

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2012-2014) OF THE TENTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

81ST Sitting

Friday, 11TH April, 2014

The Assembly convened at 2.05 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT'S BUSINESS

MOTION TO APPROVE THE ESTIMATS OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 2014

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

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

AND WHEREAS Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for the financial year 2014 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 24th March, 2014;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2014, of a total sum of two hundred and five billion, three hundred and seventy million, five hundred and eighteen thousand dollars (\$205,370,518,000), excluding fourteen billion, and six hundred and seventy six million, one hundred and forty three thousand dollars (\$14,676,143,000) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the under-mentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.”
[Minister of Finance]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will resume our consideration of the 2014 Estimates.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

In Committee of Supply

Agency: 13 Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Current Expenditure

Programme: 131 - Main Office - \$108,368,000

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, might I respectfully direct the Minister’s attention to line item 6116 – Contracted Employees - for which the proposed budgetary allocation has been increased by a sum of – if my Math is correct - \$4.6 million, and for which the staff complement has been increased by a number of two. My question to the Hon. Minister is: Could he kindly provide the designations and emoluments of these two new employees as well as the rationale for same?

Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development [Mr. Whittaker]: Mr. Chairman, the two contracted employees are a Driver at a salary of \$43,137 and a Confidential Secretary to the Hon. Minister at a salary of \$54,934.

Mr. Bulkan: I did ask, Hon. Minister, for the rationale for employing two new staff.

Mr. Whittaker: The rationale is that the positions were vacant and needed to be filled.

Mr. Bulkan: Is the Hon. Minister saying he did not have a Confidential Secretary?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, in 2013, there was only one and we needed two.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Hon. Minister. Mr. Chairman, the same line item: would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to provide the designation as well as the emoluments for the top three officials in this category.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the top three positions will be the Permanent Secretary - basic salary \$530,100; followed by the Deputy Permanent Secretary - \$465,375; followed by Hinterland Coordinator - \$399,946.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Hon. Minister. A follow-up please: Could the Hon. Minister kindly state why the entire staff complement under this heading, all 17 employees, is contract employees and not members of the traditional public service.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I am not quite sure what the rationale behind the question is. The fact is that they are contracted employees. The fact is they have that choice and that is the choice they made.

Mr. Bulkan: Through the Chair, is the Hon. Minister saying that for all 17 of these employees, it is their wish to be contracted employees and not members of the traditional public service?

Mr. Chairman: That is what Minister said; they have the choice and the choice is exercised.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Hon. Minister. Line item 6265: Could the Hon. Minister give this House a reason for the increase of \$7 million or almost 50% under this heading, from \$15 million to \$22 million.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, increased travel to the region by the Ministers, Permanent Secretary, Advisor to the Minister, and the Hinterland Coordinator...because we determined very early last year, at our retreat, that we needed to get out there with greater frequency to monitor, to evaluate, and we want to continue. That is the reason.

Mr. Bulkan: I note monitor and evaluate. Thank you, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Chairman, I refer to the entire programme, all of the line items, and I crave your indulgence to refer to the Constitution, the document which the Hon. Attorney General is fond of quoting.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, we all should be actually; it is our Constitution. Go ahead.

Mr. Bulkan: ...which he usually describes as being supreme. In particular, I refer to Chapter VII which contains articles 71 to 78B. It is titled “Local Democracy” and has a subtitle “Local Democratic Organs”. With your permission, I would like to read one...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we are to put questions on line items.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, it has to do with all of the line items under this Programme.

Mr. Chairman: Well, I can allow you to maybe make a statement but for us to have a debate on the Constitution...

Mr. Bulkan: If you will allow me to read it, Mr. Chairman, article 75 of the Constitution states:

“Parliament shall provide that local democratic organs shall be autonomous and take decisions which are binding upon their agencies and institutions, and upon the communities and citizens of their areas.” *[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Well, let us hear him. He must not be making the statement in a vacuum; he must be making it for a reason.

Mr. Bulkan: Yes, Mr. Chairman, and I refer now to the objective of Programme 131. This is what it states on page 79:

“To ensure the successful implementation of the Ministry’s plans, policies and development programmes in accordance with good governance... “

And it goes on. So the Constitution tells us that the development plans have to be those of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) and of the local democratic organs. The programme objective tells us that it is the Ministry’s plans and programmes. My question to the Hon. Minister is: in inviting this honourable House to proceed along this path, are we not being asked to operate contrary to the Constitution, in fact, to violate the Constitution?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I would not expect the Minister to answer but if he wishes to, he may. But quite frankly, he is not obliged to answer that question. It is not a question that arises out of the consideration of the Estimates for 2014. Minister, you may indicate your wish.

Mr. Whittaker: I do not wish to respond, Sir. I wish to focus on this.

Mr. Chairman: I do not believe that is an appropriate question for the consideration of Estimates, quite frankly.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have no further questions.

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Chairman, under Contracted Employees, I am kindly asking the Minister, how many of those people are above 65 years? Is there any contract worker above 65 years?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the answer is zero.

Dr. Ramayya: My next question is on line item 6281 – Security Services. I have seen a \$3.4 million increase. Can the Minister explain to this House how many additional security guards were employed and for what reason?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the number of security guards was increased to cater for the Minister. The number of guards is nine.

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, I want to draw the Minister's attention to line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence. I note, Minister, that the amount spent in 2013 was \$7,200,000. Can you say what purpose this head serves in relation to the activity that it is supposed to deal with?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, it is under this particular item that the cost for travel both by road and by river to communities is met.

Mr. Trotman: A follow-up question: I know the Minister has answered but he did not say if this travel is done by administrative officials only.

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, Mr. Chairman, this is Main Office.

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, my question is a follow-up to Dr. Ramayya's: who is the service provider?

Mr. Whittaker: Strategic Action Security Limited.

Ms. Ferguson: Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw the Minister's attention to line item 6265. I have noticed that in 2013 you spent less than what was actually budgeted for, but in 2014 you have an increase. Can you explain the reason for this, Sir? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I am advised that line item 6265 covers air transport. Because of increased travel to the ten Regions, there is the increase.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: Line item 6116: Could the Hon. Minister state what is his Ministry's establishment for Hinterland Coordinators and how many are there?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is one; that is what the establishment requires and that is what we have.

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon: A follow-up please: Is this the one person that you said was employed recently? You earlier answered by responding to Mr. Bulkan that one of the two contracted employees you hired this year was a Hinterland Coordinator. I just want to confirm that.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I did not say so. The two persons to whom I referred were the Confidential Secretary and a Driver. I never said Hinterland Coordinator.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Minister, line item 6261 – Local Travel and Subsistence - \$7 million: Does that include meals?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, it does.

Mr. Scott: What is the difference between that and line item 6293 – Refreshment and Meals - \$440,000? Is it for the same set of people?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6293 is office related; it is for when we have meetings and training programmes. It is for those purposes.

Mr. Jones: A follow-up on line item 6265: The Minister's explanation is that it is due to the increased visits to the regions. Could the Minister explain what has occasioned these increased visits?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I did indicate earlier that the Ministry had determined the need to intensify our outreaches into communities for the purpose of engaging the residents - it is part of the budget process – and also monitoring projects, *et cetera*.

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Chairman, again I want to go back to line item 6281 - Security Services. Is the Minister in a position to tell us the total paid to one security, the highest paid security guard in this area?

Mr. Chairman: There is a contract and the company would be in charge of payments and hourly rates, *et cetera*.

Mr. Whittaker: That is right.

Mr. Chairman: Maybe you need to say that to the Member.

Mr. Whittaker: We have contracted the services of a company; I gave the name, Strategic Action Security Limited. They determine what emoluments they pay their workers; we do not.

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Chairman, I checked the amount of money which is equivalent to one employee - \$121,000 per month. So I want to know how the security was bid for this amount of money.

Mr. Chairman: How they bid for it?

Dr. Ramayya: It was a bidding situation for the security company.

Mr. Chairman: How was the company contracted, Minister? Were bids put?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, it was through the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board.

Mr. Chairman: The bid was won through the public tendering process.

Dr. Ramayya: But still, Mr. Chairman, for this House, I see here \$121,000 per month. Something is wrong, paying a security \$121,000 per month per person.

Mr. Chairman: Which line item is that?

Dr. Ramayya: It is line item 6281.

Mr. Chairman: It is Security Services at \$13.140 million.

Mr. Whittaker: I do not claim to understand what the Hon. Member is talking about. What I can say, Mr. Chairman, is that we are talking about nine guards working three eight-hour shifts per day which is 24 hours. There are varying rates of pay.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the emoluments and conditions of service are dependent not on the Ministry but on the company. Some companies have sergeants; some have inspectors and what else I do not know. That really would be in the preserve of the company to determine what it collects and it then decides what it pays out. It has to keep something to make a profit if not it would not be in business. So you would not divide this sum by nine because the company would not be earning anything for itself if you made that calculation.

Programme: 131- Main Office - \$108,368,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration – \$47,538,000

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration - \$47,538,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration - \$12,100,000

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, project 1900700 - \$359,000,000: Could the Minister kindly tell us how much of this money is going to the municipalities? And could he kindly explain to the House what he means by “local community councils”. I have never heard about that.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the allocation to the municipalities is \$77 million.

Mrs. Lawrence: How much is each getting?

Mr. Whittaker: The Georgetown City Council heads the list with \$20 million; New Amsterdam - \$10 million; Linden - \$10 million; Anna Regina - \$9 million; Corriverton - \$8 million; and Rose Hall - \$8 million. When you check those, you will find you need \$12 million more. That is

additional funds made available this year and so each from these six municipalities can access that. But I have to explain that this year we are going to, for the first time, operationalise the fiscal transfers formula. Therefore, even though \$77 million is available, it will not be that the municipalities get what they have been receiving over the years. Up to 2013, the figures I gave you is what they got.

Somewhere down the line, we are probably going to talk about the fiscal transfers and how we are going to operationalise that. But the point is that \$77 million has been made available for municipalities' subvention grants, representing an increase of \$12 million over what was allocated in 2013.

Mr. Bulkan: A point of order, Mr. Chairman, I think we have actually jumped one Programme head which is 132 and gone to 133. I believe we should be addressing Programme 132 which is Ministry Administration.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you; it was just pointed out to me. Thank you very much for that.

Go ahead Mr. Trotman.

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, project code 2400100 – Land Transport: I notice there is a request for some money here to purchase a vehicle. Can the Minister say what type of vehicle is going to be purchased and where specifically that vehicle is going to be used?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, this Land Cruiser – the type of vehicle – is an addition to the Ministry's pool of vehicles and will be used to move personnel and materials around to visit communities, *et cetera*.

Programme: 132 – Ministry Administration – \$12,100,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 133 – Regional Development - \$177,392,000

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, line item 6111 – Administrative – a proposed budgetary allocation of \$19.7 million: The Staffing Details says the staffing complement is increased. Would the Hon.

Minister kindly give a reason for the increase of staff as well as the designations and emoluments of the two new staff members?

2.35 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the two additional administrative staff are two senior Regional Development Officers (RDOs), who are engaged, at a salary of \$84,565 each.

Mr. Bulkan: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: I note that the budgetary allocations have gone up, but there has actually been a reduction in staff. Would the Hon. Minister care to provide an explanation of why this is so?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes Mr. Chairman, there was a reduction in staff, the resignation of a Regional Development Officer, but the difference represents unpaid gratuities for 2013.

Mr. Bulkan: Follow-up please. Could the Hon. Minister provide the designations as well as the emoluments of the three highest paid officials under this line item?

Mr. Whittaker: These will be the Special Projects Officer - \$297,675, followed by the Community Development Officer (CDO) - \$284,110 and the Principal Regional Development Officer - \$167,177.

Mr. Bulkan: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency, for which there is a budgetary provision of almost \$96 million, could the Hon. Minister kindly provide a breakdown of some of the major components under this heading?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, captured there would be arrears of gratuity for the seven Regional Executive Officers (REOs). That accounts in large measure for the difference between the revised figure of \$92,855,000 for 2013 and the budgeted figure of \$95,964,000 for 2014. Those are the arrears of gratuities for seven of the REOs for 2013.

Mr. Bulkan: I am not sure if the Hon. Minister understood my question. I was not dealing with the reason for the increase; I am dealing with the sum in total. It is if the Minister can provide a breakdown of what the key components are that brings us to this \$96 million.

Mr. Whittaker: These would be basic salary - \$78.2 million per annum, gratuity - \$6.5 million, vacation allowance - \$2.4 million, travel allowance - \$0.4 million, duty allowance - \$0.1 million, house allowance - \$1.9 million, station allowance \$0.4 million, acting allowance - \$0.6 million and stipend which is paid to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor - \$1.6 million. Of course, there will also be the National Insurance Scheme (NIS), employers' contributions - \$3.6 million. The total is \$95,963,000.

Mr. Bulkan: Follow-up please, Mr. Chairman. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to inform Members to whom these salaries and gratuities refer?

Mr. Whittaker: The salaries and gratuities refer to the Regional Executive Officer, the Regional Chairman and the Regional Vice Chairman. These are the officers.

Mr. Bulkan: Would the Minister be kind enough to provide this in a written form?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, unless you advise me that I should not do it, it can be provided.

Mr. Chairman: Is it to advise you not to?

Mr. Whittaker: I thought some people might want to think this is private.

Mr. Chairman: What I would suggest is that you can have the list with the amounts but not necessarily with the names. We do not need to know who they are, but certainly the positions and designations with the salaries are good enough, but not with the names. Could that be provided on Monday, Minister?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Bulkan: Line item 6284, in the details it states "Other". It is a budgetary allocation of \$14,927,000. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to inform us what expenses constitute this "Other"?

Mr. Whittaker: Most of that allocation would have been paid to Puran Brothers Inc. for maintenance of the Lusignan site on the East Coast Demerara and the balance for internet services provided to the Ministry and maintenance of its website.

Mr. Bulkan: I am not sure that the majority of Hon. Members in this Assembly would know, when you say “Lusignan site”, to what you actually referred to

Mr. Whittaker: I am speaking of what people have grown to know as the Lusignan dump site, at the back.

Mr. Bulkan: I refer to the total allocations under this programme 133, the sum of \$177,392,000. I request your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, to refer to the programme objective which is stated on page 58. This is what it states: “To monitor the development of the regions, Neighbourhood Democratic Councils and municipalities ...”

I would like to respectfully refer, also, to the Local Government Commission Act, an Act which came into being as a result of a Bill that was passed in the House, almost eight months ago, in August of last year. That Act requires for its operationalisation a Commencement Order. The Hon. Minister has not issued that Commencement Order to bring this Act into being. My question to the Minister is: Why is this not so? The Hon. Minister comes to the House and informs us under this programme objective, that the very activities, which are to be conducted by the Ministry, for which funding is required, are activities that are supposed to be carried out and undertaken by the very Local Government Commission.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the Minister is not obliged to answer that question, but he may, if he wishes to.

Mr. Whittaker: Sir, I am just checking to see under which of these codes it is captured.

Mr. Chairman: While you are doing that, Members, Standing Order 75(2) speaks to what happens in a Committee of Supply.

“...unless an amendment is proposed under the provisions of the next Standing Order, a debate may take place on the question.

It is that which the Speaker or the Chairman puts.

“Any such debate shall be confined to the policy of the service for which the money is to be provided and shall not deal with the details of any item or Sub-Head but may refer to the details of revenues or funds for which that service is responsible.”

