

# Official Report

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2012) 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*

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33<sup>RD</sup> Sitting

Thursday, 20<sup>TH</sup> December, 2012

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*The Assembly convened at 2.19 p.m.*

*Prayers*

*[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]*

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**

### **Children's Christmas Party**

**Mr. Speaker:** Good afternoon. There are just some brief announcements.

The first one is on a good and light note. Yesterday the National Assembly, the staff and a few Members of Parliament present, especially the Prime Minister, hosted about two hundred children from the Sophia Care Centre and the environs. The Guyana Police Force steel band was in session and we had a very good day. Some of us stayed a bit too late into the evening, but all in all the party went very well. I would like to thank, again, the Clerk and the members of staff who assisted in making this a possibility for those children. Thank you very much.

### **Welcoming of former Members of Parliament**

**Mr. Speaker:** The second announcement is that this afternoon we have some guests, former Members of Parliament, with us. We had invited about five Members of Parliament. One is abroad, one has some injury and is unable to make it and, I think, one other may still be coming.

I would like to recognise, in our midst, Mrs. Rajcoomarie Bancroft, former Member of Parliament, and Mr. Neville Calistro, the Mighty Chief. Welcome. Mrs. Philomena Sahoye - Shury and a few others, I believe, may still be coming.

### **Response to a request from the National Communications Network (NCN)**

**Mr. Speaker:** The last announcement has to do with more of a personal matter. On Tuesday morning I responded to a request from NCN for an interview about the year in Parliament, which I give quite openly. I was shocked later in the evening to see that my words had been deliberately twisted, want to say that Parliament had passed foolish laws, which I never said. I did say that Parliament from time in memorial had been accused of passing laws that people sometimes considered foolish, and, in any event, the Government side has been the only group, or part of this House, which has brought and piloted Bills and made them into laws. I do not know what the attempt was, perhaps to embarrass one side of the House, but I believe it would have backfired and secondly that the cut hurts Guyana. I am disappointed in that kind of sleazy journalism. I would have expected that, as Speaker, I should be able to give interviews without my words being twisted to and contorted so as to score cheap political points.

I thought that I should let that be known. I am still and always will be opened to giving interviews and I will condemn any attempts to pull me into any silly, petty, political matter. Thank you.

### **REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES**

The following Reports were laid:

- (i) Minutes of Proceedings of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2012.
- (ii) Minutes of Proceedings of the 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Committee of Selection held on Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2012.

*[Speaker of the National Assembly (Chairman of the Committee of Selection)]*

### **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**[Oral Reply]**

**(1) SKELDON SUGAR FACTORY**

**Dr. Mahadeo:** I beg to ask the Hon. Minister of Agriculture Question No. 1 on the Order Paper standing in my name:

- (i) I am informed that there are a number of faults that the Skeldon Sugar Factory is encountering; can the Hon. Minister say if this is so, and, if this is the case, are these being addressed?

Can the Hon. Minister also state

- (ii) If the factory is working to its capacity?
- (iii) What is the present performance of the factory? How much cane is needed to produce one ton of sugar in comparison with the last crop?
- (iv) What acreage of cane expansion is yet to be completed in order to supply the factory with sufficient canes for it to perform at maximum capacity?
- (v) If there are further 'repairs' to be undertaken at the factory? If so, what will it entail?
- (vi) If there are any systems in place to have 'continuous' maintenance at the facility?
- (vii) If the Skeldon Factory is providing any power to the national grid, if so, how much?

**Deputy Speaker [Mrs. Backer]:** I am certain, Dr. Ramsammy, that you are prepared - prepared and passed in person.

**Minister of Agriculture [Dr. Ramsammy]:** No, actually...

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Deputy Speaker, whilst in Scotland, the First Minister of Scotland responded to questions posed by Members of his party and I thought it was a quite effective means of Government to get its policies over. I commend the Minister and the Member, Dr. Mahadeo, for those questions because it is quite... It was a feature that I thought should be, and I am hoping that it is employed some more by the Government.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. In fact, in my more than twelve years as a Minister, these are probably the more difficult questions that have been asked and I would rather not answer them. When it comes to me preparing these, these are not the questions that I would have asked. I just wanted you to know and I hope that the Member is not going to have a tough time because he did ask these tough questions.

