that in the 1981 Approved Estimates \$10,000 was voted for equipment, according to the 1981 Estimates. It was not spent according to the Revised Estimates and now \$5,000 is again required for the National School of Dance. First of all, why was not this money used up since I am sure the National School of Dance would need such funds, and why such a small sum for this institution at a time when we are also putting emphasis on culture?

Subhead 28, Co-operative Youth Palace. I simply wish to ask the Minister what is the projection in terms of finance that this palace would cost and how long it is expected it will take to construct this Youth Palace.

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Cde. Thomas: Well, the comrade was eventually able to get through his question about Ocean View school. I would like to state that we in the Ministry of Education have a difficulty with Ocean View. In 1980, we took a decision to close down that school because of the dilapidated condition and the deplorable state of the school building. As members will be aware, there is Uitvlugt Primary School which is just about 600 yards away which has sufficient space to accommodate the students of Ocean View. For sentimental reasons more than anything else, the Ministry after listening to the case made out by members of that community, decided that as part of its on going programme to rehabilitate school buildings, that building will also be rehabilitated. If the Hon. Member, Cde. Mohamed had looked at his Estimates, Division 541, page 176, subhead No. 5 he would have seen Education \$500,000, Region 3. The legend says to provide for rehabilitation of schools within the region: Den Amstel Primary, Ocean View Primary and then it went on to name others. So money will be given for that.

Now, the question of provision, subhead 11. He asked about the Committee which was set up to distribute text books. As the comrades will recall, Government's position on the distribution of text books was that we will distribute basic text books free of cost. We have done much better than that and at the present time we are distributing almost every text book required by the system. It is costing us dearly as he will recognise from the amount of money we have been spending, a great deal. The distribution of text books has been going on a pace, and I can give him the figures: Region 1, 16,724 text books were distributed during the course of last year; Region 2, 186,487; Region 3, 290,049; Region 4, 315,768; Region 5, 49,252; Region 6, 306,767; Cuyuni/ Mazaruni, Region 7, 14,444; Potaro/Siparuni, Region 8, 2,485; Upper Essequibo, Takatu, Region 9, 16,253; Region 10, 35,695; making a total of 1,233,724 text books distributed during the course of last year.

He asked about subhead 19, Assistance to Students, and wondered why the vote apparently is on the decrease. I wish to point out that this vote had in it, a component for students who were at University and who required some assistance. That part of it has been shifted to the Public Service Ministry because those programmes are handled by them. So the money voted here will go for the students who attend Cyril Potter College only.

Under subhead 26, National School of Dance, I will ask once more that you permit the Cde. Minister of State for Culture to give a response. Under subhead 28, I will

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respond by saying that the \$190,000 required for the Co-operative Youth Palace will represent the initial sum which is necessary to do some mobilisation for the project. As you know, the Government of D. P. R. K. has already donated some gifts in the form of cement, field and musical instrument for this palace. We feel that once the mobilisation is done we will be able to get further assistance. I cannot give a time frame for the completion of the project, but what I can say is that work will go on apace this year. That, I think, answers the questions under this subhead.

The Chairman: Cde. Corrica.

Cde. Corrica: Cde. Chairman, the answer to the question by Cde. Feroze Mohamed as to why the money was not used up is because we wanted foreign exchange and we could not have had that so we did not use it.

Division 531, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture - \$6,496,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 140.

DIVISION 532 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE - IDA PROJECTS – SECOND EDUCATION PROJECT

Question proposed that the sum of \$14,349,000 Division 532, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture – IDA Projects – Second Education Project – stand part of the Estimates.

Division 532, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture – IDA Projects – Second Education Project - \$14,349,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Comrades, we will go back to the Ministry of Labour, Pages 85 and 86.

HEAD 34 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,484,000, for Head 34, Ministry of Labour stand part of the Estimates.

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Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, subhead 121, has Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff. I do not know if my assumption is correct, because normally this head would have men like labour welfare officers which have to do with the workers. I want to speak with the assumption that Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff would include labour officers.

The Chairman: Let us ask Cde. Green.

Cde. Green: Yes.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, we have reached a very serious stage in the history of this country where thousands of people are being retrenched and one of the public policy with the Government is that they are carrying out a programme of unemployment. I think it is correct for the Minister of Labour to tell this Assembly during the examination of the Estimates to what extent this Ministry is involved with the labour officers whose primary functions are to look into general welfare and well being of workers.

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(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

I would like also to ask him --

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, I am not with you there. That is policy. You should raise that in the general debate. That is policy. This is dealing with five senior policy and general administrative staff. You may ask if the number of positions are filled or not. Does it relate to so and so or not? That I would allow.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Sir, I wonder if you would give me permission to ask to what extent these men are involved in the process?