The debate, which we know, is really the question and answer about the money. Issues, such as to why the Commencement Order, and so, has not been effected, though valid questions, must come in the plenary and they may be put to the Minister in the form of a question. At this point in time, we are to confine ourselves to the revenues and the estimates that are before us.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to belabour the point, but you have just made the point that it is the policy I was trying to address. The programme objective states that the policy is to monitor the Local Government Commission - I have the Act with me, Mr. Chairman – and the activities of the Local Government Commission are identical to what is stated here, that the Ministry intends to pursue. The Minister is the only person who stands in between the commencement of the Local Government Commission Act, but yet he comes to this Assembly and requests money for these very activities. This is what I am seeking to ascertain.

Mr. Chairman: Minister, you may, as I said, provide an answer; you are not obliged to.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, during my budget presentation, I did comment on the Commission. I would not go beyond that.

Mr. Chairman: Very well. You repeat and rely on your statements made in the budget presentation.

Mr. Whittaker: That is correct.

Mr. Chairman: Very well.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships): There is figure there for \$12,500,000. Could the Hon. Minister say what type of training it will be, who will access the training, the number of persons accessing the training and how often will there be training?

Mr. Whittaker: It is anticipated that over 700 persons, working in the Regional Democratic Councils (RDCs), municipalities and other Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs), will benefit from a number of these training programmes. We intend to target Overseers, Assistant Overseers, Regional Chairmen, Regional Vice-Chairmen and REOs. We intend also to target staff of our own Ministry, even NDC Councillors. It is good to note that there will be some special training programmes that represent a continuation of our sensitisation on the local

government legislation and elections. It is quite a number and overall over 700 persons will benefit from the training.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you very much.

Ms. Selman: It is notwithstanding that the budgetary provision, under line item 6294, Other, is a very small amount. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the “Other” operating expenses are?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes. It is under this line item that we would normally buy wreaths, sympathy cards, thank you cards and water supply for staff.

Ms. Ferguson: I have noticed, under line item 6312, Subventions to Local Authorities, that last year we approved the sum of \$5 million. Subsequent to that, a supplementary paper for \$24,200,000 came to the National Assembly, in December, for a clean-up campaign in Georgetown. However, I noticed for 2014, the Ministry is now seeking an approval of \$5 million. Minister, am I to understand that this money would take care of business under this line item and you would not come back for a further supplementary during the course of the year?

Mr. Whittaker: Local authorities benefits from subvention grants to which we referred to earlier on. They are also empowered by legislation to garner their own resources. Under this item, this \$5 million is used to assist some of them. There are some local authorities that do not garner rates. Last year – the Minister is quite correct - the expenditures were over \$24 million. Of this sum, \$15 million was used to assist the Georgetown Mayor and City Council in the clean-up of the city and \$5 million to assist the Linden municipality, also. That was just a one-off intervention to assist the Georgetown Mayor and City Council and the Linden Mayor and Town Council and it amounted to \$5 million.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development - \$177,392,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 133 – Regional Development - \$2,453,000,000

Mr. B. Williams: A follow-up to what the Hon. Member Mrs. Lawrence had asked. Project 1900700, Hon. Minister you said \$77 million related to subventions. Might I respectfully enquire, for municipalities, the question of local community councils, what are they?

Mr. Whittaker: The supporting document, which I have in front of me, which accounts for \$359 million, speaks of subventions to municipalities and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils.

Mr. B. Williams: Follow-up Mr. Chairman. Might I respectfully refer the Hon. Minister to the profile 54? If you look in the legend, the description of projects, it entails "Provision of capital subvention to municipalities and local community councils." It is not NDCs.

Mr. Whittaker: Perhaps Sir, it is a synonym for Neighbourhood Democratic Councils.

Hon. Members (Opposition): No.

Mr. B. Williams: Follow-up please. Could the Hon. Minister say if these are Community Development Councils (CDCs) which were being formed around the country by the former Member of this House, Mrs. Sahoy-Shury. How could the Minister come to this honourable House and ask for so much money and he does not know what he is asking it for?

Mr. Whittaker: I thought I was clear. The \$359 million is for municipalities, six of them, and Neighbourhood Democratic Councils, 65 of them.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project 1900600: Could the Hon. Minister say how much money is being allocated for the completion of the Mabaruma Market tarmac and also for the sanitary block at Buxton? Which compound will the Minister rehabilitate and how much money will be allocated for it?

Mr. Whittaker: The Mabaruma Market tarmac is \$8,393,536, it is to complete that; the extension of that tarmac is \$11,908,478; the completion of the resurfacing of the façade of the Ministry's compound is \$1,558,612 and the sanitary block at Buxton Market tarmac is \$2,139,374.

Mrs. Lawrence: Mr. Chairman, it is a follow-up to the Hon. Member Mr. Basil Williams' question. Would the Minister kindly provide the list of the allocation for the \$282 million remaining from the amount of \$359 million to the NDCs?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I will make that available on Monday.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I see the intolerance on the other side, when questions are asked. Your Honour, I was on the other side, as Minister of Local Government, I might, if I may say so, have exhibited some of that intolerance. I do recognise the reason for these questions in the interest of accountability and clarifying what projects we are expending money on.

I now observe, as a follow-up to Hon. Member Basil Williams' question, on this project, titled "Project Development and Assistance", that it is a new project financing with the allocation of \$359 million and, therefore, it requires a legend that would explain for what this capital subvention would be given and it is unacceptable for the legend to read local community council. My very good and honourable friend Mr. Whittaker is trying to bowl a googly to say it means Neighbourhood Democratic Council. We are here, the Committee of Supply, we cannot take the people's money and give it to vague and amorphous bodies. I would like to have that pellucidly clear that the subvention is going to NDCs, and if so, it is to name the NDCs.

Mr. Chairman: Well Hon. Members, the Minister said, a few minutes ago, that the money will go to municipalities, six of them, and NDCs, 65. The Hon. Member Mrs. Lawrence then got up and asked that the breakdown be given for the allocation to each and the Minister said on Monday. So I do not know what other information is needed.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I can give the Hon. Member the information.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead.

Mr. Whittaker: There are, in Region 1, two NDCs. Do the Members want me to read them too? They are Port Kaituma, Matthew Ridge and Arakaka NDCs and Mabaruma and Kumaka NDCs. These are the NDCs that will be receiving the subventions. There are, in Region 2, five more NDCs: Good Hope, Pomona, Aberdeen, Zorg, Annandale, and Rivertown. Is that what the Members want?

Mr. B. Williams: We know there are 65 NDCs. We have done the math. The math states that each NDC is getting \$21 million from the balance if the \$77 million is taken out, and that cannot be because we did the math. Seventy-seven million from \$359 million \$282 million is left. If the

Minister is talking about 65 NDCs he is looking at a \$195 million, if he is dealing with the annual \$3 million to each NDC.

In addition to that, the next legend, which is 55, refers to NDCs. It is clear that when they say NDC they write it. This is speaking about local community councils.

Mr. Whittaker: I want to refer the Hon. Member Mr. Basil Williams to Act 16 of 2013, the Fiscal Transfers Act. Whilst we give you the amount of funds available, this is not going to be business as usual; this is not going to be like what we did up to 2013, where \$195 million was taken and each NDC was given \$3 million. That is 65 NDC by \$3 million which is equal to \$195 million.

If you are activating the fiscal transfer formula, we could not go down the same road. What is happening is that the money goes into a pool, half of it is given to these councils and in respect of the balance the fiscal transfer formula is activated.

Mr. B. Williams: It is a notional amount you have, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Whittaker: If we want further discussions and lessons on it we will have to do it a next day.

Mr. Nagamootoo: I want to ask some questions on project 3600100, Solid Waste Disposal Programme. I have seen the sum of \$1,070,000,000, "Provision for solid waste management programme at Haags Bosch..." My question is whether this amount would conclude the dump site facility. I know it is operationalised. In view of recent reports, I think the Hon. Minister had acknowledged some of those reports of smells, fumes and everything else emanating from the site, it is whether this amount will conclude the expenditure on that project.

Mr. Whittaker: That contract, to which the Hon. Member refers, comes to an end in December, 2014. The amount allocated there is intended to complete the construction aspect of the project, but the operational aspect, of course, will continue beyond December, 2014.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Under this programme, was there any provision for additional dump sites as we saw, not so long ago? If I may say, there were disclosures in the press that there were going to be two more landfills, one on the East Coast Demerara and one on the East Bank Demerara,

and actually a contract been executed in the sum of \$6 billion. Was that intended under this programme, or was it not in the card at all?

Mr. Whittaker: My understanding is that the allocation is to be able to complete the construction of the Haags Bosch Landfill Site.

Mr. Nagamootoo: Sir, may I ask a follow-up on this? I know this, so I do not need to say that I do not know this. This programme provides for a legal framework, which includes the solid waste management law. Last year, I asked the question, when will this law be brought to the Parliament and I was told very soon. The Hon. Finance Minister did allude, in his speech, that a law would be introduced in the National Assembly. I know the law was drafted because I worked on it in another capacity as a lawyer, but when will this law be introduced in this National Assembly, as part of this project?

3.05p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: The Solid Waste Bill, to which the Hon. Member refers, has been the subject of much checking and redrafting but we expect to be able, not long after we would have concluded the consideration of the Estimates, to bring it to the level of the National Assembly.

Mr. Nagamootoo: If I could kindly crave your indulgence, Your Honour on the related subject, project 3600200, National Clean-up Programme, and it is if you would permit me to ask a question as a nexus that under the solid waste management disposal programme there ought to have been established, and the law that was contingent to it, a National Solid Waste Management Authority so that if there was a national clean-up campaign for \$1 billion then it would have been the authority which would have been managing or in some way dealing with that aspect. In the absence of not having a law and a National Solid Management Authority, under this head, would the Minister say whether this sum of money would be disbursed to the Georgetown Solid Waste Management Programme, which was set up under this programme, to deal with solid waste?

Mr. Whittaker: I listened to the first part of the discourse and to say that at the level of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Ministry of Public Works the technical staff have been engaged in setting

out the preparatory work for the establishment of the solid waste authority. Notwithstanding the fact that the Bill has not been tabled here as yet, some preparatory work is being done.

Specifically to deal with the issue of the \$1 billion, it is expected that... in fact what has happened so far is that at the level of the Ministers, the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Ministry of Public Works, have all met and put together our thoughts and views on the way forward in pursuit of the objectives of this clean-up exercise.

The Minister of Local Government and Regional Development is responsible for the disbursement of this money. The disbursement will be based on what comes out of a needs assessment and what comes out of a programme for the clean-up of the city.

Very shortly the technical people at the level of the Ministries, to which I just alluded, we will be bringing on board the city council, the private sector and we want to involve people at the level of the community.... These are some of the key stakeholders – Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Tourism, Industry and Commerce and Georgetown Mayor and City Council – in which we have already started engaging, but what will happen is that - we all know that the city is divided into groups and in each group there are communities - we will be looking at all of them to identify needs, to identify resources, to identify responsible agency to move the process forward. We specifically, in respect to the very question asked, it is the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development who is responsible for the disbursement of the fund and we have no plans, as I stand here, to disburse money to any council at this point in time.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: I was going to ask the Hon. Minister for a list of the different areas that he intends to clean-up, including the allocations, but now I see that he now wants to do the needs assessment. I am thinking that Minister came to this House to ask for \$1 billion and he did not do any needs assessment; he does not know yet if this money is going to be adequate or not. He has put the cart before the horse then.

Mr. Chairman: Do you mean to clean up the city? Is the question, Hon. Member, whether or not the \$1 billion is going to be enough to clean Georgetown and that he should have done a needs assessment of the cleaning?

Mr. Whittaker: I did not say that.

Mr. Chairman: That is what is being asked, whether you did a needs assessment as to what is needed before you allocate \$1 billion.

Mr. Whittaker: What we are doing, Mr, Chairman, is a work plan coming out of a needs assessment.

Mr. Chairman: Please repeat that so that the Member could hear. Hon. Members, could we hear the Minister, he needs to respond to the question.

Mr. Whittaker: First of all, let me remind the Hon. Members that \$500 million of this money is intended to be used in the city of Georgetown. The other \$500 million is intended to be used in other urban and rural hinterland areas. In fact, we have already started, since 2013, a regional solid waste programme and the funds being made available will go a far way, in terms of advancing that programme.

Some preliminary work has been done to identify areas of focus - *kokers* and sluices, main canals, the cemeteries, monuments, roadside drains, parapets and alleyways, the need for public awareness. We have also looked to examine the present condition of communities within the groups to which I earlier alluded, the ten groups into which Georgetown is divided, for the purpose of solid waste management. We have looked to examine the present condition and the nature of the activity needed to repair whatever damage there is to that condition. We are looking at what is the present situation; what needs to be done to bring the desire and improvement; what resources are needed, both human and capital, to bring about these changes; how do we monitor the works taking place and that is the level to which we are at.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have ten minutes remaining to consider this agency so I am going to take some quick questions.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: It is a follow-up on the same project. Hon. Minister, since you do not have an idea if this \$1 billion will be adequate, then can the House expect you to come back on the same programme with a supplementary?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I never pronounced on the adequacy or inadequacy of the amount...

Mr. Chairman: That is true.

Mr. Whittaker: ...because we are not about to usurp the role of the municipal and the local government bodies, we are not about to do that, we are supporting and we are assisting.

Mr. Trotman: Project 3600100, Solid Waste Disposal Programme: This is a project with a large cost attached to it, more than \$5.25 billion and the notion, which we are getting, is vague. I wonder if the Minister can give us in writing a breakdown of the percentage of works that is being done, already done and the cost for each individual activity that has to be done and the cost that will accrue to this project in 2014.

Secondly, I want to direct the Minister's attention to project 1900600, Infrastructural Development, and to ask him to look at the project which he is carrying out the completion of Mabaruma Market tarmac and sanitary block at *[inaudible]*. Again, we do not have a sense of what percentage of the work has been completed and what is the cost of that completed work. Could the Minister give us in writing this information and include in it the percentage of works that has to be done and the cost that will accrue to those works? I would also like to have the dimension of these entities that is being done at this time.

Mr. Whittaker: The question of the status of the market project was never raised until now. In terms of the Mabaruma Market tarmac, 75 % of the work has been completed. It is a contract with Joshi Construction and Transport Services. That has been completed.

With respect to the extension of the market tarmac, it has been terminated and the Minister is to retender that. I hope that satisfies you.

Mr. Trotman: It does not. I want to know, and I believe that this Assembly is entitled to know, what is the dimension of these works that are being undertaken because we want to know what 75% means? We also want to know, as you said the work has been terminated, in relation to another aspect of the work, why has it been terminated and much money has been spent?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I have information but I was mindful of the ten minutes that you spoke about earlier. In respect of the construction of the Mabaruma Market tarmac, the 250ft by 136ft with sand and loam, in proportion 60/40, compacted with gravel... It is a lot of information.

Mr. Chairman: One second Minister, Hon. Member Mr. Trotman, would you be more comfortable having this in front of you so you could actually...?

Mr. Trotman: That is my point.

Mr. Chairman: Would you like to have the document?

Mr. Trotman: That is why I asked...

Mr. Chairman: Well, make the document available. I think you will get a better sense when you can get the scale.