In fact, I stand here to say that the Skeldon factory is still not working to capacity. The Skeldon factory, for various reasons - not all have do with the factory itself, but some of it has to do with matters external to the factory - is operating at an average sixty to sixty-five per cent capacity. There is planned redesign work after this crop. That was part of the discussion during the budget debate and it was said that after the second crop the Bosch engineering redesigning work would be done. When that particular work, which was budgeted for - it is not all the work - is completed we would reach a capacity of about eighty-five per cent.

In terms of the performance of the factory, that last crop was the better crop since the new factory started to work and consistent with the old factory type of production. The first crop was about 19.6 ton of cane to produce ton of sugar (TCTS). The TCTS during this crop has been 14.3 ton. There has been an improvement.

In terms of the supply of electricity to the national grid, the answer is yes; we are supplying to the national grid. Power is supplied continuously to the grid, on an hourly basis, averaging 5.5 to six megawatts. However, during peak periods as much as eight to ten megawatts are supplied. The eight to ten megawatts are achieved by utilising the turbo generators which use bagasse, which is bio-fuel.

In terms of work to be undertaken, the ones that I will list are not all the ones that will be done during the Bosch engineering works. Example, the modification to the punt dumper design and replacement of structure is one of the critical components of the work to be done, but that is not included in the Bosch engineering contract.

The second one is the modification to cane conveyor and the cane preparation equipment. That is part of the work that Bosch engineering would be doing.

Thirdly, the installation of condensing tank to boost diffusion efficiency - this is the new technology we introduced at this Skeldon factory and a redesign of the condensing tank is being done.

And, fourthly, the modification to bagasse conveyor, the plows and scratcher, is also included in the Bosch engineering work to be done and that will boost the co-generation capacity of the factory.

In terms of plant maintenance, continuous maintenance, this is one of the features of Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo)'s work and, yes, this factory has a comprehensive continuous maintenance programme.

The acreage part of what has to do with the factory not working to its capacity, there is still approximately two thousand six hundred hectares remaining to be brought into operation. Of this, seven hundred and eighty-two hectares are located within the estate's property and one thousand eight hundred and forty-five hectares are private farmers' property.

I hope that I have answered all the questions that the Hon. Member asked.

### **[Written Replies]**

#### **(2) VEHICLES FOR THE PORT KAITUMA AND MATTHEWS RIDGE HOSPITALS**

**Mr. Allen:** Could the Hon. Minister say to the honourable House why the Port Kaituma and Matthews Ridge Hospitals have been without vehicles for over five years and when this situation will be corrected?

**Minister of Health [Dr. Ramsaran]:** The statement made about the hospitals in Matarkai Sub-region being without vehicles is inaccurate.

His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo visited Matthews Ridge in March 2011. In response to concerns raised by residents at a large public meeting His Excellency made a commitment to provide the Pakera Hospital with a 4x4 pickup, which was procured and sent to the location in July 2011. There is also a full-time driver for this vehicle. This is in addition to an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) available for outreach to areas inaccessible to

other types of vehicles.

Port Kaituma Cottage Hospital also has a 4x4 pick up vehicle. Since August of this year it has experienced intermittent mechanical problems. A decision has been made to send that vehicle to Georgetown for general servicing shortly. In the meantime the health programme hires appropriate vehicles as needed as provide for in such contingencies in the regional appropriations.

In the perspective 2013 Budget the Regional Democratic Council has requested a new ATV, a new 4x4 and a fiberglass boat.

### **(3) KUMAKA REVETMENT PROJECT PLAN**

**Mr. Allen:**

- (i) Who was/were the engineer(s) who was/were responsible for the drafting of the Kumaka Revetment Project Plan?
- (ii) Was the failure of the project the fault of the engineer's plan or the contractor's?
- (iii) How much money was spent on the project and what steps or actions have been taken to recover the money?
- (iv) What is the cost of the new project?
- (v) When will this project be completed?

**Minister of Public Works [Mr. Benn]:**

- (i) A designated team of engineers and technicians from the Ministry of Public Works was assigned the responsibility of planning, designing and supervising the revetment works. The construction works were undertaken by a Force Account Unit from the Transport and Harbours Department of the Ministry which has experience in the construction of similar marine structures.
- (ii) The project's failure was not the fault of the engineer's plan. Non adherence to the prescribed project implementation methodology and design parameters related to

anchoring and backfilling of the revetment and unfavourable site conditions were determined to be the contributing factors.