The Chairman: This is policy.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I want to see what work they are doing in this. If you are not going to allow that, I have discovered too that the number of Labour Officers has been reduced from 8 to 5.

The Chairman: That does not follow. The Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff, not necessarily Labour Officers.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I think I made it clear at the beginning that I was making an assumption that this was dealing with Labour Officers, sir, and the Minister said this is so.

The Chairman: It also has Labour Officers.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: That is why I was saying that the details would restrict us from making the point. I think you would concede, if I just make the point on behalf of Members on this side of the House, that many of the subheads have been dumped into other heads. You are not allowing me to ask questions of a pertinent nature.

The Chairman: I do not find so up to now.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Here you have a glaring example. Subhead 142 deals with Incentives. At this point of time people are retrenched, if not dismissed. I

should like to know the kind of incentives the Ministry of Labour is offering to the people and to the workers at this time and if this provision is a token sum to cater for the large numbers who have been retrenched. I know that we are permitted to vote token sums in the Estimates and perhaps this is one of the areas that has been used. Can the Minister tell us exactly what is taking place so that we can really find out what is happening with the welfare of the workers generally, those who are affected?

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, with very great respect, I will not allow that. It is an oblique way of asking. “Incentive” means incentive. If workers produce they get more. We are coming to another Head, Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency. You may find it there.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I don’t want to be told at that stage to go back.

The Chairman: Let us go on with this.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: On page 86 I have one short question. There is a new provision at subhead 216, Women’s Bureau. Probably the Minister will tell us what is that Bureau. This is on page 86. I think we are dealing with pages 85 and 86.

The Chairman: Cde. Green, there is only that question – Women’s Bureau, subhead 216.

The Vice-President, Public Welfare (Cde. Green): The Women’s Bureau was established after some examination by the Ministry because it was thought necessary to have a specific governmental agency to assist in the co-ordination of the very magnificent work that our women’s organisations are doing.

Head 34, Ministry of Labour - \$1,484,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 87.

HEAD 35 – CENTRAL RECRUITMENT AND MANPOWER AGENCY

Question proposed that the sum of \$308,000 for Head 35, Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Sir, I want to ask a question under subhead 121, which has to do with Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff and also with Other Senior Specialist and Administration Supervisory Staff. I think that under those two I shall be able to pose the question dealing with the retrenchment of workers, for example, what is their position, if you so permit it. If you don't, I suppose I cannot ask it.

The Chairman: Let us try to be fair. I want to help you because I have a lot of time on my hands. Wages and Salaries deals with

- (1) Senior Policy and General Administrative Staff; and
- (2) Other Senior Specialist and Administrative Supervisory Staff.

If you find it somewhere else, I am willing to allow you.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I can assure you, sir, that I have made a diligent search and I cannot find it.

The Chairman: I am afraid I cannot help you.[Interruption] When Cde. Persaud is finished you will have your opportunity.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I don't know if it will help, with your permission and with the greatest respect, sir, but it speaks of Manpower Agency and my question deals with manpower agency. In the details of the Estimate itself there is no such specific Head. This is no fault of mine because I did not frame the Estimates. I said at an earlier stage that these Estimates have been prepared and certain vital information is concealed to restrict debate on them.

Cde. Belgrave rose --

The Chairman: Do you want to say something?

Cde. Belgrave: I did not get to speak just now. I was not permitted. I see a new subhead at 124, Other Technical and Staff Skilled and Other Skilled Staff. There is no legend. If this is a new subhead I assume that the Government or the Minister responsible, or the Vice-President, would at least want to convince this House that it is worth its salt being placed in the Estimates. The establishment is 15. I should like the Minister to inform us what this subhead is about, what they will do within this department.

Subhead 505. This appears to be a new subhead too. It is for Professional Consultants. Consultants on what? What will they do? \$50,000 of the people's funds will be used in the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency for consultation. I should like the Minister to give answers to these question.

I should be very happy if in future legends could be placed against the items so that at least we would be informed.

The Chairman: Cde. Green.

Cde. Green: Subhead 124, Other Technical and Staff Skilled, Other Skilled Staff. The intention here is to identify a number of persons with professional skill to help in the very critical area of coordinating the work of the Labour Department. It is important to ensure that we have people who understand the needs of the labour force and therefore the intention here is to have persons who are qualified to assist in this vital task in this stage of our development.