Mr. Whittaker: In addition, Mr. Chairman, we have documentation that talks about the level of achievement, what was done in the area of construction and in the area of operations at the Haags Bosch solid waste site during 2013, the cost and what is proposed to be done during 2014 in the area of construction and operation, institutional strengthening and capacity. This can be made available to the Hon. Member too.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Minister, this is a new project and there is \$359 million. I am talking about project 1900700, Project Development and Assistance. In view of the problem of the neglect of the Kitty Market, do you have any plans within the project to rescue that market from total destruction?

Mr. Whittaker: That project 1900700, to which you referred, Hon. Member, refers to subventions to municipalities and other local government bodies. It does not capture the Kitty Market.

Ms. Ferguson: Project 3600200, National Clean-Up Programme: We, on this side of the House, welcome this, but just before I get into my question, I can recall, last night, that while we were examining the Estimates under the Ministry of Housing and Water, there is a community something project coming up where \$484 million has been budgeted and approved. Now we are seeing..., and the explanation given by the Minister then, the Hon. Member, is that the money

will be used to enhance communities, bridges, cemeteries amongst others, yet what I had heard the Hon. Minister just alluded to is that a portion of this \$1 billion will be doing same things. What we are seeing here in this National Assembly is duplication and replication of projects.

I guess when it comes to natural resources we might be seeing something coming under this effect. I think it is time for us to put a stop to it. We heard about \$484 million approved last night. The Minister said that the moneys will be used for the cleaning of cemeteries. We can go back to the *Hansard* for last night. Now, Minister Whittaker is saying it is for cemeteries, bridges, roads and I just cannot understand this; it is appalling.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, instead of making the claim of duplicity let us find out. I do not know how many cemeteries there are in Guyana. The *Le Repentir* alone may need \$1 billion to bring it back into some fit and proper condition. I do not know. Hon. Minister, you may wish to say what cemeteries the money is going to because indeed we heard last night that moneys are earmarked for cemeteries nationwide as well.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I understood the Hon. Minister last evening to be speaking about the Community Roads Improvement Programme (CRIP).

Mr. Chairman: He did say cemeteries. On several occasions he said cemeteries.

Mr. Whittaker: These are different projects and the Minister referred to particular NDCs in which that project is being rolled out. We are talking about cleaning up. Our focus is on the drains that need desilting; our focus is on the *kokers* and sluices that need rehab. In other words, our focus is on remedying those areas that contribute to garbage, to flooding. It is different.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I think I really need to allow about three more questions because I need to put the vote. I think that we have enough information as to whether or not we want to send this format as approved or not. There are seven persons indicating a desire to ask questions.

Ms. Ferguson: Under this very project, the Minister further alluded to stakeholders being a part of the clean-up campaign. I can recall us having a motion moved in this National Assembly last year March, 2013, by the Hon. Member Mrs. Lawrence. My suggestion to the Minister is that what he should seek to do is to get even more parliamentarians involved because a number of us

have geographical responsibilities. Apart from getting the city council and the other stakeholders involved, we too should be apart so that we can monitor the activities where the clean-up campaign is concerned. That is just a suggestion and the Minister can choose to run with it or not.

Mr. Whittaker: All 150,000 people living in Georgetown are a part of this project because we expect them to help to monitor it and sustain it. It is not just about spending the money; it is about maintaining what comes out of the project that revolved around the money.

Mr. Allicock: Project 3600100, Solid Waste Disposal Programme: Could the Hon. Minister say what is the total allocation for Region 9 and would the five sub districts be included in this activity?

Mr. Whittaker: This particular project, to which we refer here, is confined to Region 4. We have, at the level of the Ministry, to determine that we must work to replicate it across the other nine regions and for that reason we have started. In Region 9 there is a contractor who is responsible. That is at the level of Lethem and we hope to extend that to reach out to replicate it in other areas but there is a contractor there who collects the solid waste and we want to replicate that. The answer is not captured in the Haags Bosch Solid Waste Programme but there is a regional solid waste programme which sees us with the help of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifying suitable landfill, developing these sites and using them.

We have taken on board the plan presented by the Hon. Member Mrs. Volda Lawrence, in which her technical committee did a lot of work in determining areas that needed to be remedied. In fact, I did tell Mrs. Lawrence this. As we sit around to work out the modalities and all of the finer details, certainly, we would want to have that committee or Mrs. Lawrence on board.

Mr. Bulkan: Project 3600200, National Clean-Up Programme: It is a follow-up question to those already asked. Of the provisional allocation, here, of \$1 billion, the Minister of Finance had indicated in his budget speech that 50% or \$500 million of this amount will be allocated to use in Georgetown. My question to the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development: Would the local democratic organ, which is the Georgetown Mayor and City Council, be integrally involved with the decision to fund the particular activities under this programme? Would there be a decision of the Georgetown Mayor and City Council?

Mr. Whittaker: It will be a part of the project planning and the implementation. We could not exclude it. I do not know about the other things which were motioned but it will be a part. I could not leave it out. In fact, I had indicated this in person to the Mayor.

Mr. Bulkan: Once again the Minister is being very vague. Would the Minister be kind enough to say that this part, which he spoke of, plus a minus, is close to the 5%, 20%, 50%, and 75%? Would he care to give the honourable House a figure? What part the city council is going to play in identifying the activities to be funded by the 50% of the provision here?

Mr. Whittaker: I would say that it will have equal opportunity like any other stakeholder who would sit to work on this.

Mr. Bulkan: This is the point that I was trying to make earlier, the Constitution say that the task of managing and developing the communities are those of the local democratic organs. Here it is this local democratic organ has been reduced to the level of a single stakeholder.

Last night we heard when the Hon. Minister of Housing and Water was answering questions, and we learnt, that there was one particular programme which received budgetary allocations of \$484 million, which is greater than the total subvention to the 71 local democratic organs and the activities to be carried out. We were told last night, by the Hon. Minister, and it is there in the project document, that it is to improve drainage in the environment, but yet the Constitution tells us that this is the responsibility of local democratic organs. Yesterday we learnt that the Ministry of Housing and Water is being funded to the tune of \$484 million. Today, \$500 million... The Minister just said that he has engaged three of his colleagues, three Ministries, and, as an afterthought, we heard that the local democratic organ will be engaged. This is an invidious practice.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development - \$2,453,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Minister please note the line of questioning you received and I think that Members have put you a notice that money, particularly, for the \$1 billion project, will be carefully scrutinised because we all have a vested interest in how it is spent, where it is spent and we are also very concerned about the right of local democratic organs to manage their own

affairs as per the Constitution. That is something, which I believe, that you would have taken note of.

I wish to thank you and your technical officers for their support. I know that they were waiting since last evening. You still have to do ten regions, but thank you to those who gave assistance.

At some time Mr. Basil Williams will assume chairmanship of the proceedings, at a convenient moment.

Agency: 71 Region 1: Barima/Waini

Current Expenditure

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$113,578,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6116, Contracted Employee: Could the Hon. Minister indicate the designation and emolument for the new contracted employee?

Mr. Whittaker: It is a Typist Clerk with a salary of \$43,137.

3.35 p.m.

Mr. Trotman: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Minister say if there has been an adequate amount of money budgeted under this head for RDC councillors to be able to monitor the work of the RDC? If yes, can he say what that amount is?

Mr. Whittaker: Of course, the question of adequacy has to be tied to available resources and how these resources need to be divided among competing users. What I can say is that \$3.234 million is set aside to provide transportation to take councillors to and from meetings and meals. There is a further \$1.6 million to pay stipend to councillors. That has to be added. There is money for the maintenance of the outboard engines and vehicles that move the chairman and councillors around. That is \$1.482 million.

Mr. Trotman: We, in this House, are concerned about the inability of the councillors to do their work and the work partly entails monitoring the projects that are carried out within the regional administration area. I want to know if there has been money set aside to allow councillors of the

Region 1 RDC to be able to embark on a programme of monitoring the works that will be carried out in the regional administration on behalf of the people of the region.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, you would recall that I earlier referred to a sum of money to move councillors to meetings, in the communities where they can get feedback, see work that is taking place and interact with the people.

Also, I am of the view, and we share it with councillors, that they must work with the other programmes. They cannot confine themselves and think that their role as councillors is limited to attending statutory meetings and committee meetings. They must be aware of the visit of the education officer and its people in their community and piggy back and be able to move with them. They must be aware of the movement of the agriculture officer. In short, they cannot just confine themselves to performance at the level of meetings or limit themselves to the use of the regional resources.

The village councils are always eager and happy to have councillors. **[Mrs. Lawrence:** Not true.] It is not true for your side, but it happens with us. They are always happy to have us.

Mr. Trotman: If we are serious about doing work in the regions and if we are serious about how it is the people's money is being spent in those regional administration bodies, the councillors, who are elected by the people, must be in a position to monitor the work on behalf of the people. It is the duty of the regional administration to provide the money to ensure that those councillors are able to do their work. It brings me to another point. Could the Minister say how many meetings of the RDC have been budgeted for Region 1 for 2014?

Mr. Whittaker: There are councillors who sit on the works committee of the RDC and they do visit projects. There are councillors who are not on the works committee but they have an interest in people's development, so when the engineers go out to visit projects, they go with them. When the sub-treasury officers go out to visit projects, they go with them. They do not limit themselves to RDC visits to projects. When one looks at that, there is nothing that precludes councillors, whether they sit on the education committee or not, from being able to move around with people from the education team visiting communities and visiting projects. I know that this happens because I interact frequently with members of all ten RDCs.

Mr. Chairman: The question that was put by Mr. Trotman has not been answered. How many meetings for the RDCs have been budgeted for 2014?

Mr. Whittaker: Six meetings.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6281: We observe that in 2012/2013, no budgetary allocation was made. However, in 2014, we notice a sum of \$11 million has been budgeted. Could the Hon. Minister say what has influenced this budgetary provision and what is the name of the security company that is going to be hired?

Mr. Whittaker: Security services used to be covered under the programme of Public Works but as of this year, 2014, it is covered under this particular programme.

Mr. Selman: What is the company, sir?

Mr. Whittaker: It is Strategic Action Security Service.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Between line items 6111 and 6117, could the Hon. Minister say under which category the regional councillors fall? Is the senior technical contracted employees' monthly stipend still \$10,000?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, if I do not capture all of the issues raised by the Hon. Member, I will ask that she repeats herself. I know she did enquire under which specific line item councillors receive their stipend. The answer is line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency. There are 15 councillors on that RDC and they each receive \$10,000 per month.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: I have a follow-up question with regards to Strategic Action Security Service. Are you aware, Hon. Minister, that lots of the guards are complaining about payment? Their payment is less than what they are supposed to be paid. I think they are being paid \$120 per hour when they are supposed to receive more than that according to the Ministry of Labour.

Mr. Whittaker: I want to thank the Member for bringing this to my attention. We will certainly investigate. I am not aware of that.

Mr. Felix: What is the wisdom in retaining Strategic Action Security Service in the face of what we learnt last year? The security service seems to have moved from Georgetown to the outlying

areas. What sort of consideration is the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development giving so that this security service continues to receive contracts from Government?

Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): What categories of workers are being trained and how many are involved?

Mr. Whittaker: A number of persons will be able to access in-house training conducted by regional personnel with the focus on government accounting procedures, supervisory management and procurement and stores management. Training is a continuous process. With respect to the in-house training on personnel and accounting procedures, these are normally one day sessions and they target about 15 persons in the sub regions. In the case of training on government accounting procedures, supervisory management and procurement and stores management, these are conducted with the support of the Public Service Ministry (PSM) and these are normally between three to five days in some instances.

Mr. Felix: The first question has not been answered.

Mr. Chairman: What are your considerations for retaining the security service?

Mr. Whittaker: The security firm went through the same process. The National Procurement & Tender Administration Board, the established authority, deals with that.

Ms. Williams: Under line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service - I notice an increase. Could the Hon. Minister explain?

Mr. Whittaker: This is occasioned by the fact that the region will be acquiring a new All Terrain Vehicle (ATV), an outboard engine and, as I alluded to earlier on, for intensifying visits to communities.

Ms. Williams: How many vehicles does the current fleet have?

Mr. Whittaker: Under this Programme – Regional Administration and Finance - there are three Toyota Hiluxes, two ATVs and one 200 horsepower Yamaha outboard engine. These are for the three sub regions. One of the Toyota Hiluxes is for the Matakai sub region. All of the other vehicles are for Mabaruma and Moruka.

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$113,578,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$35,085,000

Ms. Williams: Project code 1208600 – Buildings – Administration: Could the Hon. Minister state which building would be constructed, where the building would be constructed and the cost for constructing the building?

Mr. Whittaker: The RDC will be completing the District Development Officer's (DDO) office in Baramita. The total cost is \$4.762 million. We will be constructing a sub district office in Port Kaituma in the Matakai sub region. The total cost is \$15 million. That would be sited close to the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) office.

Ms. Selman: Project code 1901100: Could the Hon. Minister indicate how much moneys would be spent on the two projects which include the living quarters at Moruka and the empoldering of farm lands?

Mr. Whittaker: Some \$3,713,000 would be spent to complete the empoldering of farm lands along the Aruka River. It is about one square mile. Some \$5,600,000 would be spent on the enclosure of the bottom flat of the living quarters of the agricultural officers and that is at Santa Rosa, Moruka. That is a 30X40 concrete structure. It would include: two rooms, kitchen, dining hall, sanitary facilities, *et cetera*, and it is ideally intended for one officer and his family or two bachelors and spinsters.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project code 2401500 – Land and Water Transport: The legend states that an engine would be purchased. Hon. Minister, could you kindly say where this engine will be placed?

Mr. Whittaker: It is a 200 horsepower outboard engine and it will be placed at Mabaruma and would support the work of the regional administration as it does its outreaches in the various riverain areas in the Mabaruma sub region. I am informed that there is an outboard engine at Mabaruma of the same capacity – 200 horsepower – that will be placed in Moruka.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project code 2502500 – Furniture and Equipment – Administration; Which Administrative region will it be placed in?

Mr. Whittaker: The paraphernalia listed will cut across the three sub districts. There is video camera and digital camera for national events. That would be at Mabaruma. There are solar panels and accessories worth \$800,000. That is to be used at the guest house in Moruka and the DDO's office in Baramita. Public address system and accessories will be placed at the Regional Democratic Council at Mabaruma. There would also be procurement of four writing and computer desks at a cost of \$240,000. This is to be provided to the DDO's office in Baramita, the Assistant Regional Executive Officer's (AREO office in Moruka and the AREO's office in Port Kaituma and the personnel office in Mabaruma. There will be the acquisition of eight office executive chairs at a cost of \$360,000 and this will be provided for the DDO's office in Baramita and other offices of the regional administration in Mabaruma. It is a total of \$1.8 million.

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$35,085,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 712 – Public Works - \$188,907,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: We observe that there is an increase of \$5 million. There are two new contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the designations of the two and their emoluments?

Mr. Whittaker: The two new additional staff under contracted employees will be an electrical engineer at a salary of \$167,385 per month and a civil engineer at a salary of \$159,414 per month.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: I notice there is an increase by one person. What I would like is their designations. Are they mechanics?

Mr. Whittaker: The 10 employees are: one building overseer and one road overseer at a salary of \$71,858; a senior electrical technician at a salary of \$63,558; an electrical technician at a salary of \$63,558; a carpenter III at a salary of \$62,488; two carpenter II at a salary of \$59,925;

an equipment operator II at a salary of \$59,925; a linesman at a salary of \$57,688; and the addition is the transport officer at a salary of \$54,934.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Where are these personnel placed? Are they in Moruka, Mabaruma or Port Kaituma?