(iii) Sixty-two million dollars (\$62 million) was spent on the previous project.

Steps taken to recover this cost include the following:

- Reuse of the anchor system (installed timber anchor piles and deadman walers) constructed under the previous project. These were assessed and determined to be structurally adequate for reuse. Additional anchor piles and deadman walers were installed to reinforce what was previously constructed.
- Reuse of salvaged materials from the failed works, including timber sheets, walers and steel anchor rods that were recovered in acceptable structural condition.
- Sections of the failed revetment which have stabilised form part of a buffer system and sediment retaining structure for the toe of the new revetment.

(iv) The cost of the new project is thirty-five million, two hundred thousand dollars (G\$35.2M).

(v) The new project will be completed by December 19, 2012.

The only major outstanding component of the works is the backfilling of the installed revetment and the placement of scour protection elements to minimise erosion at the toe of the structure. This will be executed during the week of December 12, 2012 when the tidal conditions for this aspect of the works will be favourable.

#### (4) **DOCKING OF THE TWO NORTH WEST FERRIES**

**Mr. Allen:** Could the Hon. Minister say why the two North West ferries have not been docked as yet and when they will be docked?

**Mr. Benn:** There are two ferries which have been operating the North West District route - M.V. Lady Northcote and M.V. Kimbia.

**M.V. Lady Northcote**

Tender for the M.V. Lady Northcote was opened on July 3, 2012. Subsequently, a decision was made to annul the docking of the M.V. Lady Northcote for the following reasons:

The M.V. Lady Northcote had commenced operation in 1937 and of recent the department has been placed under enormous pressure to maintain and service several major components that are obsolete, such as:

- Main Engines
- Main Gearbox
- Cargo Winch DC Motors
- DC generator to power cargo winch and auxiliary equipment
- Cargo winch and mechanical controls (brakes, hoist, whip, slew, sheaves and pulleys).

As a consequence of that decision, the M.V. Barima was identified to replace the M.V. Lady Northcote temporarily until another vessel is acquired for which efforts are in train.

Tenders for the docking of the M.V. Barima were opened on November 27, 2012 and the bids were evaluated and resubmitted to National Procurement and Tender Administration Board on 3/12/2012 for approval.

It is expected that the M.V. Barima should be docked by the last week in January 2013.

### **M.V. Kimbia**

Docking of the M.V. Kimbia was publicly advertised and at the time of closing of bids on the 3/7/2012 only one bid was received — Guyana National Industrial Company Inc. whose cost for docking was \$118,795,398. However, the sum provided in the capital programme for Transport and Harbours Department was \$95,000,000 - a shortfall of \$23,795,398.

Following a decision for the shortfall of \$23,795,398 to be met by the Maritime Administration Department (MARAD), approval was granted by the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board for the Docking of the M.V. Kimbia for the



sum of \$118,795,398 by the Guyana National Industrial Company Inc.

As the Christmas season is imminent, Transport and Harbours Department has decided to continue the Kumaka /North West Operations with this vessel for December, 2012. The M.V Kimbia is therefore scheduled to be docked by 23/12/2012.

**(5) HOUSING SCHEME AT KOKERITE VILLAGE, MABARUMA, NORTH WEST DISTRICT**

**Mr. Allen:**

- (i) Would the Hon. Minister agree that the preparation work for the housing scheme at Kokerite Village, Mabaruma. North West District has been going on since 2001? If so, could the Hon. Minister say when his Ministry will complete this housing scheme?
- (ii) Who is the engineer attached to this project?

**Minister of Housing and Water [Mr. Ali]:**

- (i) No. Preparation works for the housing scheme at Kokerite Hill have not been ongoing since 2001.

The commencement date for the construction of roads, drains, structures and installation of the pure water distribution network at Kokerite Hill, Region 1, was 30 August 2012.

A brief scope of the project is as follows: the construction of roads and drains, the installation of internal pipe lines and transmission mains and the construction of nine (9) culverts. The works are completed with the exception of the pressure testing of the pipelines, which are ongoing and are expected to be completed by 14 December 2012.

The installation of electricity and the development of the water supply pumping station for the scheme will be submitted as part of the Ministry of Housing and Water 2013 Budget and is dependent on the approval of the budget.