In terms of 505, Professional Consultants, the consultants are required in terms of the criteria set out by the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency. This agency is intended to be an umbrella organisation. Therefore you need people with competence to whom we can pay the appropriate fees to look at the entire public sector to ensure that for the first time we have some rationalisation and some related institution that can deal with the manpower planning so that we do not make the mistakes we have made from the colonial era.

Head 35, Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency - \$308,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 88.

HEAD 36 – SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$11,956,000 for Head 36, Social Assistance, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Belgrave: This is a sore question. We have been raising questions on subheads 223, 224 and 225, Public Assistance, Old Age Pension and Social Rehabilitation respectively. I see here that \$2.2 million was approved in 1981 and revised to the same account. I observe that the sum of \$2 million is being allocated for

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1982. I should like the Minister to re-assess this position taking into account the acute situation which has recently developed. It is obvious that there will be the need for more public assistance, taking into account that many persons have been dismissed and it will mean that this department will necessarily need to give a lot of public assistance.

I give an example. From two different Ministries a husband and his wife were dismissed. They are the parents of five children, which means that they are both out of jobs and it is obvious that public assistance in this respect will be necessary until their rehabilitation.

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(Cde. Belgrave continues)

There would be many cases of this nature and I would suggest the Minister, instead of decreasing, this head should have been increased by a substantial sum. 222, the legend says, increased for rates and number of cases. In 1981, \$6,500,000 was approved. The revised estimates is \$10 million, the estimates in 1982 is \$9,500,000. I wonder if the Minister may be able to tell us if he expect some debts that will reduce this amount, or maybe some migration, because if \$10 million was used in 1981, it is obvious that because of persons coming to age, a greater number within a period of time, that this head should have been increased. Nevertheless, we do ask that the old age pension be increased to satisfy the needs, taking into account the high cost within the society today. Instead of an increase, it would appear that austerity is taken here, there is a reduction. Can the Minister satisfy this House that \$9,500,000 will be adequate for that purpose of old age pension.

Cde. Speaker, we have always been asking about social rehabilitation – that this area in terms of the estimates be looked at some more. I understand that this head is to take the account rehabilitation of some very needy cases. Extremely needy cases and in some cases they were giving five or eight dollars at the then time, I think it increased to ten dollars, but really, some people need to be rehabilitated and \$50,000 coming to this head, to my mind, is not adequate and we will be asking the Minister if there is a possibility.

The Chairman: Just a minute Cde. Belgrave. These people do not want to stop making noise, if not get the Police to put them out. It is very disturbing Cde. Leader of the House for people in the lobby to be making noise.

Cde. Belgrave: To re-examine this head with a view of increasing it or maybe the Minister can satisfy us that this is adequate and how adequate \$50,000 can be used for social rehabilitation.

The Chairman: Cde. Green.

Cde. Green: Cde. Chairman, on the first question raised about Public Assistance, I think my friend is a little confused. There are particular and peculiar characteristics that resolve around the issuance of Public Assistance, Old Age and Social Rehabilitation. I think when he introduced the concept of the difficulty he had with persons who have

been retrenched. There are other additional governmental agencies of a more developmental nature that will help such persons. (1) They will be offered other job opportunities and (ii) there are the banks, the Agriculture Bank and the other agencies that will assist them if they are prepared to sit down and work out projects and programmes. We are satisfied that with the careful management of our old age pension vote this year that this sum will suffice.

The Chairman:

HEAD 36 – SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$11,956,000 for head 36, Social Assistance stand part of the Estimates.

Head 36, Social Assistance - \$11,956 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 102 and 103.

HEAD 41 – CENTRAL HOUSING AND PLANNING AUTHORITY

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,683,000 for Head 41, Central Housing and Planning Authority stands part of the Estimates.

Head 41, Central Housing and Planning Authority - \$1,683,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 104.

DIVISION 525 – MINISTRY OF HOUSING

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,265,000 for Division 525, Ministry of Housing stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Belgrave: Subhead 2 Cde. Chairman, Laing Avenue Apartments - \$115,000 the legend says to rebuild the Laing Avenue Apartments. Can the Minister say if the legend represents the thought rebuild or repair.

The Chairman: Cde. Green.

Cde. Green: To rebuild Cde. Chairman. It is pellucidly clear and absolutely correct.

Division 525, Ministry of Housing - \$4,265,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 105 and 106.

HEAD 69 – MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,033,600 for Head 69, Ministry of Regional Development stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 299, this is speaking about regional bodies that have already been established. We are in possession of information that many of them are not functioning efficiently and even those who are charged with the administration of these bodies are not opaque with the authorities and powers. In many of the regions today, there is evidence of not only inefficiency, but mismanagement and in some cases there have been reports of fraud. A great deal of talk is going on about regionalising and decentralising, but we have found that with the establishment of these bodies, the people generally in this country are not benefiting because of the complaints I am alluding to tonight in the House.