Mr. Whittaker: All are based in Mabaruma.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Minister, why are none placed in Moruka or any other sub region? There is work in Moruka and these technical people have to travel from there to Moruka.

Mr. Whittaker: Let me apologise to the Hon. Member. Two are, in fact, in Moruka. Mr. Wendell Correia and Mr. Lawrence Atkinson are in Moruka.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: What are their designations?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Correia is an electrical technician and Mr. Atkinson is a carpenter II.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Are there no plumbers or other skilled personnel who can take care of the different infrastructural works there?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is no.

Mr. Chairman: The question really should have been: why are there no plumbers or other skilled personnel there?

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Why, Hon. Minister, are there no skilled personnel of these sort in Moruka, Port Kaituma and Matthews Ridge?

Mr. Whittaker: The region is examining the need to create additional positions such as one for a plumber.

Mr. Chairman: Let us say a school in Santa Rosa has a problem. Would the person to rectify that problem have to come down from Mabaruma? How is a problem rectified if there is not the resident skill? Certainly, the problem has to be rectified.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I am told that often there are people who have these skills but they offer them privately.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you, Hon. Minister. The last time I was at Moruka and wanted a plumber, it was very hard to get a plumber. There was one plumber and he was out. If there were a resident plumber in the administration, I could have gotten his service. This is where training needs to be done.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6281: We observe that in 2013 some \$16.189 million was expended. We observe that in 2014, some \$10,541,000 is budgeted. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the reason for the reduction in the provision is?

Mr. Whittaker: Earlier on I mentioned the fact that we have delinked this item from the Public Works. Public Works is now catering for its own security.

Ms. Selman: Why has \$10 million been budgeted for if it is not being catered for under Public Works and it is now Regional Administration and Finance?

Mr. Whittaker: My understanding is that before now, all the expenditure for security was captured under Public Works. Now, the region has to do a realignment which will see those for education being captured under education and those for health being captured under health. Hence, there is this reduction.

Mr. Felix: I have two questions for the Hon. Minister. Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: Which roads have been identified? Line item 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges: Which bridges have been identified?

Mr. Whittaker: They are: repairs to the Hosororo road, hill and the stretch, the Mabaruma compound, Kumaka stretch, Hobo airstrip road in the Mabaruma area, grade and shape gravel road at Barabina, Bumbury, Kamwatta, White Water, Wauna and Hobo and grade and shape gravel surface roads in Mora, Ring Kong and Aquero in Moruka.

4.05p.m.

Mr. Felix: Before you move to bridges, is there any consideration given to roads in Matthews Ridge?

Mr. Whittaker: I am advised that the roads in Matthews Ridge are done jointly. You have the NDC. They do a lot of road works because they do collect a toll and they use that to do road

works. The Ministry of Public Works is also involved in road rehabilitation there and also the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission (GGMC) does a lot of road work in that area.

Mr. Felix: So are you saying that there is no work planned for roads in Matthews Ridge under this heading?

Mr. Whittaker: There is no road work as per the RDC road maintenance programme for 2014 but the RDC is aware that the NDC, using some of the bridge toll that they collect, is involved in internal road maintenance at Matthews Ridge, Arakaka and Kaituma and the RDC is also aware that the Ministry of Public Works...in fact the Ministry is presently doing a substantial amount of work in the Kaituma area and the Guyana Geology and Mines Commission also does a lot of road work, a large measure on the main road that links those three major communities of Kaituma, Arakaka and Matthews Ridge and even as far as Baramita.

Mr. Felix: Well may I respectfully suggest to you, Hon. Minister, that the roads in Matthews Ridge and those responsible for doing the works be given serious attention. I will show you some photos on my phone as old as two weeks.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members...

Mr. Felix: We still have the bridges.

Mr. Whittaker: There are three bridges to be fixed: bridge number two along the Hosororo stretch which is in the Mabaruma Sub Region; the bridge at Ring Kong, Moruca; and the bridge at Kamwatta in Moruca. Those are the three bridges.

Mr. T. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a follow-up on the said line item. My question to the Hon. Minister is: Is the Reunion Manganese Inc. company used by the region or Ministry of Public Works to do road works in Region 1, particularly the Matthews Ridge area?

Mr. Whittaker: I am informed that the NDC does engage Manganese Reunion Inc., from time to time, not the RDC. I am not sure if GGMC... I think the Ministry of Public Works sometimes uses them but I am certain that the NDC does use the machinery and equipment from time to time.

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Chairman, to the Hon. Member, line item 6264: Can the Minister indicate to this House how many vehicles the region has?

Mr. Whittaker: Under the Public Works Programme that I am looking at, I can see that we have a Massey Ferguson 390 tractor at Mabaruma and we have a 290 tractor in Moruca. There is a Bedford Model 'M' truck in Mabaruma and a backhoe in Mabaruma. We also have a Caterpillar grader and an Ingersoll Rand roller in Mabaruma. Those are the vehicles. We have equipment such as, for carpentry, Stihl carpentry chainsaw. We also have a number of generators at Mabaruma. There is a 750 kva Perkins and also a 625 kva Perkins generator. In Moruca, there is a 125 kva generator; a Honda pressure washer at Mabaruma, a Honda plate compactor in Mabaruma and Bosch jackhammer in Mabaruma. These are the list of vehicles and equipment under the RDC programme.

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Chairman, can the Hon. Minister indicate to this House whether there were new vehicles bought last year? The reason for that is I have seen here that vehicles spares and service was \$16.5 million and for this year's budget, it is \$13.9 so there is a reduction which means that there is a possibility, from looking at this report, that probably there are more new vehicles than old ones which will not need service. I want to know why the decline.

Mr. Whittaker: The reason for the decrease in the allocation of this line item is due to the recent overhaul of the 390 tractor – better performance – and the 125 kva generator in Moruca. Also, the newly installed generating unit was donated by the Office of the Prime Minister for the 750 kva generator.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Back to line item 6251 - Maintenance of Roads. Hon. Minister, how much money is earmarked for Moruca roads and is there an allocation somewhere in your budget for the Kumaka-Kwabanna Road and the Port Kaituma Road? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: I can give you details of the roads that are going to be subjected to considerable maintenance work. This is the in the Moruca and Mabaruma Sub Region. Repairs to Hosororo Hill and Hosororo stretch, DBST road; repairs to the Mabaruma Compound, Kumaka stretch, the township, the Hobo Airstrip Road, DBST, which is about 1 ½ miles; grading and shaping of the gravel road in Barabina, Bumbury, Kamwatta – that is the Kamwatta in Mabaruma – White

Water, Wauna and Hobo, about 5 miles; grading and shaping of gravel surface road at Mora, Ring Kong and Aquero, about 5 miles, which is in the Moruca Sub Region.

Ms. Marcello: Yes, Hon. Minister. I was just asking how much money is earmarked for these Moruca roads. Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: I did not get that.

Ms. Marcello: What is the allocation for the Moruca roads? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: The allocation for the Moruca roads is \$6 million.

Mr. Bulkan: Mr. Chairman, line items 6251 to 6255: Partial answers have already been given to some of these, but could the Hon. Minister agree to lay over the full details of all of the maintenance activities that are intended to be funded under these headings?

Mr. Whittaker: I have them here. They can be made available.

Mr. Chairman: Please make them available to the Member. Does any other Member wish to have? Certainly the Region 1 people and Mr. Bulkan, of course...

Mr. T. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I wish to go back to the previous question I asked on line item 6251. Hon. Minister, you said that the RDC and the Ministry of Public Works would have been responsible for the roads in the Matthews Ridge area and then I asked the question whether Reunion Manganese Inc. was being contracted as a company to provide services and you said that they were. My question is: When one has a company, particularly a foreign investor in a local area with that amount of heavy duty machinery traversing the roadways, is it normal for the company to maintain, by obligation, more or less, the roads, at least from time to time, rather than to be rehired by the State and paid to do that service? I would like to know the Government's policy on this particular issue because some people in the area get the impression that the roads are being done freely by the company and others get the impression that the company is now a player in the providing of services for building roads. Can you answer us, please?

Mr. Whittaker: Our policy is to work with any entity, anybody who has a vested interest in working with us to improve conditions under which people live and work. And so in our

engagement with Reunion Manganese Inc., Jialing and all of them is the same. In fact, Manganese Reunion Inc. has, from time to time, assisted in rehabilitating roads within that Sub Region and, more particularly, within the Matthews Ridge area, but the NDC does also engage the company to assist them in doing work in the Kaituma area. So they are involved, in some instances, of their own accord because it is in their interest too as their vehicles traverse these routes and, in other instances, it is because the NDC has engaged them for support.

I am aware also that often, from time to time, we, ourselves, at the level of the ministry, have discussed with them. We are aware that the Ministry of Public Works has also assisted us by talking with them to get them to assist.

Mr. T. Williams: Just to follow up quickly, Hon. Minister, therefore, what I would like to know, which probably would apply to other regions, because we have heavy duty operators in most of the interior regions extracting raw materials and natural resources and their contribution to the maintenance of these roads are always a contentious issue, are you saying that there is an obligation by large companies, whether foreign or local, to play their part in maintaining these roads?

Mr. Chairman: I would not put it at that, Mr. Williams, that there is an obligation because you bring in legal issues there. Certainly, good corporate citizens feel a sense of moral suasion to assist, but when you want to rank it at the level of obligation, that could provide some jeopardy. But certainly, companies would play a part. I do not know that it is a legal obligation. What is your view on that, Mr. Minister?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, that is our expectation.

Programme: 712 – Public Works - \$188,907,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 712 – Public Works - \$121,379,000

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hon. Minister, the Kumaka-Kwabanna bridges, how many are you catering for and how much money is earmarked for this project? For Hosororo, how much money...? How soon do you hope to start these projects? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: There are three bridges. In the first instance, we have the completion of the construction of the bridge and revetment at White Water to the Mabaruma Sub Region; that is wooden. Then there is the construction of the reinforced concrete bridge at Five Miles; that is on the Kumaka-Kwabanna road in Moruca and then the construction of reinforced concrete bridge, bridge number three, on the Hosororo Stretch in Mabaruma. I guess as soon as the budget is approved is how soon they will begin.

Ms. Marcello: How much money is allocated for these projects, please?

Mr. Whittaker: The White Water Bridge is \$11.5 million; Kumaka-Kwabanna - \$8.5 million; and the reinforced concrete bridge on the Hosororo Stretch is \$10.7 million.

Mr. Felix: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1400400: Hon. Minister, I have checked the profile and I see that the road in which I am interested is not mentioned. May I direct your attention, please, to the junction of Arakaka going into Matthews Ridge? Who is responsible, from among the several agencies doing roads, for maintaining that road?

Mr. Whittaker: The NDC...

Mr. Felix: No. This is the public road. This is not in the village. It cannot be the NDC.

Mr. Whittaker: The NDC collects tolls from users of the road and the intention of that collection - I was there when that started - was to use those funds to maintain the primary road linking Kaituma, Matthews Ridge and Arakaka.

Mr. Felix: These things come with approval and they have done all of the surrounding roads except the ones going into Matthews Ridge with a certain comment, which I am not going to repeat here.

Mr. Whittaker: The road going into Matthews Ridge: they did seek permission to engage the services of a contractor who was doing the road to Baramita and they said to us, as the contractor is there, if he can do this road. We could not give the approval in the absence of the required

information - cost, *et cetera*. But the NDC understands. That might be an exception; that is not the norm. They do ensure that the roads linking these three major communities are done.

Ms. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 2601400: Can the Hon. Minister say if there are any provisions for the completion of electricity at Barabina? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: My understanding is that the electricity expansion project in Barabina is ongoing. It had been fraught with some challenges but it is an ongoing project.

Mr. Trotman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I have two questions for the Minister. The first relates to project code 1100200. There is some revetment to be done there. Can the Minister say what the length of revetment is that has to be done and what the cost of that revetment is? My second question relates to project code 1902600 - Infrastructural Development. Again, it has to do with construction of revetment and my question is the same as the previous question.

Mr. Whittaker: There is a budgetary allocation under Infrastructural Development for construction of revetment in an area with which the Hon. Member ought to be familiar. [*inaudible*] Manawarin, Moruca. Ten million dollars is allocated there. The length of the revetment is 600 feet, 14 feet wide. They will be using 6x6x14 feet piles; 4x6 wailers and 2x12 sheet piles. The second revetment is 600 feet. This is in the White Water area in Mabaruma. It is 600 feet of revetment. I do not have the other dimensions, just the length.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1400400, Roads: I noticed, Hon. Minister, that there is no mention of the Kumaka-Kwabanna Road and it is in a very bad condition every time the rain falls. What is going to happen there? Why is no allocation being made for that road? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: I am reminded that the Ministry of Public Works did substantial amounts of work along that Road during 2013 and 2014.

Mr. Chairman: It is coming under Public Works, Hon. Member.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I recognise Mr. Bulkan and he will put our last question and then we need to move on because we are running out of time for this agency.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1400400 - Roads: Of the \$30.378 million that is allocated here, would the Minister kindly identify how much is for each of the four projects that are outlined here, the respective amounts?

Mr. Whittaker: I am giving you to the nearest \$100,000: \$2.1 million will be spent on the completion of that stretch of road from Khan's Gate to Wanaina Bridge in the Mabaruma area; \$4 million for the upgrading of the gravel surface road, Seven Miles Branch to Waramuri in the Moruca Sub Region; construction of DBST road from Kumaka District Hospital to One Mile, Moruca - \$13 million; rehabilitation of the road from Digicel to Bumbury junction - \$8.3 million - in the Mabaruma Sub Region; and the upgrading of gravel surface road at Para, Moruca - \$3 million. These are a total of \$30.4 million.

Programme: 712 – Public Works - \$121,379,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery - \$842,107,000

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6116: We noted an increase of almost \$2 million and the staffing details, as it relates to contracted employees, remain the same. Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the reason for this?

Mr. Whittaker: I am informed that that additional \$2 million under that item was covered by the Ministry of Finance under line item 6141.

Mr. Chairman: Explain that accounting. You said that it was covered under another line item. What does that mean?

Mr. Whittaker: In a moment. I am informed that when one has shortfalls, as we did in this case, the Ministry of Finance will normally cover it under line item 6141 and for the ensuing year, one will find that it is captured.

Mr. Chairman: I see. Ms. Selman, is that good enough?

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could I direct our attention to line items 6242, 6252 and 6255? I am going to ask one question but it relates to all of them. Could the Hon. Minister provide us, in writing, with the number of bridges or the names of the bridges that have been identified for maintenance, the same thing for buildings as well as the other infrastructure to be maintained?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, I will.

Ms. Williams: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6281 – Security Services: I have noticed in 2013 that there were revised allocations and in 2014, there was a huge increase in the amount budgeted for. Can the Hon. Minister explain why this increase and the name of the security service? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: The increase is as a result of the revised minimum wage effective 1st July, 2013. Strategic Action Security is the name of the security firm.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Ms. Williams: A follow-up, Mr. Chairman: Who are the beneficiaries of this security service?

Mr. Whittaker: A number of schools – North West Secondary and its dormitory, the Learning Resource Centre, Mabaruma, and the following primary schools in Mabaruma: Mabaruma, itself, Hosororo, Wauna, Bumbury Nursery, St. Mary’s Primary, Port Kaituma Secondary and Primary, Matthews Ridge Primary, Santa Rosa Secondary, Primary and Secondary Dormitory, the Education Office at Moruca, Waramuri Primary and St. Nicolas Primary - are the beneficiaries. There are 17 locations.