- (ii) The civil engineer attached to this project is Mr. Omar Bispat.

**(6) WATER FOR RESIDENTS IN MABARUMA SETTLEMENT, NORTH WEST**

## **DISTRICT**

**Mr. Allen:**

- (i) Could the Hon. Minister say what his Ministry has in store for the more than one hundred families who have been without water for over fifteen years in the Mabaruma Settlement, North West District?
- (ii) How and when will this ongoing problem be rectified?

**Mr. Ali:** The Hinterland Capital Investments Programme 2013 provides for the upgrade of infrastructures in Mabaruma which will enable the residents in Mabaruma Settlement to receive service.

At present, the designs are ongoing.

It should be noted that the existing infrastructure cannot provide the service required by the residents in that area.

**Mr. Speaker:** I wish to take this opportunity to announce that the Minister of Agriculture has ensured that all publications and advertisements for tenders are to be shared with Members of Parliament and you may have received an email earlier today. From time to time, you will be given notification that there is a tender out and so you could keep track of what is happening, which is, again, a commendable feature. Thank you very much Minister.

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILL AND FIRST READING**

The following Bill was introduced and read the first time:

### **THE GUYANA CRICKET ADMINISTRATION BILL 2012 – BILL NO. 31/2012**

A Bill intituled:

“AN ACT to make provisions for the incorporation of autonomous national cricket administrative organisations in Guyana and to provide for other matters connected therewith.” *[Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport]*

**Mr. Speaker:** I note that there has been a request for this Bill to be sent to a Special Select Committee. We have already had Mrs. Lawrence's Bill referred to such a Committee and so Mr. Clerk I would like to have this matter addressed before Christmas. I am asking that we have a meeting of the Committee of Selection today, at the recess, so that we could address both Bills.

*Bill referred to a Special Select Committee.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Before we move on, it is just a reminder that I did call Dr. Anthony for his birthday. It was his birthday and so we recognise your birthday. I believe that there are a number of other birthdays coming up, but when we will be giving greetings later this evening I will address them. Happy birthday, again, Dr. Anthony.

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

## **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

## **MOTIONS**

### **FINANCIAL PAPER NO.3/2012**

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 3/2012 – Statement of Excess (Current) Estimate totalling \$204,604,821 for the period ended 2012-12-31.

*[Minister of Finance]*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, we are at that part of the Order Paper that states consideration of Financial Papers. There are several Financial Papers before us - Papers No. 3/2012, No.4/2012, No. 5/2012. The Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider these papers in the order in which they appear.

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

**Minister of Finance [Dr. Singh]:** Mr. Chairman, in accordance to article 171 (2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the National Assembly the motion for the approval of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 3 of 2012 -

Statement of Excess (Current) Estimates totalling \$204, 609, 821 for period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2012 and I now move the motion.

*Motion proposed.*

## **CURRENT ESTIMATES**

### **Item 1 01-012 Office of the President –President Advisory Cabinet and Other Services) – \$136,003,029 and \$68, 606, 792**

**Mr. Greenidge:** Would the Minister note our continuing concern over the inadequacy of information provided in relation to all the papers before us? It is a matter of concern and maybe we have not made this point clear enough in the past. I hope that the Minister will note because we will take action on it.

As regards line item 6116, Contracted Employees, I would like to know what exactly this means? Are we speaking of an additional number of employees, additional to those who were budgeted for in Budget 2012? If so, what are the categories of employees and why are the numbers varying from what has been budgeted?

Secondly, what is the relationship between this figure, the excess amount billed as expended, and the amount disallowed by us during the course of the last budget discussion?

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, let me reiterate, Sir, through you, to the Hon. Member that we continue to be available to provide any additional information that is required and to answer any question that is asked in relation to any of the items on this or the other Financial Papers.

In relation to the particular item in question, line item 6116, Contracted Employees, and in answer to the question asked by Mr. Greenidge, this amount of excess expenditure, for the greater part, represents expenditure for those employees employed within the Office of the President under this category and within the line, not necessarily new employees or additional employees. There are a few additional employees, a few new recruits, but they are not that many. I have the details of the new recruits and I would be happy to share them with the Hon. Member. The amount, in fact, approximates, though it is not exactly to the dollar, the amount referred to by the Hon. Member as having been disallowed earlier this year.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Notwithstanding the fact that after a long debate we removed this amount from the budget it has been brought back. I still would like to know what categories of staff we are talking about here and who are the new recruits, and the numbers in each case. The Minister has not addressed that. I would like to know also whether the five per cent increase, which was announced, is also included in this figure. We would like more details.