In many of the areas, people complain of lack of water supply, roads and other facilities that are vital to their sustenance and existence, but no heed is given to their representations and their complaints. I am informed that at least in one region the Chairman has been relieved or will be shortly relieved of his responsibility as head of that region. I will call on the Minister to tell us if this is so. I understand that the Chairman of region five is under investigation. I do not want to give more details but I thought that I should be specific in two instances. If this is the situation, something is terribly wrong in the regional system because just over a year elections for these regions were held in December 1980. December 1981 was just one year and the life of the region and those who constitute the region under the Regional Democratic Organs Act, they were entitled to remain in office for a period of five years and if at least one of the Officers is going to be called upon to resign or he has been removed just over a year. Cde. Chairman, the Assembly ought to be informed of what is taking place in the region so that we can know exactly where we are going.

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Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: As we overlook the Estimates, as we listen to all the speeches we hear the talk about the great regional system. I would like to, specifically, ask is it true that a chairman has been removed within the last 72 hours or will even before that be removed or is in the process of being removed to Georgetown.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, if you want to be specific be specific. If it is near Georgetown you have to ask him. You have about seven or eight.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Is it true that the chairman of Region 3 has been removed or will be removed shortly? If so, what are the reasons for removing him? Is the Minister satisfied with the functioning of Region 3? If he is not what are the complaints, specifically that necessitated removing of a chairman? What steps are taken ...

The Chairman: I am only allowing you this. When you get to Region 3 you would not get to ask.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The other question is true that the Chairman of Region 5 is being investigated and is it true that there are a number of complaints about the functions, and operation more specifically to Region 5? If my information is right the Minister will be doing the nation a duty and really fulfilling his role as a Minister in this Parliament, bearing in mind the Minister's party is advocating 'tell it like it is'. Do not with-hold, do not conceal. Let us know because it is vital that every single cent expended in whatever area is properly spent and accounted for and not only in that form but whatever standards the people are entitled to under these various institutions that we are getting maximum service to better their standard of living and conditions which are so terribly bad today in Guyana.

Then we reach to the second link of this very head. Provision in the Estimate for the establishment and development. Since 1970 elections were not held for district and village councils. It is clear that those members that exist in the country in the year 1982 are in position of the people of the various areas. If we talk about people's democracy, if we utter phrases about people's involvement and if we want to really get the people motivated for development of this country I am sure that Government is guilty of the greatest misjudgement, error by imposing on the people in the various parts of Guyana people they have not chosen and who have been there for well over ten years. We have

looked, though we were not given an opportunity to debate the White Paper, but these papers were circulated and we have had a look at it. It is stated there will be not only regional councils but district councils, co-operatives, neighbourhood, sub-regions and what have you. Since their coming-to-being of the Act we have entered about the 14th month but we have not been hearing anything about these sub-regions or neighbourhoods or co-operatives or what have you. What is the position and I think the time is fitting for the Minister of this Head to tell us exactly what is happening in this area and for him to say whether in establishing these bodies the people's will will prevail or again those areas concerning those people who are going to be affected are going to be subjected to further imposition and violations of their rights. The country is in serious economic predicament and if at all there is a possibility existing for us to life ourselves out of it serious and meaningful involvement of the people, to me, are the prerequisite for such change economically and otherwise in this country.

Mr. M. A. Abraham: Mr. Chairman, Subhead 298 in respect of Amerindian Residence and Hostel maintenance, etc. Sir, it is with deep regret that I note that there has been a drastic cut of \$18,500 over last year's provision. Anyway, the question is the Amerindian residence here in Georgetown the roof at this moment is leaking and what with the rains? Second question. With respect to the hostels, specifically in Corriverton and Charity, have those hostels had any maintenance done to them in recent times? Thank you.