4.35 p.m.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Mr. Chairman, line item 6133 – Benefits and Allowances: Hon. Minister, there is an increase of \$31 million. Can you please explain this increase? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the RDCs have taken responsibility for payment of the remote areas incentive to teachers. We would have learnt from the Hon. Minister of Education that after the project and the funding came to an end, Government took over that responsibility. So it is

due in large measure to provision for Whitley Council leave - that is the allowance - and remote area incentive to primary teachers.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: there is almost over \$2 million increase. Please give us details for this increase. Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: This increase of course caters for additional printing materials. We have two new schools: increased enrolment in the nursery schools due to change in the entry requirements.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6302 – Training (including scholarships) – \$18 million: that is two million more than last year. Can you explain the training please? Who and which locations will benefit? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, this document provides information on the beneficiaries. There will be a lot of continuous training provided by the National Centre for Education and Resource Development (NCERD) and the Department of Education. Of course, teachers, school administrators... I think, Mr. Chairman, it would be a better thing if we made this document available to the Member, if you so wish.

Dr. Ramayya: Mr. Minister, I have seen here a great increase in security services. Can you indicate to this House why this 40% increase in security? Are there new buildings or the old ones are still there with double the increase in salary? And which company is being used?

Mr. Whittaker: I do recall responding to that, identifying the locations and indicating that it is because of the revised minimum wage effective from 1st July, 2013.

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, line item 6111 – Administrative: I notice an increase of four persons in the administrative sector and I wonder if the Minister will divulge to us what are the positions that have been filled and the emoluments that go with them.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, these positions are the Deputy Headmaster or Headmistress (DHM) of the Santa Rosa Primary School transferred; three Assistant Masters or Mistresses (AMs) promoted to Senior Masters or Mistresses (SMs) with effect from the 1st September, 2013 and paid a salary of \$103,022 per month. These three persons are placed at Sacred Heart Primary School, Yarikita Primary School and Sebai Primary School.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery – \$842,107,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery - \$58,339,000

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project code 1202600: Hon. Minister, how much money was already spent for the Hosororo and Canal Primary Schools and the Baramita Teachers' Quarters, and how much more do you intend to spend from this money to complete the works? In connection with the construction of the primary school and extension at Wauna, how much money is earmarked for each of these two items? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: The Hosororo Primary School extension is \$2.022 million. This is a rollover project from 2012. The construction of the primary school at Canal Bank is \$2.5 million; this is a 2013 rollover project. The extension of the Wauna Primary School is \$17 million.

Ms. Selman: Project code 2401500: Could the Hon. Minister say how many boats and engines will be purchased, the size of the engines and the cost of the vehicle?

Mr. Whittaker: The vehicle is a minibus and the cost is \$4 million for transporting the secondary school children from surrounding areas in Hosororo and Wauna to the North West Secondary School. A total of about 45 students will benefit under the Universal Secondary Education (USE) Programme to which the Hon. Minister referred.

Three 15-horsepower outboard engines attached to dugout canoes will transport secondary school students from surrounding areas in Parakeese and Kamwatta so they can access secondary education at Santa Rosa Secondary; they can travel daily. The third engine will go to Hymacabr. A total of 43 secondary school students will now have access to universal secondary education daily.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery - \$58,339,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Current Expenditure

Programme: 714 – Health Services - \$348,252,000

Mr. Chairman: It is my hope that we can take a suspension on or about five o'clock but that depends on Members, whether or not we get through the questions. We have one programme left for this region which is Health Services.

Dr. Cummings: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line items 6113 and 6116: I notice there is an increase in two as well as four staff for contracted employees in the same order. Could the Hon. Minister tell us about the increase and the emoluments of these staffers? One attracts an increase of \$3 million and the other an increase of \$5 million.

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skilled: The two appointments are of a medical lab technician - emoluments \$63,235 per month; and the other is of a staff nurse at \$62,956. Under line item 6116 – Contracted Employees – the four are a Ward Orderly - \$50,003; a Ward Maid - \$45,131; a Field Assistant - \$43,540; and a Laundress - \$39,540.

Dr. Cummings: Thank you, Hon. Minister. Line item 6281 – Security Services: I notice there is also an increase of approximately \$4 million. Is it for new services or new health facilities? Could you explain the increase?

Mr. Whittaker: It is the same security company, Strategic Action Security Limited, and the same locations, Mabaruma Regional Hospital, the Pakera Hospital at Matthews Ridge, the Kumaka District Hospital and the Port Kaituma Hospital. What has increased is the emolument as result of the revised minimum wage.

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, line items 6252, 6253, 6254, and 6255: Could the Hon. Minister provide us, in writing, with the information pertaining to those requested here?

Mr. Chairman: Can and will do.

Mr. T. Williams: Mr. Chairman, under line item 6231, could the Minister say what was responsible for an additional \$4 million requested for fuel and lubricants?

Mr. Whittaker: The increase of approximately \$4 million is occasioned by the fact that we now have generators at the Mabaruma Regional Hospital, Pakera, Port Kaituma and Kumaka District Hospitals. And more insignificantly, the increase in medical outreach and surveillance in far-

flung communities add to this intensifying of immunisation activities in the region. Previously, it was a situation where persons who come from the village have to travel to the centre, but now there is an increase in outreach activities as we reach out to the persons needing the services.

I am also informed that there are bi-monthly surgeries – I think we are all aware of that - as bi-monthly medical teams go into the region and perform surgeries. These are new services offered by the regional hospitals. It is not limited to that but includes dentals services also. These are a number of positive factors that have contributed to the increase in the need for more fuel, more lubricants and more money.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Mr. Chairman, line item 6241 – Rental of Buildings: I notice an increase of \$3 million. How many buildings are being rented, Hon. Minister, and where? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: First of all, Mr. Chairman, let me say that the rental of buildings is not a fixed occurrence; it is based on needs. Most of it is attributable to our outreach malaria activities; \$2 million is for rental of buildings in Port Kaituma. From time to time, we are required to send staff in that area. Also in the Barama area, where there is a lot of mining activities up river, \$1 million is allocated; in the Baramita area, \$1 million is allocated. So that is how the \$4 million is allocated. It is not permanent; it is not that next year a building is going to be rented in Port Kaituma. Perhaps, we will have the malaria situation under control there and need to go some place else or not at all.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Minister, a follow-up question: The rental of \$1 million for Barama and \$1 million for Baramita, are they for a year? How long are you going to rent it? If it is \$1 million, how much per month or per trip do you pay?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, it is a budgetary allocation. Teams go out and spend weeks or sometimes two months to deal with a situation and when it is under control, they are finished; then some other need arises elsewhere. So it is a budgetary allocation.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Thank you, Hon. Minister. I have another follow-up. When they go on outreaches, do they actually rent a building? Does the Ministry of Health not have a building or the villages have guest houses?

Mr. Chairman: Ms. Garrido-Lowe, they rent and that is why there is an allocation for it.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Are there no guest houses at all in these villages for them to stay?

Mr. Whittaker: These are teams going out with instruments, equipment, and their own personnel possession; they are teams going out and are not living under home conditions.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: A follow-up on that: If they are going into the mines, do they rent tents or something?

Mr. Chairman: Ms. Garrido-Lowe, when the Ministry is sending its officials into a region, it requires sometimes that they have a base, so a building is rented for a team to stay. It might be five men cooking together, as we call it ‘bachee’. If they sometimes have to go into a mine, they would leave their equipment and stuff, go into the mine for a day or two and come back to their base. It is itinerant and not all 12 months.

Programme: 714 – Health Services - \$348,252,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 714 – Health Services – 58,282,000

Mr. Trotman: Mr. Chairman, project code 1202400: I am going to be repetitious with this question because of the absence of information in relation to what is being done here. I will like the Minister to put in writing the information in relation to the completion of the living quarters at Baramita, including the dimensions of the building, the percentage of work being done and the cost, and the cost of the rest of works that have to be done.

I will also like the Minister to tell us what will be the cost of No. 2 and No. 3 in the project outline.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, we can certainly provide it. In fact, I have it in front of me.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Hon. Minister, project code 1202400 – can you provide in writing the details with regards to the rehabilitation of the hospital *et cetera*? That is No. 2. And for No. 3, what is the cost of the extension of the health hut at Koko? How far is it, what percentage has been completed, how much money spent before, *et cetera*? Thank you.

Mr. Whittaker: I get the impression it is the same information I am required to provide the Hon. Member.

Mr. Chairman: You will receive the information, Mr. Trotman and Mrs. Garrido-Lowe.

Ms. Williams: Mr. Chairman, project code 2401500 – Land and Water Transport: Could the Hon. Minister say where these equipment would be placed?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the all terrain vehicles are required for the Port Kaituma Cottage Hospital. That will be used in the house to house programme. The 175-horsepower outboard engine with ballahoo will be used in the Mabaruma area. It replaces an old engine they had at the Mabaruma Hospital which is now unserviceable.

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, project code 1202400 – Buildings – Health: I have checked the profile and my question is: what consideration is given to the morgue at Matthews Ridge? Is there any intention to rebuild it like the one at Port Kaituma? If so, when?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the credible information I have is that the Ministry of Health is taking care of that.

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, project code 2601400: Could the Hon. Minister say how many transformers and generators are to be purchased, their sizes and which location they are going to be assigned to?

Mr. Whittaker: The transformer, 25 Kilovolt-amps (KVA), is required for the Mabaruma Hospital for voltage conversion from the Government grid for use by the Hospital.

The 175 KVA is for the Moruca Hospital; it is a backup. It will allow them to activate the use of x-ray and other such equipment. So the 25 KVA is for the Mabaruma Hospital and the 175 KVA is for the Moruca Hospital.

Mr. Chairman: Ms. Williams, you will close us off on this one, and fittingly so.

Ms. Williams: Thank you. Project code 2502800 – Furniture and Equipment – Health: Could the Hon. Minister say where these equipment would be placed?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, as I peruse this document, these equipment are going to a number of health institutions in the Region, including the district hospital, the health centres and health posts: autoclaves for the Kumaka District Hospital and the Mabaruma Regional Hospital; measuring board for the Kumaka District Hospital, the Kwabanna Health Centre, Waramuri Health Centre. I can provide.

Programme: 714 – Health Services – 58,282,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Members, thank you. Just to let you know, 46 questions were put on Region 1 alone. I think we all deserve a break right now.

We have completed our consideration of Region 1 and I would like to thank the Minister and his technical staff. I know that some of you will be back for the other Regions, but thank you very much. Take a well deserved break.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: We stand suspended for one hour.

Sitting suspended at 5.00 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 6.03 p.m.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: Members, when we took the suspension, we had just completed consideration of the Estimates for Region 1. We are now going to commence consideration of the Estimates for Region 2, Pomeroon/Supenaam, its current and capital expenditures. I am giving time for the Minister's technical support team to gather.

Agency: 72 - Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam

Current Expenditure

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$139,735,000

Mr. Jones: Line item 6112, Senior Technical: We see a reduction by one, but yet the figure has increased. Could the Minister explain?

Mr. Whittaker: I wonder if they are looking at the right item. For line item 6112, the complement of staff has increased and so too has the allocation.

Mr. Jones: Yes. Sorry about that Minister. Line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled: Could the Minister explain the increase?

Mr. Whittaker: This is another instance where the Ministry of Finance would have paid the amount and the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) is now providing for the increase.

Mr. Jones: Line item 6281, Security Services: We noticed a significant increase from \$11 million to \$17 million. Could the Minister explain to us who provides this security service?

Mr. Whittaker: The allocation there is based on the new award. It is Home Safe Security and Domestic Service. It provides security services at the increased rate, which is \$348 per hour, Value Added Tax (VAT) inclusive.

Mr. Jones: Line item 6117, Temporary Employees: We noticed a reduction from three to one, but the amount remains the same.

Mr. Whittaker: The one staff, to which we are referring in 2014, is a Temporary Assistant Caretaker who was appointed as a relief for a period.

Mr. Chairman: Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Minister inform us who utilise this?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6261 caters for travelling for all sections under programme 1. It includes the office of the Regional Executive Officer, registry, personnel, local government, *et cetera*.

Mr. Jones: A follow-up. Minister by chance, does the word *et cetera* include councillors?

Mr. Whittaker: It does not.

Mr. T. Williams: Hon. Minister, I will take you back to line item 6281. You stated that you are now using a new security service and it is charging more. I note that throughout these programmes there are significant increases. Just to save time, is this the standard cost for the increases — the new service? We would like to know why it is a new service which charges more when there was one previously that was doing the same work for less?

Mr. Whittaker: Home Safe Security and Domestic Service would have gone through the same process that the other security firms, to which I alluded, went through. No doubt considerations of increased employment cost would have been a factor in the determination of the price.

Mr. Jones: Line item 6284, Other: Could the Minister explain how this sum is utilised?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6284 catered for the payment of payroll commission, for encashing of cheques, and for the payment of advertisement of tender notices. That is the nature of the payments.

Mr. Jones: Line item 6294, Other: Same question, how is this sum utilised?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6294 would cater for the payment of students of work study attachment from the University of Guyana, at \$18,000 per student, monthly.

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$139,735,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 721 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$403,411,000

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$403,411,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$232,318,000

Mr. T. Williams: I return to security. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if, for almost a third increase in expenses towards security, we are benefiting now from more services from this new

company. There is an increase in security around the clock. Could the Minister say if there is a change in the kind of service that the region is getting?

Mr. Whittaker: It is a different security service provider and, as I said earlier on, the other consideration would be the fact of having to meet the requirements of the revised minimum wages for workers, as at 1st July, 2013.

Mr. T. Williams: A follow-up. Could the Hon. Minister say the rate of the next highest or lowest bidder from the security services?

Mr. Whittaker: I would not know that.

Mr. T. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister commit to providing this House with the information of the competing bids from the security services, for the provision of this service?

Mr. Chairman: Well, I would first have to ascertain whether this is information under the control of this Minister. Is it?

Mr. Whittaker: It is National Procurement and Tender Administration Board (NPTAB).

Mr. Chairman: The Ministry does not conduct the bidding process, review or selection, so we have to be careful of that.

Dr. Ramayya: On the same line item 6281, the security, could the Minister provide for us because it is baffling, what the minimum wage was prior to the new one? If the number of employees seems to be the same and the increase is about 40% and 35 %, what the previous minimum wage was, in comparison with the one today?

Mr. Whittaker: The previous rate was \$145 per hour. The revised minimum wages, as of 1st July, 2013, is \$202 dollars per hour. Security firms bidding, no doubt, would have been guided by that fact. We have no control over what persons will bid for. It is a process they go through and NPTAB, no doubt, ensures that the process is transparent. I have no doubt that this security firm was, perhaps, the lowest responsive bidder.

Mr. Felix: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees: In the year 2013, the figure was 32 and in 2014, it is 31. The budget for 2014 has exceeded the revised for 2013, could the Minister explain?

Mr. Whittaker: During the year one labourer was dismissed, therefore, at that stage the employment cost would have dropped, but because of increases, occasioned by the revised minimum, it would have gone up again.

Mr. Jones: Line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants: We see an increase from \$36 million to \$39 million. Could the Minister justify this increase please?

Mr. Whittaker: The increase totalling some \$3 million caters for additional fuel requirements as field visits are increased by officers monitoring the conservancy and the cultivation areas across the region and also for the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) pumps and heavy-duty equipment assigned to this programme.