If I might just draw the House's attention to the legislation passed by this Government, pertaining to the information to be provided, we are not interested, on this side, in a personal exchange with the Minister over what information he may care to share with us. He has an obligation under the law. The Fiscal Management and Accountability Act, section 24, is very specific as regards the obligations, the reasons for the proposed variations and the information is supposed to be provided by way of a supplementary document. This is amongst the obligations on the Minister and I think it is intolerable that he should continue to dismiss the requirement of the law on the grounds that he is available to talk to us. That is not the issue. We can all be available to have a gaff or a drink at anytime, but this is not the issue before us. We have a legal obligation and I would like the answer to the specific questions I have raised.

**Dr. Singh:** I repeat that a supplementary document accompanies the Supplementary Appropriation Bill in the form of Financial Papers. It identifies the areas under which additional resources are required and it provides the reason why those additional resources are required.

In a relation to the new recruits, there are, in fact, nineteen new recruits. I would be happy to provide the names of those. The designation varies from.... I can call the designations out...

**Mrs. Backer:** Call the names out and their salaries.

**Dr. Singh:** Household service worker, five drivers, senior research assistant...

**Mr. Greenidge:** And salaries too.

**Dr. Singh:** Salaries too, Sir.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Yes.

**Dr. Singh:** Household Service Worker - \$55,206 per month, Drivers – at salary between \$52,128 and \$66,736 per month, Senior Research Assistant, at various salaries - \$56,108 and \$79,585,

Confidential Secretary - \$ 101,716, Divisional Head - \$586,306, Special Assistant- \$378,076 per month.

These are all monthly figures, Sir.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Sorry, could you please repeat that last figure again, Sir?

**Dr. Singh:** Special Assistant - \$378,076, Finance Officer within the Project Management Office - \$525,000, another Household Service Worker - \$55,206, Media Officer - \$50,009, Environmental Economist - \$102,491, Information Coordinator - \$525,000, IT Officer - \$90,300, Residential Cameraman - \$68,040 and another Media Officer - \$50,009.

I would be quite happy to provide this detail in writing if the Hon. Member would like.

**Mr. Sharma:** My question is in relation to line item 6116. Sometime earlier in the year a question was asked of the Hon. Minister of Finance by the Hon. Member Joseph Harmon. It was: Could the Hon. Minister state the name, agency, designation and salaries of persons whose employments were terminated as a consequence of Budget 2012 cuts? The Minister was basically asked who were sent home because of the budget cuts. The budget cuts amounted \$150 million and the Minister's response was that the Budget 2012 cuts resulted in the persons listed – he submitted a list – and attached not accessing their salaries. This is in limbo. There are a set of people who we thought were terminated because we cut \$150 million and the Minister response was that those persons were not terminated but it was just that they did not access their salaries. I would like to know what happens to that position.

Now, apparently, the Minister is asking for \$136 million, so it coincides almost to the \$150 million that was cut, and that is exactly the question here. For the persons who did not access their salaries, will the \$136 million be used to pay those persons? If not, what happens to the position that the Minister stated of those persons who have not accessed their salaries?

*2.49 p.m.*

**Dr. Singh:** The Hon. Member would indeed recall correctly the question was asked in relation to this matter and the answer was quite clear. A list of persons was provided, of such persons not having access to their salaries, and those details were at the time provided. The Hon. Member

would also recall that subsequently there was delivered a decision by the Chief Justice that outlined the relevant provisions of the Constitution as it relates to what remedies are available in the event of inadequate appropriations being available to meet the services of Government.

**Mr. Sharma:** I was not previewed to the ruling, but from what I read in the newspaper was that the Hon. Chief Justice was speaking about the Ethnic Relations Commission (ERC), particular, because he was saying that by the Constitution a lump sum should have been sought. He was saying that, in the National Assembly, we should deal with other internal arrangements. In particular to this, now the Minister is actually saying that in this \$136 million is the amount that was cut. That is what he is saying. The nineteen persons are just an addition to this. That is the point I want the Minister to address.