The Minister of Regional Development (Cde. Oscar Clarke): Cde. Chairman, first of all I wish to indicate that the sum of \$1.09 million provided under this subhead has been provided to meet the expenses connected with development of existing and the establishment of the new Local Democratic Organs. Now we already have, as the House knows and I think the Member knows, the Local Democratic Organs, in-place, the members of these bodies function, in the case of N.C.L.D.O. the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of that body, two from each of the ten regions meet from time to time and function as overall supervisors of the system which we are implementing. In the case the Regional Democratic Council, these councillors, as the House knows, were elected by popular vote in December, 1980 and the councilors have been performing the duties and statutory duties provided under the LDO Act and they have been doing so satisfactorily. Cde. Chairman, I say satisfactorily because this is a new system. It is a little over a year old and the councilors, Chairman and Vice-Chairman have been attempting to grapple with new responsibilities in terms of regional development. Responsibilities which hitherto did not devolve on the local Government system. As a result, I am not surprised that the honourable members would have heard criticism and would be able to level certain criticisms as regard shortcomings which have taken place in some of the regions,

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indeed at all of the regions. But I would be less than honest with this House, Cde. Chairman, if I did not indicate that during the first year of operation of the Regional Democratic Councils in all of the regions the people of the regions were able to realise substantial benefits and the central Government has been able to get a lot more achieved in the regions as a result of the work of the Regional Development Council.

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21:30 hrs

(Cde. Clarke continues)

Cde. Chairman, I want to say that it is not true that any of the Chairman have been relieved of their positions. Specifically, in response to the question on Region 5, the Chairman of Region 5 is not under investigation. So the hon. Member has got his information quite incorrect.

On the question of the Local Authorities Elections, I think the Member knows that prior to 1970 these Councils did not have elections for some ten years. In fact, when I made my presentation on the Budget Speech I made the point that in relation to the establishment of the new Councils, that is to say the sub-regional to the People's Co-operative Councils, those five other sectors of the system, the problem which we encountered in 1981 was connected with the finalisation of the boundaries relating to the establishment of those sub-divisions. Work is proceeding on that and during this year that work would be completed. As a result of the completion of that work, the Government is going to be in a position to name a date for elections to be held for those Councils. When those elections are held the people will be expressing their popular will once again for the membership of those Councils. So I do not understand the anticipation of my friend. I hope that when those elections are held the People's Progressive Party will field the full slate of candidates for all the sectors and will, indeed, participate.

Cde. Abraham asked about the Amerindian Residence in Georgetown. It is true that work is to proceed during this year on the Amerindian Residence in Georgetown and the funds provided here have been provided precisely for that purpose.

In respect of Charity and Corriverton, work did not take place on those two during 1981. There was some mobilisation done at Charity, materials were purchased and work will begin there during the course of this year. At Corriverton, we anticipate that work will also begin there in the last quarter of this year for the rehabilitation of the Amerindian Residence.

Head 69, Ministry of Regional Development -- \$4,033,600 -- agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 167.

DIVISION 538 – MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$800,000 for Division 538, Ministry of Regional Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 4, Matarkai Development Authority. We have spent from 1979 to the current year about \$6 million of this Authority and what I think ought to be questioned, and questioned with the greatest effectiveness, is the fact that there is no revenue shown from this Authority. When it was started we all knew that it was supposed to be agricultural, it was more or less a kind of a state farm and then extended. But surely, if we are going to spend money, the Government owes it to the Assembly to tell us whether there has been any income or not. But when one looks at the Estimates and finds nothing as coming from the project or the Authority, then it is time we ask why this input and there is no income from the Authority. Our information here is, and it has been for some time, that this Authority is not properly managed. Millions of dollars have been widely spent in this Authority and I want to call, on behalf of Members of the People's Progressive Party, for an impartial investigating team for the Matarkai Development Project so that it can be investigated from its inception to the current, and a report be submitted to this Assembly.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, the Matarkai Development Authority has been functioning during 1981 under the general guidance and supervision of the Regional Democratic Council of Region 1. As a result, during 1981 you will know that while the sum of \$2,500 million was approved in the Estimates, the sum spent was \$1,667 million. The sum being asked for in 1982 is half a million. The point I want to make is this, you will know that as a result of the operations at Matarkai coming under the purview of the Regional Democratic Council of Region 1 the management in that Authority has been more effective. As a result the amount of money being asked for in support of the work of the Authority is decreasing. The Central Government is being asked to vote less in 1982.

In 1981 the Authority was able to put under cultivation an acreage of 1,041 and that acreage was a significant improvement on any previous years' acreage under crops. In 1982 the work programme of Matarkai is making provision for 1,600 acres to put under cultivation and the crops are corn, black-eye peas, soya beans, pumpkins, peanuts and so on. Revenue derived from the Authority is ploughed back into the business and it

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is supplemented by the Central Government. The point I am making is that because we can see a progressive decline in the amount being asked for from the Central Government you will see that the Authority is beginning to make substantial progress in terms of its own revenue position.

Cde. Clarke: I am hopeful with the continued good guidance of the Regional Democratic Council of Region 1, the Matarki Development Authority is going to break even in a year's time and would begin to make surpluses which would be reflected. My friend would like to see them reflected. They will be reflected.