Mr. Jones: Line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence: Could the Minister inform this Assembly whether the councillors are a part of this?

Mr. Whittaker: For line item 6261, councillors are not a part of that.

Mr. Jones: Line item 6271, Telephone Charges: We see an increase from \$46,000 to \$340,000. Could the Minister explain?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes. The region is catering here for three additional lines and also internet service for the Regional Engineer.

Mr. Chairman: Line item 6272, Electricity Charges: There is a move from zero to \$672,000. Which building will be utilising this electricity?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6272 makes provision for electricity services to the Regional Vice Chairman's office, which is at Anna Regina, the administrative building and toll gate at Suddie.

Mr. Jones: It is just a follow-up. Am I to understand that the Regional Vice-Chairman is, for the first time, being afforded electricity?

Mr. Whittaker: This refers to the office building.

Mr. Jones: Is it a new building?

Mr. Whittaker: No. This is about the reprogramming to which I alluded earlier on.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads, \$7,000,000 and line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works, \$93,000,000: Could the Hon. Minister provide, in writing, the different areas where the maintenance will be done along with the allocation earmarked?

Mr. Whittaker: Will do, Mr. Chairman.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$232,318,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$153,000,000

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project 1300700, allocation for \$139 million: Hon. Minister, I see it here in the description of projects, numbers 1 to 5. Could you kindly give us, in writing, the amount of moneys earmarked for each project?

Mr. Whittaker: Will do, Mr. Chairman.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture - \$153,000,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 723 — Public Works — \$87, 360,000

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$87,360,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 723 – Public Works - \$94,200,000

Mr. Jones: Project 1100300, Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown on the bridges that will be constructed at Windsor Castle, Sparta and Richmond Housing Scheme?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes Mr. Chairman. At Windsor Castle, the cost of the project is \$5.2 million. The nature of the work is replacing defective timber revetment side walls and HBP tube with a reinforced concrete structure, to give better access to residents, some 120 beneficiaries. The dimension is 22.0 feet length by 16.0 feet width, with 4.0 feet bore for the culvert and Double Bituminous Surface Treatment (DBST) surface over the newly constructed bridge.

Mr. Jones: Sorry, Mr. Minister, it is just for the cost, not the dimension.

Mr. Whittaker: The one at Windsor Castle is \$5.2 million and the one at Cross Street, Sparta is \$6.5 million. The one in Richmond Housing Scheme, connected to Sherriff Street, is \$4.5 million, making a total of \$16.2 million.

Mr. Jones: Project 1400500, Roads: Could the Minister just provide a breakdown of Dartmouth and Airy Hall?

Mr. Whittaker: At Dartmouth, there is Clarke Street - \$4.1 million; there is also Benn Street - \$5.8 million and Airy Hall - \$7 million.

Mr. Bulkan: It is on the same line item. Could the Hon. Minister please advise us, of the \$58 million, how much is budgeted for the upgrading of roads in Supenaam? Is the Minister in a position to advise us which roads in Supenaam are targeted to be upgraded?

Mr. Whittaker: There is one road in Supenaam, the Sawmill Road and the voted provision is \$4.4 million.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Project 1901200, Land Development: I see here that there is the upgrading of roads in Reliance, Lima and Three Friends. It is more roads again - the upgrading of roads. I was thinking, maybe, housing schemes...

Mr. Chairman: What is the question, Hon. Member?

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: What allocation is there for housing schemes in the ...

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member did mention a line item when she started?

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Yes. It is project 1901200, Upgrading of Housing Schemes: It if the Hon. Minister can say where exactly these housing schemes are.

Mr. Whittaker: There is one housing scheme mentioned here, that is the Lima Housing Scheme, and the Masjid Street which will be done at the cost of \$6.5 million?

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: There are roads in this document, instead of housing schemes. Another question: Is there any money allocated to regularise the Charity squatting area?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is no.

Programme: 723 - Public Works - \$94,200,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery - \$1,318,142,000

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery - \$1,318,142,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery - \$65,505,000

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery - \$65,505,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 725 – Health Services - \$457,246,000

Programme: 725 Health Services - \$457,246,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 725 - Health Services - \$84,606,000

Programme: 725 – Health Services - \$84,606,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

6.33 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: I would like to thank the Minister and his technical support staff for attending, and for them assisting him and the House in the considerations.

Agency: 73 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara

Current Estimates

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$154,230,000

Mr. Adams: Line item 6281, Security Services: We have noticed that there is an increase of approximately \$6 million. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say why there is the increase and which security service is the service provider for Region 3?

Mr. Whittaker: Home Safe Security and Domestic Service and the increase in due to the increase rates.

Mr. Adams: Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say which buildings in Region 3 will be maintained under this head?

Mr. Whittaker: These buildings would be the RDC admin building at Vreed-en-Hoop, the sub region office at Leguan, the admin office, Wakenaam and the RDC's guest house situated at Enterprise, Leguan.

Mr. Adams: Line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Would the Minister be kind enough to list the other infrastructure that will be maintained under this head?

Mr. Whittaker: These will be maintenance of fence around the regional admin building at Wakenaam and the maintenance of the fence at the office at Pouderoyen.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$154,230,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$8,100,000

Mr. Adams: Project 2503200, Furniture and Equipment – Administration: Would the Minister be kind enough to tell us, for the purchase of furniture and equipment, which department will benefit from this purchase?

Mr. Whittaker: It will be the RDC head office in Vreed-en-Hoop, sub offices on Leguan and Wakenaam, the guest house in Leguan and Wakenaam and the RDC...

Now let me explain. There are different items. There is the 75 KVA generator with an automatic change over switch and this is for the RDC head office at Vreed-en-Hoop, and there is a vault; there are filing cabinets, six of them, which will be distributed among RDC head office and the two sub offices at Leguan and Wakenaam; there are also six fans and those will be distributed between the Leguan and Wakenaam; there are ten office desks, six of which will go to the RDC head office and two each to the Leguan and Wakenaam sub offices.

Mr. Adams: Project 1208700, Buildings – Administration: It just states “Provisions for cubicles.” Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say where the cubicles will be placed because the legend states “provision for cubicles” too with no details?

Mr. Whittaker: The fifteen cubicles, 6 x 6 x 4 ½ ft, will be located at the RDC head office, Vreed-en– Hoop.

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe: Just for clarification, are we looking at Public Works?

Mr. Chairman: We are at Regional Administration & Finance, capital expenditure.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$8,100,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$235,101,000

Mr. Adams: Line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support: The Staffing Details states one. Would the Minister be kind enough to provide the designation and emolument of that officer?

Mr. Whittaker: It is one Typist Clerk at a salary of \$47,624 per month.

Mr. Adams: Line item 6133, Benefits and Allowances: For the Agri Department, who are the recipients Minister? Would you be kind enough to say?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6133, Benefits and Allowances: There are 33 employees named here who will receive that benefit, it is the vacation allowance. There are five Rangers who will receive \$60,681 each, a number of Sluice Attendants where ten of them will receive \$60,686 each, the others are Labourers receiving \$41,083 each, giving a grand total of \$1.786 million.

Mr. Adams: In the interest of time, Mr. Chairman, can I double? Line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Work, and line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: It is if a list can be handed to us to say where these works will be administered and that would be fine for me. It would be useful if I can get a list of that so that I will be able to assist the Minister in the region to see if the work is being done as would be scheduled.

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, that will be... We have it here.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$235,101,000 - agreed and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$59,300,000

Mr. T. Williams: Project 1300800, Agricultural Development – D&I: I would like to ask the Minister, what are some of the areas or the name of the areas that will benefit from this D&I allocation? To add to that too, will any *kokers* be done under this project?

Mr. Whittaker: The areas, which will benefit, will be Enterprise, Zeelandia, Stanleytown and Kingston.

The nature of the work varied. For example, at Enterprise it is the rehabilitation of wooden *kokers* to reinforce concrete *kokers*. Then there is the rehabilitation of wooden control structure to reinforce concrete at Zeelandia; rehabilitation of wooden Ruby tail wall escape to reinforce concrete, rehabilitation of earthen drain at reserve 784, construction of greenheart revetment in

Stanleytown, construction of greenheart revetment at Kingston, rehabilitation of two river sluice doors and construction of two river sluice doors. The dimension varies – rehabilitation of two – 12ft x 14ft, construction of two – 13ft x 17ft.

Mr. Ramjattan: There are four activities here. Could the Minister just put down the proportions of the moneys of the \$59 million that will go for the first, second, third and fourth ones? I just want that.

Mr. Whittaker: In fact, there are eight activities: the wooden *koker* door at Leguan - \$8.9 million, one at Wakenaam - \$6 million, one at Ruby, East Bank Essequibo - \$8.9 million, the construction of the earthen drain reserve at Parika facade, East Bank Essequibo - \$7 million, the greenheart revetment in Stanleytown, West Bank Demerara area - \$6.5 million, the other three are the greenheart revetment at Kingston in Leguan - \$6.1 million, there are two river sluice doors at Salem, East Bank Essequibo - \$7 million and then the construction of two river sluice doors at Bagotville, West Bank Demerara - \$8.9 million, giving a total of \$59.3 million.

Mr. Adams: Unlike my colleagues, I would not ask the Minister to read the list out but what I would ask is that he gives the list of the areas and the amount so that we can be able to monitor what is happening in the region.

Mr. Chairman: Members, I continue to say that there has to be an improvement that we can bring to this. The Ministers have the information which they are prepared to share but if there was a process through which we can receive some of this in advance it would be ultimately better. It is not as if it is being hidden; it is available. The requests are made during the question and answer time but if, in fact, we could prearrange through the shadows to have relevant information, then other information, I am sure, will be requested and it would make our work ultimately better on both sides. That is a consideration for next year or whenever.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture - \$59,300,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$1,781,404,000

Mr. Adams: Line item 6281, Security Services: I will start with security for Education. It has moved quite to a high figure this time. I know that I will be told about the increase and paying of minimum wage. Could the Hon. Minister say how many schools have 24-hour security in the region?

Mr. Whittaker: The information I have in front of me indicates that none of the schools have 24-hour security service.

Mr. Adams: I do not think that your information is accurate, Sir.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, can I ask that we go on and come back to that?

Mr. Chairman: The question is: How many schools have 24-hour security? Is it that, Mr. Adams?

Mr. Adams: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Are you likely to come back to it tonight or...? If you do not have it now I do not know when...

Mr. Whittaker: The technical staff reiterate that no school - this is Public Works - has 24-hour security.

Mr. Chairman: None has. Does that answer the question, Mr. Adams?

Mr. Adams: I know that is not so, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Do they all have?

Mr. Adams: They all do not have but there are schools with 24-hour security in region.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister is saying that at present none of the schools has 24-hour security. Does that not confirm what you are saying?

Mr. Adams: Is it not Education Delivery?

Mr. Chairman: Education Delivery is where we are.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, my apologies to you and the Hon. Members, we were looking at the wrong schedule. I am told that all of the secondary schools have 24-hour security – three 8-hour shift.

Mr. Chairman: So, you are correct, Mr. Adams.

Mr. Adams: Yes, because I am at a secondary school and the school has 24-hour security.

Line item 6291, National and Other Events: I notice that the amount of money resembles that of 2013, would this be adequate? Does it cater for new uniforms for athletes? Does it cater for stipend for the teacher supervisors who go to National Schools Athletics, Swimming and Cycling Championship with those children?

Mr. Whittaker: The \$6.7 million made available here is what is affordable and it will ensure participation of all of the students in the activities listed here which include National Science, Mathematics and Technology Fair, Education Heritage Month activities, regional awards ceremony - Mashramani/Independence, National Schools Athletics, Swimming and Cycling Championship.

Mr. Adams: I think the Minister will very well come back to the House for some more money. Does the Minister see how many activities there are and the National Athletics, Swimming and Cycling is the last on it?

Line item 6294, Other: What does this head cater for?

Mr. Whittaker: It is under this line item that the RDC pays for photocopying of documents, in some instances providing spectacles for children, which is commendable.

Mr. Adams: Could I be directed then to the head which caters for the work study students receiving their stipend and the teacher supervisors?

Mr. Whittaker: That would be line item 6284, Other. Here we cater for stipend for 150 work study students, increase in raise to supervisors and invigilators for Caribbean Secondary Examination Certificate (CSEC), National Grade Six Assessment (NGSA) and also for the increase in payments for the sweeper/cleaners.

Mr. Felix: Hon. Minister, I want to take you to line item 6112, Senior Technical. In 2013 it was 421 staff, now it is increased to 433 in 2014, could you please explain the increase?

Mr. Whittaker: This provides for the upgrading of ten temporary qualified teachers to the status of trained teachers and two trained teachers were transferred in.

Mr. Felix: Then there is line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled. It was 251 staff in 2013 and there is a reduction to 245 staff in 2014. Checking the budget, could we have an explanation as to the reduction?

Mr. Whittaker: The Staffing Details shows, under line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled, a reduction by six. Two Temporary Qualified Mistresses/Masters (TQMs) have retired; there were three resignations of TQM and there was one transfer of a TQM out of the region.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$1,781,404,000 - agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$75,605,000

Mr. T. Williams: Project 1203000, Buildings – Education: A number of projects are listed here and the estimated cost is \$61 million. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if he can assure this Assembly if this sum is adequate. Is it one contractor who will be doing all of this work?

Mr. Whittaker: The projects, to which the Hon. Member refers, will have to be tendered and there is always the probability that the tendered amount may fall well below what is stated here. The point I am making is that it is not easy to say that this is inadequate or this is adequate. We optimise the use of the available resources.

Mr. Adams: The same line item 1203000, Buildings – Education: The description tells me that some work is going to be done to the school house at Wales. My information is that there was never a school house at Wales.

Mr. Whittaker: I am informed that there was never, true enough, a teachers' quarter at Wales. However, there was a commitment given by the Hon. Minister of Education with respect to having such a quarter there and hence provision was made for that quarter - commendable.

Mr. Adams: Would the Hon. Minister be able to say what would be done on the building at Plantain Walk? Is this the education building that the Ministry occupies at Plantain Walk? What type of work will be done at Plantain Walk?

Mr. Whittaker: It is the rehabilitation of a two-flat building at Plantain Walk that presently houses the Department of Education. This includes, also, some extension.

7.03 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: This includes extension to provide improved accommodation to the staff and to facilitate more members of the public visiting and interacting with the staff in the education department.

Mr. Adams: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to give me the details of the work to be done under the programme of Education Delivery in Region 3?

Mr. Whittaker: The dimensions would have to be provided. I do not have it here.

Mr. Adams: I would just like the list to see what is happening in the Region. Would I be able to get that, sir?

Mr. Whittaker: It would be provided.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery - \$75,605,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$674,712,000

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$674,712,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$82,210,000

Mr. Adams: Project code 2401700: The legend states that an ambulance would be purchased. Would it be an ambulance or is it a bus to be made into an ambulance?

Mr. Whittaker: This is a fully equipped ambulance.

Mr. Adams: Under the same project code, I notice that money has been budgeted for the purchase of a washing machine. Which of the hospitals would that washing machine be sent to?

Mr. Whittaker: It would be sent to the West Demerara Regional Hospital (WDRH).

Mr. Adams: I asked the question because when I visited the Leonora Cottage Hospital, they had asked for commercial washing machine.