Division 538, Ministry of Regional Development - \$800,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 168 and 169.

HEAD 70 – REGION NO. 1 – BARIMA/WAINI

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,554,400, Head 70, Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Speaker, page 168, Head 70, subhead 126, I see here Agriculture Farm Labourers, and it appears that Agricultural Farm Labourers actually appeared --

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: What subhead?

Cde. Basir: 126. I am wondering whether the Minister can say whether these farm workers are employed in the Farm Oil Project or some state farm or Matarki as he had mentioned, or whether they are involved in having that at Jones Town resuscitated.

The Chairman: Cde. Clarke.

Cde. Clarke: This item, Cde. Chairman, refers to the Agricultural Demonstration Station and the workers attached to that station.

Head 70, Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini - \$1,554,400 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 170.

DIVISION 539 – REGION NO. 1 – BARIMA/WAINI

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,042,000, Division 539, Region 1 – Barima/Waini stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Speaker, page 170, subheads 6 and 7. Under subhead 6 there is an amount of money allocated for roads and the legend reads “To upgrade part of the road between Yarakita and Hosororo.” But from latest information, Cde. Speaker, the Wauna/Yarikita is in a very poor state and this is one of the main roads on which important production like cassava and peanuts are being transported. I would like to know whether the Minister has intentions of extending that road to Matthews Ridge, because there is already a train and that has to do with production.

On item 7, which designation deals with Land and Water transport. I am wondering whether the Minister has intentions also of thinking of a mere escape to the between Upper Baramali to the main seashore thus reducing a travelling distance of 183 miles to 10 miles and that is an important water way similar to that of the Mora passage.

The Chairman: Cde. Basir, it is only because of you that I am allowing the question.

Cde. Clarke: The money for the rehabilitation and repair of roads to which my friend refers, would be appearing under Maintenance and really not under this Head. If he turns the page back he will see \$250,000 being provided under maintenance and that road would be maintained out of that sum and of course water transport again that question does not really refer to this item.

Division 539, Region 1 – Barima/Waini - \$1,042,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 171 and 172.

HEAD 71, REGION 2 – POMEROON/SUPENAAM

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,429,000 for Head 71, Region 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: One short question, sir, under this subhead 214 on page 172. There is a provision for expenses for Local Democratic Councils, \$60,000 but there is no legend or explanation to say what purpose that sum of money will be used. I will be grateful if the Minister will let us know.

The Chairman: Cde Clarke.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Speaker, the expense of 1981 in the operation of these Councils indicate the need for a sum of money to be placed within the competence of the Councils to help in the supportive work relative to the mission of the Regional Councils. That mission being the mobilisation and in general, the involvement of people in the task of development of the region. One of the problems that we had was that the ineffective functioning during 1981 of the sub-committees of the Council which have the responsibility of organising and mobilising people for development. Those sub-committees did not function well enough because the members of those said sub-committees could not really move as freely and hold their meetings as my friend Cde. --

The Chairman: Yes. Cde. Clarke, you are not dealing with your friend, you are dealing with Parliament.

Cde. Clarke: My friend, Cde. Persaud knows a lot about this and so we have put some money in this area, especially for that purpose. He will notice that this is an amount that is being repeated under this Head in all of the regions.

Head 71, Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam agreed to and order to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 173.

DIVISION 540 – REGION 2 – POMEROON/SUPENAAM

Question proposed that the sum of \$675,000 for Division 540, Region 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: On subhead three there is a provision for some infrastructural work, but I want to bring to the attention of the Minister that the bridges at Rivers Town and Somerset in Bath are in a very way and it is almost impossible --

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud, look, let us deal with the legend.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: What I am saying is --

The Chairman: What I am saying is let us deal with the legend.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: The legend says that --

The Chairman: Right, right, well that is what we are dealing with.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Can I ask the Minister whether things like bridges where vehicles have got to pass in a bad way --

The Speaker: Cde. Basir, yes, you wanted to ask a question?

Cde. Basir: Cde. Speaker, I want to speak on page 173, subhead 6. I wanted to speak of the canals in the lower Pomeroun.

The Chairman: You cannot speak under 6 which deals with Education.

Cde. Basir: Subhead 3, sorry.

The Chairman: Subhead 3? Now, you can only speak on what the legend talks about.

Cde. Basir: It has to do with canals. It has --

The Chairman: To provide for the completion of the Aberdeen/Cozier Façade, Charity Revetment, Aurora River Defence and to empolder agricultural lands in the Pomeroun riverain areas with EEC assistance.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Speaker, I wanted to explain to this Assembly how this canal is being kept.

The Chairman: Well, I do not know how you will do that here.

Cde. Basir: Because this has to do with production and these canals are being dugged and they are being blocked up.

Division 540, Region 2 – Pomeroun/Supenaam - \$2,429,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

21:50 hrs

The Chairman: Pages 174 and 175.

HEAD 72 – REGION NO. 3 –
ESSEQUIBO ISLANDS/WEST DEMERARA

Question proposed that that sum of \$2,649,400 for Head 72 – Region No. 3, Essequibo Islands/West Demerara stand part of the Estimates.

Head 72, Region No. 3, Essequibo Islands/West Demerara - \$2,649,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 176.

DIVISION 541 – REGION 3
ESSEQUIBO ISLANDS/WEST DEMERARA

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,230,000 for Division 541, Region No. 3, Essequibo Islands/West Demerara, stand part of the Estimates.

Division 541, Region No. 3, Essequibo Islands/West Demerara - \$4,230,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 177 and 178.

HEAD 73 – REGION NO. 4
DEMERARA/MAHAICA

Question proposed that the sum of \$6,169,400 for Head 73, Region No. 4, Demerara/Mahaica, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 73, Region No. 4, Demerara/Mahaica - \$6,169,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 179.

DIVISION 542 – REGION NO. 4

DEMERARA/MAHAICA

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,785,000 for Region No. 4, Demerara/Mahaica, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, against subhead 1, Agricultural Development, there is a legend which says, “To meet infrastructural costs of development works in the Linden/Soesdyke and Cane Grove areas.” I wonder if the Minister would be kind enough to identify the specific work that will be done in these areas bearing in mind the number of problems that exist at Cane Grove.

The Chairman: Cde. Clarke.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I think we are going pretty fast.

The Chairman: The question must be relevant. I allow a lot of irrelevant questions because of the time factor.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: When I talk about infrastructural work at Cane Grove I am speaking from a background of knowledge of the area.

The Chairman: You asked a simple question. Hear what he is going to say.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, the amount provided here would be specifically in terms of Soesdyke/Linden for road and bridges to the Kuru Kururu and Silver Hill area, and for Cane Grove it is to assist in ensuring the provision of second certificates in that area. It is for infrastructural works connected with the general housing area and also the cultivation areas so that the people in the area can get their second certificates.

The Chairman: Cde. Persaud’s point is: What are those works? He wants to know specifically. If you cannot answer, you cannot answer. If you can, you will tell him.

Cde. Clarke: General works are provided. For instance, the trenches at Grandfield and places like that and it is also for the general overhauling of the drainage system there.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, what I want to draw to the attention of the Minister is that this is a very serious area and many of us have experience of the kind of suffering and hardships people face in the Cane Grove area.

The Chairman: He cannot tell you what the specific works are. Why do you ask?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Let me put it this way, I might help you: Whether these infrastructure areas will ensure that in the future the people will not suffer the severe flooding they suffered during heavy rainfall. We are passing through the worst times. We who are living in areas not affected cannot appreciate the area, the sub-human conditions. I would like to invite members of this Parliament to go to Cane Grove and they would understand what I am talking about.

The Chairman: You are asking Cde. Clarke to be an obeah man. I will now put the question.

Division 542, Region 4, Demerara/Mahaica - \$3,785,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 180 and 181.

HEAD 74 – REGION NO. 5

MAHAICA/BERBICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,830,000 for Head 74, Region No. 5, Mahaica/Berbice, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Belgrave: Page 181, subhead 404, Maintenance of Roads. Can the Minister tell us if this sum of \$400,000 will be adequate to relieve the situation that is developing, particularly with this rainfall, in access roads within the Mahaica/Berbice Region.

Let me give an example. The road at De Hoop is in a terrible state. Some money was expended to alleviate the problems at one point where the residents were suffering, vehicles and tractors laden with paddy and other materials cannot pass along the road up to the bridge. That road, Cde. Chairman, lies primarily within a rice area. Tremendous holes have developed in that area. There are other similar areas but I use De Hoop as an example. Can the Minister give this House an assurance that this department will be looking at that particular area to see what relief can be given with the sum of \$400,000 listed here?

The Chairman: Cde. Clarke.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, \$100,000 of that \$400,000 is earmarked for De Hoop.

Head 74, Region No. 5, Mahaica/Berbice - \$1,830,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 182.