Mr. Chairman: This machine is going to the WDRH and not the Leonora Cottage Hospital. Did you get that answer, Mr. Adams?

Mr. Whittaker: I am told that one was already bought for Leonora.

Mr. Adams: One is there; I know that.

Mr. Whittaker: What is budgeted for here is one for the West Demerara Regional Hospital.

Programme: 735 – Health Services - \$82,210,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Members, this concludes our consideration of both the Current and Capital Estimates for Region 3, Essequibo Islands/West Demerara. I would like to thank the Minister and his technical support team for answering the questions and to remind you, Hon. Minister, you have a compiling list of documents that you have undertaken to share with Members.

Agency: 74 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica

Current Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$144,132,000

Mr. Elliot: Line item 6111 – Administrative: I notice in the staffing details there is an increase of two staff. Could the Minister indicate to us the portfolios and the salaries afforded?

Mr. Whittaker: Those two positions are: the Deputy Regional Executive Officer (DREO), who was transferred, and the Chief Accountant, who was appointed. The DREO's salary is \$205,798 and the Chief Accountant's salary is \$107,485.

Mr. Elliot: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Under the staffing details, I notice an increase by one. Could you indicate the portfolio of the person and his or her emoluments?

Mr. Whittaker: It is a position of typist clerk and the salary is \$50,003.

Mr. Elliot: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Minister indicate the purpose for the increase, state if all of the schools in Region 4 have 24-hour service and state the name of the security firm?

Mr. Whittaker: The security service provider is Home Safe Security Service. There are eight locations and 30 guards. At two of these locations, Triumph and the Triumph Regional Stores, there are four eight-hour shifts. At the other locations – Paradise compound, Timehri Sub Office, Cane Grove Sub Office, Enmore Sub Office, Grove Craft Centre and the Regional Chairman's residence - there are three eight-hour shifts.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6242: Could the Hon. Minister provide, in writing, the buildings which have been identified for maintenance? Under line item 6255, could the Hon. Minister also provide, in writing, the other infrastructure to be maintained?

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bulkan: Line item 6211: Could the Hon. Minister kindly provide the details of what these expenses are?

Mr. Whittaker: This includes payment of stipend to regional councillors, a whopping \$3,960,000; payment to the Captain of St. Cuthbert's Mission of \$120,000; payment for Regional Democratic Council (RDC) statutory meetings - \$780,000, that is 12 meetings at \$65,000; and payment for Regional Administration Committee (RAC) statutory meetings - \$600,000. Under statutory expenses, it is \$5.460 million.

Councillors' travel and subsistence is \$2.7 million. Expenses for constitutional officers: regional chairman office equipment maintenance - \$500,000; stationery - \$450,000; janitorial - \$100,000; regional chairman's office refreshments - \$480,000; RDC committee meetings - \$200,000; and regional vice chairman office refreshments - \$360,000. That is a total of \$840,000 in refreshments. Janitorial services - \$80,000. Expenses for constitutional officers are \$2.220 million.

Public causes: youth and sport organisations - \$240,000; social cases - \$340,000; family assistance - \$400,000; arts and cultural development - \$300,000; community assistance - \$715,000; and regional women's affairs committee - \$200,000. It is a total of \$12.575 million. It is signed by the Chairman, Mr. Clement Corlette.

Mr. Bulkan: Thank you, Hon. Minister. It is probably the solitary case in which I have noticed that you have followed the recommendations of the regional chairman.

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$144,132,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$8,805,000

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$8,805,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$248,469,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister provide the designations and emoluments for the three additional contracted employees?

Mr. Whittaker: These are, hired on contract, one Mechanic III, one Sluice Attendant and one Equipment Operator. The Sluice Attendant's salary is \$63,715; the Mechanic III's salary is \$62,356; and the Equipment Operator's salary is \$46,628.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6253: Could the Hon. Minister provide, in writing, the communities or places which have been indentified for maintenance and drainage works to be done?

Mr. Whittaker: I can and I will.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6281: Could the Hon. Minister inform us what is responsible for the increase in this provision from \$12.625 million to \$19 million?

Mr. Whittaker: It is the increased rates.

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6283 – Cleaning and Extermination Services: I would like the Hon. Minister to tell us how this is done? Is it done quarterly? Could the Hon. Minister give some information on that? Even though the revised amount for 2013 was \$128,000, I notice there is an increase, bringing the amount for 2014 to \$190,000.

Mr. Whittaker: The treatment of termites is done annually. Other treatment for roaches, fleas, *et cetera*, is done on a quarterly basis.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$248,469,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$38,450,000

Ms. Selman: Project code 1701200: Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of the allocation for each project? This would be construction of revetments at Cane Grove and Craig. Could he also provide the dimensions and costs of each? Mr. Minister, we would like it in writing.

Mr. Whittaker: I can. We have it here.

Mr. Elliot: The same project code: Could the Hon. Minister tell us if this project was a project submitted by the Regional Democratic Council of Region 4 or were the projects put in by the Ministry?

Mr. Whittaker: At the Ministry, we do not ever put in any projects. These represent projects submitted by the Regional Democratic Council.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture - \$38,450,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 743 – Public Works - \$113,610,000

Mr. Elliot: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Minister indicate to us the reason for the increase and the portfolio of that person?

Mr. Whittaker: The answer is one Driver. The emolument is \$43,137 per month.

Ms. Selman: Line items 6251, 6252 and 6255: Could the Hon. Minister provide, in writing, the details as they relate to the three line items identified?

Mr. Whittaker: I can and will do.

Deputy Speaker [Mr. B. Williams]: A follow-up question: I do not know if the Hon. Minister could indicate for the purposes of the East Coast Demerara, the roads and bridges he has indentified under line item 6251.

Mr. Felix: I would like to add the roads in North Sophia to that.

Mr. Whittaker: Repairs to potholes and road shoulders in Section ‘B’ Non Pareil; similar works will be done in 17th Street, Dazzell Housing Scheme; Enterprise main road; Middle Street, Strathspey; Ramroop Road, Chateau Margot; Ruby Gas Station road at Success; Vryheid’s Lust, South area and North area by the community centre; Happy Acres; Atlantic Gardens; 6th Street at La Bonne Intention (LBI); and Ogle clay brick road, **Cunje**.

Mr. Chairman: What about North Sophia?

Mr. Whittaker: Maintenance of other infrastructure: repairs to the fence at the Officers Living Quarters at Triumph, East Coast Demerara; rehabilitation of the fence at the RDC Office,

Timehri; rehabilitation of fence at the Cane Grove Sub Office. Everything seems to be East Coast here.

Mr. Felix: Is there nothing about North Sophia?

Mr. Whittaker: I am told that for the purpose of this budgeting exercise, Sophia is not provided for.

Programme: 743 – Public Works - \$113,610,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 743 – Public Works - \$63,500,000

Mr. Elliot: Could the Hon. Minister inform this Committee of the number of bridges that would be constructed under project code 1100500? Could the Hon. Minister inform this Committee of the number of roads that would be constructed under project code 1400700? Could the Minister give us a list, the costs and the particular areas? We do not want him to read out the list.

Mr. Whittaker: Certainly.

Ms. Selman: Just to add to what the Hon. Member, Mr. Elliot, said, could the Hon. Minister add the dimension and type of materials to be used in relation to the construction of the bridges?

Mr. Whittaker: If they take it now, they can get all of that.

Mr. Chairman: I think they would like to have it in written form so they can monitor the works.

Ms. Selman: Could the Hon. Minister also provide the name of the material that would be used for the finish of the road?

Mr. Whittaker: It would be provided, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Bulkan: I refer to the two project codes under the programme of Public Works, these being capital expenditure for bridges and for roads, for which the total allocation is either the princely or paltry sum of \$63 million. Could the Hon. Minister provide an explanation as to why this is

the total sum of money allocated for the construction and rehabilitation of bridges and community roads in what is the most populous of the 10 regions?

Mr. Whittaker: I am aware that roads within this Region are done by the Ministry of Public Works. I am aware that there are roads done by the Ministry of Housing and Water. I am aware that there are roads done by the local authority. I am aware that there are roads done by the Regional Democratic Council. The same cannot be said for the other regions.

Mr. Chairman: Having named all of the different agencies that do roads, how is the inter-agency mapping done? For example, how do you decide what your Ministry does? What are your priorities? There is some overlapping and there is some duplication and many grey areas. All of these agencies are working on roads, yet many roads are still left out. This begs the question: how is the work coordinated among these agencies?

Mr. Whittaker: The probability of overlapping is minus one and the actual overlapping is zero.

Mr. Chairman: You are very confident about your degree of overlapping.

Mr. Whittaker: There is collaboration at the level of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Finance provides the resources so we do not have overlapping.

Programme: 743 – Public Works - \$63,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery - \$2,515,809,000

7.33 p.m.

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6281: Could the Hon. Member provide a justification for the movement from \$123 million to \$160 million as it relates to security services?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, under this line item, security is provided for 82 schools – 28 at the nursery level, 16 hours a day; 38 at the primary level, 16 hours a day; and 16 secondary schools at 24 hours a day. The increase in cost is a function of the new rates.

Ms. Selman: Could the Hon. Minister inform us as to how many new schools or additional schools are now being catered for in 2014 compared to 2013?

Mr. Whittaker: There are no new schools. All are existing schools but the rates...

Mr. Chairman: Which security service is this?

Mr. Whittaker: Home Safe Security Service.

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Sir. Line item 6284: Could the Minister indicate to us what has led to the increase by \$10 million from \$45 million to \$55 million under Other Goods and Services to be purchased?

Mr. Whittaker: The payments made under this line item include payment of Sweeper/Cleaners from the nursery, primary and secondary schools, invigilators, supervisors and work study students, and the RDC has been making special effort to ensure, especially our Sweeper/Cleaners – those mothers who work hard and look forward to their payments – receive such payments.

Ms. Ally: Follow-up: May I ask the Hon. Minister to explain why the category of Sweeper/Cleaners falls in this category and not under the staffing details of the contracted employees as is being described in all other ministries or agencies?

Mr. Whittaker: I am informed that the Sweeper/Cleaners are temporary but all efforts are being made to get as many of them as possible and as would wish onto the permanent payroll.

Ms. Ally: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Under staffing, line items 6111 to 6117, could the Hon. Minister say whether this include Georgetown or is it only for the East Coast and East Bank?

Mr. Whittaker: It does not include Georgetown.

Mr. Bond: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6271: Could the Minister tell us how many of these calls are interagency calls?

Mr. Whittaker: This represents payment of rental fees of all schools with telephones.

Mr. Bond: If I may just expand the question a bit, could the Minister tell us how many of these calls are between schools or between other agencies within the education sector? How much of this amount is estimated to be spent on calls to be made within the system, per se?

Mr. Whittaker: The RDC pays the rental fees only. The school takes care of the cost of the calls.

Mr. Bond: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Elliot: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Minister indicate the maintenance of other infrastructure in writing and the cost per...?

Mr. Whittaker: Will do, Sir.

Mr. Bond: Sir, I am noticing an increase of \$377,000 to be spent on rentals. Could the Minister explain as to what the cause is for this exponential increase in the rentals of the telephones? I have not noticed the Guyana Telephone and Telegraph Company (GT&T) charging me for additional cost for rental of my service.

Mr. Whittaker: I am told that these are for additional phones. Those who were not benefitting before have now come onboard.

Mr. Chairman: Who are "those"?

Mr. Bond: If the Minister can then assist me in this concern: how many new sets and what is the cost per set that the Ministry pays for the rental of each set?

Mr. Whittaker: There is a fixed fee and that fee is \$1,500.

Mr. Bond: If one divides \$377,000 by the \$1,500, could the Minister then tell me how many sets...?

Mr. Chairman: Please, Mr. Bond, with respect now.

Mr. Whittaker: My Mathematics is very poor.

Mr. Chairman: I think that we are all capable of that arithmetical calculation. We are not going to put the Minister through such... I think the point is, at \$1,500 for \$377,000, it means that many

people are getting new sets. I am saying that he said “those who did not have”. I would like to know which categories of employees are now getting access to rented handsets. I think that is where we want to go.

Mr. Bond: Sir, I know the question may seem a bit overbearing...

Mr. Chairman: No. What I am saying is I would not allow you to ask a Minister to do a calculation to divide three hundred and something thousand by \$1,500. I do not think it is proper.

Mr. Bond: I could do it...

Mr. Chairman: Exactly, you may do it and then put the question to him. You may do it and put the question to the Minister.

Mr. Whittaker: It is the schools, not the employees that access it.

Mr. Bond: It is roughly 251. If I may, please, could the Minister tell us which schools would be benefiting from these 251 new sets?

Mr. Whittaker: I would use my geographical knowledge and we will work on it and provide the information.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6284: Could the Hon. Minister provide us with the details of the other goods and services to be purchased?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6284 reflects payment of Sweeper/Cleaners for 61 nurseries, 82 primary and 51 secondary schools, invigilators, supervisors and work study students. We have detailed information here.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery - \$2,515,809,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditures

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery - \$74,238,000

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1203300: I have one question but it has several parts and I am requesting the information in writing. May I go ahead, Sir, and ask them? Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Just do not use the word “exponential” in your question.

Ms. Selman: No, Sir; I would not. Thank you. Could the Hon. Minister provide us, in writing:

1. the purpose of the cold storage rooms, the individual costs and the dimensions?
2. the sanitary blocks, the dimensions of those, the areas identified and the cost of each?
3. the sizes of the fences and the cost of each?
4. the dimensions of the extensions at Lancaster Secondary School, Friendship and Oleander Nursery Schools?

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Whittaker: Do you want me to read it here?

Ms. Selman: Sir, I did say at the beginning that I am requesting it in writing.

Mr. Whittaker: I will provide it.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Sir.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery - \$74,238,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 745 - Health Services - \$296,608,000

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: I notice that there is an increase in two staff members there and there is a \$4 million increase. Could the Hon. Minister explain who these individuals are and their salaries?

Mr. Whittaker: Three of the staff either had their services terminated or left – one driver, one handyman and one cook. Three came off and five came on – one handyman, one driver, one ward maid, one staff nurse and one health centre attendant.

Dr. Cummings: Security Service, once again, Hon. Minister, there is an increase of about \$7 million. Could you explain? Is it the services? Who has been contracted for the security services and why the increase?

Mr. Whittaker: The locations remain the same, 23, but the rates move upwards and that is why the allocation has also moved upwards. The rates have more than doubled; it was \$145, but now it is at \$300. It is more than 100%.

Dr. Cummings: Through the Chairman to the Hon. Minister, line item 6302 - Training (including Scholarships): I know the Ministry of Health has a programme that they give scholarships for. In the Regions, do you also give scholarships to nurses or doctors? It has moved from the revised \$498,000 to \$860,000 here. Is this in-house training or training abroad? What sort of training and scholarships are we talking about here?

Mr. Whittaker: This training is provided by GPHC and the Ministry of Health and provides training for all doctors on basic life support, advanced cardio live support, *et cetera*, and the cost being covered here includes travelling, the course cost, meals, *et cetera*. The second one, the DRH, is the Ministry of Health. This targets health workers; 24 persons are attending that training and it costs \$25,000.

Dr. Cummings: Alright, thank you.

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6242: Could the Hon. Minister provide, in writing, the list of buildings to be maintained? Under line item 6255, could the Hon. Minister also provide the list of other infrastructure to be maintained?

Mr. Whittaker: Will do.