DIVISION 543 – REGION 5

MAHAICA/BERBICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$550,000 for Division 543, Region 5, Mahaica/Berbice, stand part of the Estimates.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: A short question, sir, under subhead 6, Pure Water Supply. There is a provision for the extension of the Pure Water Supply System to the Cotton Tree area. This area is the hardest hit on the West Coast Berbice. Will the Minister tell us how early the people are going to be relieved and when the work will be started?

Cde. Clarke: That work has already started. Fifteen thousand feet of P.V.C. pipes have been put in.

Division 543, Region 5, Mahaica/Berbice - \$550,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 183 and 184.

HEAD 75 – REGION NO. 6

EAST BERBICE/CORENTYNE

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,901,400 for Head 75, Region No. 6, East Berbice/Corentyne stand part of the Estimates.

1982-04-05

22:00 – 22:10 hrs

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

22:00 hrs

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Equally short question Sir and it comes under subhead 214, the sum is \$200,000 as against \$60,000. I would like to ask him.

Cde. Clarke: The answer is the same Cde. Speaker.

HEAD 75 – REGION 6

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,901,400 for Head 75, Region 6 stand part of the Estimates.

Head 75, Region 6 - \$3,901,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 185.

DIVISION 544 – REGION 6

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,080,000 for Division 544, Region 6 stand part of the Estimates.

Division 544, Region 6 - \$3,080,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 186 and 187.

HEAD 76 – REGION 7

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,207,000 for Head 76, Region 7 stand part of the Estimates.

Head 76, Region 7 - \$1,207,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 188.

DIVISION 545 – REGION 7

Question proposed that the sum of \$665,000 for Division 545, Region 7 stand part of the Estimates.

Division 545, Region 7 - \$665,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 189 and 190.

HEAD 77 – REGION 8

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,286,400 for Head 77, Region 8 stand part of the Estimates.

Head 77, Region 8 - \$1,286,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 191.

DIVISION 546 – REGION 8

Question proposed that the sum of \$755,000 for Division 546, Region 8 stand part of the Estimates.

Division 546, Region 8 - \$755,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 192 and 193.

HEAD 78 – REGION 9

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,416,000 for Head 78, Region 9 stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Abraham: Mr. Chairman, subhead 124 and 301. Under subhead 124, I want to speak on the topic Master Masons and Bricklayers. Sir, it has come to my attention and I stand to be corrected that in early December Region 9 issued a contract to a

Brazilian National for the manufacture of 60,000 bricks. I am told that we have indigenous Guyanese brick makers in that region who could have been awarded the contract rather than the Brazilian. Could the honourable Minister say what was the criteria used in offering that contract, bearing in mind that the Brazilians are charging 90c for each brick, whereas we could have saved a certain amount of money if we had afforded the contract to the Guyanese, because they are going to charge 75c for the bricks.

Subhead 301, Materials, Equipment, Supplies. Drugs and Medical Supplies. Sir, I wonder if I can speak a little on the Lethem Hospital – conditions there. I just want to say in passing that the Lethem Hospital is one of the most efficiently run hospitals in the country. According to the Honourable member Mrs. Jagan, you do not get a smell there. It is so clean there. There is only one slight hitch there and it is, sometimes the Hospital suffers at times from the load shedding exercise in that their deep freeze usually spoils the meat that is put in there to preserve. So, I am asking Sir, if it is possible if region 9 could think of installing a stand by plant so that incidents of spoilage would not take place. Thank you.

The Chairman: Cde. Clarke.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Chairman, I am aware of the contract which was issued. It is a contract which was issued by a private contractor and did not involve the regional administration.

Secondly, with respect to the load shedding. Work is already taking place to ensure a more regular and efficient supply of electricity for Lethem. A standby plant is already on the way to Lethem.

Head 78, Region 9 - \$1,416,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 194.

DIVISION 547 – REGION 9

Question proposed that the sum of \$630,000 for Division 547, Region 9 stand part of the Estimates.

1982-04-05

22:00 – 22:10 hrs

Division 547, Region 9 - \$630,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 195 and 196.

HEAD 79 – REGION 10

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,181,400 for Head 79, Region 10 stand part of the Estimates.

Head 79 – Region 10 - \$1,181,400 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 197.

DIVISION 548 – REGION 10

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,400,000 for Division 548 – Region 10 stand part of the Estimates.

Division 548 – Region 10 - \$1,400,000 – agreed to and order to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly Resumes.

The Speaker: Comrades, tomorrow we will start with the Ministry of National Development, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Energy, Attorney General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and if we can get to Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Home Affairs. Cde. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to tomorrow, 1982-04-06 at 14.00hrs.” [The Vice President, Parliament Affairs and Party/State Relations]

Adjourned accordingly at 22:10 hrs.