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, line item 6284: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what constitute Other Goods and Services to be purchased under this line item?

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6284 – Other - is to pay for the washing of curtains and sheets, and part-time cleaners at health facilities also.

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, line item 6294: Could the Hon. Minister indicate what the other operating expenses are?

Mr. Whittaker: This item covers, among other things, stipends for work study students, water, hosting of receptions and wakes.

Mr. Bond: Line items 6112 and 6113: Could the Hon. Minister tell us how many of these employees are in substantive posts but, nonetheless, are performing duties that are not in their job description for their substantive posts?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I am not aware of what the Hon. Member is talking about.

Mr. Bond: I will give an explanation. For example, one is confirmed as Court of Appeal Judge but one acts as Chief Justice or one is confirmed as a Deputy REO but one is performing duties of the REO...That is what I am asking, Sir. How many persons are in their substantive posts but, nonetheless, they are performing duties outside of the scope of their job descriptions in acting appointments?

Mr. Chairman: Are you in a position to answer that question now, Sir?

Mr. Whittaker: I am told that we do not have such persons. These are permanent positions, specialised positions.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 745 - Health Services - \$296,608,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 745 – Health Services - \$43,717,000

Dr. Cummings: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1203500 – Buildings - Health: Hon. Minister, the project entails - profile 325 - construction of patients waiting areas at

Beterverwagting, Supply and Timehri Health Centres, construction of trestles at Craig, Mocha Arcadia and Kurukuru and rehabilitation of doctors' quarters at Coven John and Golden Grove. Who are these contactors? Hon. Minister, there are some contractors who would start the work and then we have to repeat the work over and over again. Could you tell me the name of the contractor?

Mr. Chairman: Maybe that is by design.

Dr. Cummings: Could you give me a list of the budgetary allocation for each?

Mr. Whittaker: These are budgetary proposals that are yet to be approved and hence the process of identifying contractors has not begun. We have to advertise and all of that. We have not done that yet. We have not reached that stage.

Ms. Selman: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up to Dr. Cummings question: Could the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown in terms of how the moneys will be allocated to each project, in writing? If I may ask my other question, project code 2404700: Could the Minister tell us how much moneys will be spent on the ambulance and on the outboard engine and could he tell us to which area the ambulance will be assigned?

Mr. Whittaker: The allocation, based on an estimated cost for the ambulance, is \$11 million. It will be assigned to the Dr. CC Nicholson Hospital on the East Coast of Demerara. The outboard engine is a 40-horsepower and the allocation is \$800,000. That would be stationed at Cane Grove primarily for medical outreaches in the Mahaica River.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 745 – Health Services - \$43,717,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Members, we have, in fact, overtaken our work. We had put our close off time at 10.00 p.m. The Region 5 technical officers are here and are prepared to go on so that we can press on. I also have expressed on behalf of the Assembly our condolences. The REO's son died in a tragic accident so there is some grief in Region 5 and I believe that they would prefer to get

this over with because on Monday and Tuesday, they have arrangements for a funeral. So I would say that I crave your indulgence for us to finish Region 5 tonight. Thank you.

Members, even though Region 5 is slated for Monday - and I notice the Hon. Attorney General rubbing his hands in confusion because he may have had an appointment to attend to but that appointment will have to wait, sir... We will try to be as fast... You may send a message through that the appointment will be...

Members, I urge that we proceed to cover Region 5. If we can quickly go to pages 318 and 319 of our Volume 1 and go to Region 5, then we would have done Region 5 a good service. I would like to thank the technical staff who supported the Minister for Region 4 as we invite members of Region 5 to come forward.

Agency: 75 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 751 - Regional Administration and Finance - \$110,038,000

Ms. Wade: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to join with you also as the Regional Member of Parliament for Region 5 to express on behalf of A Partnership for National Unity our sincere condolences to the REO of Region 5 and to just remind him of Psalms 30:5 which states, "...weeping may endure for the night but joy comes in the morning."

I would like to turn to line item 6116 - Contracted Employees. I have noted here that we have an increase. Could the Minister provide the Committee with the designations and the salaries of the top two?

8.03 p.m.

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the eight additional positions are: two Clerk II (General) – the top two – at \$49,985 per month; three Accounts Clerk II, two Typist Clerks, and a Stores Clerk. That is eight.

Ms. Wade: Thank you, Hon. Minister. I would now like to turn your attention to line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service. Minister, I would just like to know how many vehicles are in the fleet and how many are new?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, there are five vehicles in the fleet: two pickups, a land cruiser, a motor car and a minibus. But I have to say the land cruiser is a PGG series, the motor car and minibus are PDD series, ages 19, 23 and 14 years in that order and are unserviceable.

Ms. Wade: Thank you.

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$110,038,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$8,330,000

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$8,330,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$111,618,000

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, like my Colleagues, for Maintenance, Infrastructure, Bridges and Roads, I would like if we could be provided with the budgetary amounts and the areas in writing.

Mr. Chairman: Can that be provided?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, these are works located at Esau and Jacob.

Mr. Chairman: The Member would like to have them in written form.

Mr. Whittaker: They are not that many and we would like the public to know about them also.

Mr. Chairman: Very well, go ahead.

Ms. Wade: I prefer them in writing.

Mr. Whittaker: You will get them in writing. At Esau and Jacob, and Burma, East Coast Demerara, we are going to do six and a half kilometres of works at estimated cost of \$6 million and about 800 residents ought to benefit.

Champagne, Mahaicony: the entire road, 4.96 kilometres (just under five kilometres), \$9 million will be spent there; about 1,000 residents including students, farmers, *et cetera* will benefit. Then there is Hyde Park, Mahaicony: about 6.4 kilometres of work at \$3 million. So there is a total of \$18 million and an additional 800 residents will benefit.

Also, there is the rehabilitation of the RC structure across Esau and Jacob access road in the Mahaicony area at an estimated cost of \$7 million. This project ought to see some 800 residents, including rice farmers, cattle rearers, fish breeders and students, benefitting.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, sir. That list will still be provided.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$111,618,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$91,500,000

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, project 1300900: Hon. Minister, I have checked the profile and found that the projects are all aimed at upper East Coast. Could you say what consideration is being given to West Berbice where there is flooding? At the moment, the rain is set up?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, I have a list in front of me which identifies the areas where drainage and irrigation works will be done. I have no doubt that the considerations are primarily centred on areas where farming is done, areas which are either subject or susceptible to flooding, and hence the need for extensive drainage and irrigation works. These include Mahaicony River to Perth; construction and rehabilitation of accesses within the Mahaica/Mahaicony area; construction of access dams at **Poor Fellow, Basket, Plimpla and Rutherford**; construction of revetment door at Farm Sluice, Mahaicony.

Mr. Felix: Mr. Chairman, I understand that clearly. My position is that West Berbice has farming done there too and some people cannot farm. Well, let us go east of Abary Bridge taking in Belladrum and those areas.

Mr. Whittaker: Those areas, Mr. Chairman, are covered by the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary (MMA).

Ms. Selman: Sir, project code 2401900: Could the Hon. Minister say what type of truck will be purchased and where it is going to be assigned?

Mr. Whittaker: A small dump truck will be procured for use by the RDC for transporting of materials primarily to do community road maintenance works. It should be noted that the RDC has been carrying out Drainage and Irrigation (D&I) works within communities and the truck will also be used to cart off excessive materials.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture - \$91,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 753 – Public Works – 91,689,000

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, line items 6242 and 6255 – Maintenance of Buildings and Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister provide me with that information.

Mr. Whittaker: Line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure.

Ms. Wade: Written, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister is going to read it and then present it in written form.

Mr. Whittaker: Significant rehabilitation works: in this instance, rehabilitation of sanitary block at the RDC compound, Fort Wellington, which is in a deplorable condition - the Hon. Member would agree - \$2 million is allocated. Then for the RDC shed and fence at Fort Wellington will see a further \$1.2 million spent there, bringing the total to \$3.2 million. Among others who would benefit from that project, you would agree, would be the entire staff of the RDC.

Programme: 853 – Public Works – 91,689,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$91,000,000

Ms. Wade: I just need a printout, Mr. Chairman, of budgetary allocation and the areas of bridges and roads.

Mr. Chairman: Minister has made the argument, and, in fact, this has been the case for many years, that there is a listening public and the allocations need to be read into the record so that people would know that their places are covered. There is also a lot of politics involved in it too. We are politicians.

Mr. Whittaker: The construction of the greenheart (GH) timber bridge at No. 5 Village, 25ft by 16ft - \$6 million; it will create access for 500 residents including school children and farmers and provide a link between No. 5 and No. 6 Villages and also will provide better access to the sports ground.

For the roads, a total of \$55 million is provided. Upgrading of main entrances of 1st Street, Hope, parallel to the public road in the Bath Settlement area – 500ft by 10ft - \$8 million will be spent there.

There will also be the upgrading of sideline dams at El Dorado, north and south of the public road, for a further \$7 million. I should add that this would take the form of an upgrade from the deplorable double bituminous surface treatment (DBST) crusher run to DBST surface.

General rehabilitation of Middle Walk, Lovely Lass at \$5.5 million; general rehab to first Sideline Dam - \$6 million; general rehab of third cross street in Trafalgar, \$5 million; upgrading of Sideline Dam at No. 10 and No. 11, 800ft by 11ft - \$7 million; general rehab to first cross street, Ross, 600ft by 9ft - \$4.5 million; general rehab of Middle Walk Dam, Golden Fleece - \$4 million; and general rehab to Larico Main Entrance - \$8 million. It is anticipated that all of these works will be done and completed during the period July to September - \$55 million.

Ms. Wade: A follow-up, Mr. Chairman: I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if the same type of materials will be used in all the areas?

Mr. Whittaker: In some instances, upgrading, I would say as a layman, is from mud and using crusher run and DBST; in other instances, moving from DBST surface to asphalt.

Mr. Chairman: The list is still to be provided, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Whittaker: Will do.

Programme: 753 – Public Works - \$91,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$1,046,833,000

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Hon. Minister, Bygeval Secondary School is listed as an ‘A’ school. How much money is voted under this line item for the refurbishing of the teacher’s quarters at that compound?

Mr. Whittaker: The Bygeval Secondary School teacher’s quarters is not reflected in this programme of activities. I understand that it is under the Ministry of Education.

Ms. Wade: Line item 6284 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister say how this allocation will be spent?

Mr. Whittaker: Under this particular line item, a number of temporary cleaners, in fact 90, will be paid: three outboard operators, 28 invigilators and a number of assistants to these invigilators. In addition, the temporary services for fumigation of dormitory and buildings will be done.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$1,046,833 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimate.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$68,108,000

Ms. Selman: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1203600: The project entails completion of the Novar Primary and the Mahaicony Secondary Schools. Could the Hon. Minister say what percentage of work has already been done at Novar Primary and Mahaicony Secondary Schools, and how much money will be spent to complete these schools in 2014?

Secondly, could the Hon. Minister provide the cost and dimension of the Teachers' Quarters at Gordon Table and the estimated cost for the construction of tarmacs at Fort Wellington, Novar and Belladrum Primary Schools, the same for the extension of Woodley Primary School and the enclosure of Teachers' Quarters?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the Novar Primary School building is 100% completed. The figure reflected there is the retention fee. The Mahaicony Secondary School is 75% completed. The Teachers' Quarters at Gordon Table: the building is presently used to accommodate teachers. There is need to improve the conditions and make it more comfortable. The tarmac at Fort Wellington is 120ft by 60ft; \$5 million is allocated there. The tarmac at Novar Primary/Secondary: \$7.5 million is allocated. Extension of the Woodley park Primary School is 25ft by 80ft; \$19.1 million is allocated for that project. The enclosure of the lower flat of Teachers' Quarters at **Karamac** is \$4 million. That is a total, under this programme, Education Delivery, Capital, of \$53.622 million.

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, a follow-up: Could you give us a deadline when the Mahaicony Secondary School will be completed?

Mr. Whittaker: In fact, Hon. Member, the contract has been terminated and the RDC is in the process of re-advertising and going through the tendering process all over again.

Ms. Wade: So what percentage was finished?

Mr. Whittaker: Seventy-five per cent of the work is completed.

Ms. Wade: So Hon. Minister, could you say what is the budgetary amount to finish the school?

Mr. Whittaker: Four million dollars.

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, project code 2503800 – Furniture – Education: Could the Hon. Minister say how many schools will benefit from this allocation and identify the schools?

Mr. Whittaker: Mr. Chairman, the information I have indicates that a total of 11 secondary schools will benefit. In terms of type 'A' and 'B' – 240, teachers' chairs - 150, teachers' tables - 35, whiteboard - 10, filing cabinets - 25, and cupboards - 25. In terms of primary schools, the numbers are significantly higher; in fact, 30 primary schools will benefit.

Ms. Wade: In writing, Mr. Minister.

Mr. Whittaker: Yes, you will get it. The number of pupils' desks and benches available of 'B' and 'C' type 215 - teachers' chairs - 150, teachers' tables - 30 (each school will get), chalkboards - 30, filing cabinets - 13 (and the specific schools are identified here), cupboards - 10. At the level of the nursery school, there is also going to be made available a number of teachers' chairs, in fact 100, teachers' tables – 20, filing cabinets - 5, and cupboards - 5. These will go to 30 nursery schools.

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery - \$68,108,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$303,259,000

Ms. Wade: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: Mr. Chairman, in the Staffing Details, there is an increase. Could the Hon. Minister provide the House with the designations and the salary for each of the five?

Mr. Whittaker: These positions are two Records Clerks; Dental Surgeon appointed; Statistical Clerk appointed and a Senior Environmental Health Officer. The highest salary is \$217,585 for the Dental Surgeon followed by the Senior Environmental Health Officer's salary of \$132,623.

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister provide me with the list in writing?

Mr. Whittaker: For Other infrastructure, it is a nice spread: the Mahaicony medical complex, Ithaca Village, Rosignol Village, Bush Lot Village, Fort Wellington, Woodley Park; a total of \$8 million will be spent. In fact, in the Mahaicony Medical Complex, the focus will be on landscaping works, repairs to internal drains, walkways, *et cetera*. In Ithaca, the focus is on

replacing a decayed bridge and the fence at the Ithaca Health Centre. In Rosignol, it is all about infilling, landscaping and upgrading of the shed at the Rosignol Health Centre and the Polyclinic. At Bush Lot, it is infilling again, landscaping and upgrading of fence and drains at the old and new Health Centres. At Fort Wellington, it is repairs to the Fort Wellington Hospital - \$2 million, and fence, trestle and landscaping works to the compound. At Woodley Park Health Centre infilling, landscaping works continues and repairs to internal drains and walkways.

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$303,259,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$59,692,000

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, this is my last question. Project code 2401900: Where would the ambulance be assigned, Hon. Minister?

Mr. Whittaker: The ambulance will be assigned to the Mahaicony Hospital.

Ms. Wade: Thank you.

Programme: 755 – Health Services - \$59,692,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Members, that completes our review of the estimates for Region 5. Again, I would like to thank the members who, in the midst of their grief, were still able to come. We are grateful you were able to attend to our matters. Please again convey our condolences to your REO and the staff.

Hon. Members, I am told that the delegation from Region 6 seeks to have an indulgence to be heard tonight. We have been elected to do the people's business; we should press on. The people's business is paramount.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs [Mr. Hinds]: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House be adjourned until Monday, 14th April, 2014 at 2.00 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 8.32 p.m.