**Mr. Chairman:** Minister, my understanding is that the Government's position was that the ruling by the Chief Justice allowed for moneys to be taken and used where there was an inadequacy. I know that the Hon. Attorney General has an opinion but I think he gave the opinion relative to the Guyana Elections Commission (GECOM) and accessing moneys. I believe that the principle you relied on, that is, the interpretation, I take it, of the Government, was that the order of the court allows it to access moneys to meet shortfalls.

**Dr. Singh:** You are quite correct, Sir.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Can I just be clear about two points? It is my understanding, that notwithstanding the decision which the House took, the Minister has made arrangements to spend moneys that the House specifically prohibited and the explanation is being offered here is that the court has sanctioned such behaviour. Am I to understand that that means that the court somewhere in the Constitution is authorised to overrule the body that is empowered to approve appropriations? I have the decision of the court before me and I do not, I emphasise, arrive at that understanding. Nowhere can the court authorise the Minister to spend moneys. He cannot. He has to come back to the House. Therefore for the Minister to tell us that he is authorised by the court is completely wrong and misleading. Let him cite for us, Mr. Chairman, the specific phrasing that was written by the Chief Justice.

**Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs [Mr. Nandlall]:** If I may offer some clarification, the Chief Justice in his ruling identified provisions in the Constitution which are

available to the Minister of Finance and avails the Minister of Finance to access moneys from the Consolidated Fund and the Contingencies Fund if in the opinion of the Minister of Finance there has been an insufficient allocation made in respect of those agencies. All the Chief Justice did was to point to provisions of the Constitution to which the Minister has resorted and he exercised the powers conferred upon him under those provisions of the Constitution.

**Mr. B. Williams:** If it pleases you, Sir. I am fortunately in possession of the decision of the provision, all be it, that the learned Chief Justice gave. Sir, he says this, [Ms. Teixeira: Quote page?] I now remember my sister attended “grazing”.

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Basil Williams, withdraw that remark. It is uncalled for.

**Mr. B. Williams:** Sir, if the remark offended her, it is withdrawn, but I would not allow that to detain the learning that will be dispensed now. I quote verbatim from the judgement of the learned Chief Justice. All those who have ears to hear, let them hear.

“It is not for the Court to substitute itself for the Minister of Finance.”

That is the first statement. So the court recognises the doctrine of the separation of powers. That is the first thing.

“It is he, the Minister who must make the prerequisite finding.”

The Minister must make the finding within the context of the rule, the laws. The court cannot tell the Minister to go and take money from the Consolidated Fund or the Contingencies Fund and go and spend it. The court is telling him that he must abide by the rules. Let me continue. That is why he said:

“If the Minister finds the amounts appropriated by the Appropriation Act and insufficient it is open for him...”

It is not to take it from Mr. Nandlall’s pocket but...

“...to lay before the National Assembly.”

Do I need to continue with this, or it is learned enough? So the Minister has to come here...

[Mr. Nandlall: Wrong.] Wrong? That is why I am reading from verbatim, because the Chief



Justice cannot tell you to go and take money out of our treasury. That would be acted in concert or conspiracy to defraud.

Sir, if I may continue, page 31, and this is provisional, we have not been heard. Mr. Granger's lawyers have not been heard in this matter. It is a provisional decision in which the Attorney General alone submitted a document to the court and the man from Trinidad whose money... He must tell us how much he paid him, just now.

“Additionally if he satisfies...”

“He” refers to the Hon. Minister of Finance.

“...that there is an urgent need for expenditure for which provision has not been made it is open for him to approve a Contingencies Fund advance or advances by the issuance of a bill of right...”

This is what is important.

“...limited to two per cent of the previous year's estimated annual expenditure.”

In other words, the rule still applies. He cannot go to the Contingencies Fund in breach of this rule. In fact, now that I am reflecting on what the learned Chief Justice has said, it appears to me that it is a sublime decision. The Chief Justice, I do not know if the Minister believes that he was going to usurp the power of the National Assembly to approve expenditure. The Minister has now given me additional respect for the Chief Justice upon reflection. All he has done was to describe what the financial procedures and laws governing are, taking money from our Consolidated Fund and our Contingencies Fund. I rest my case.

**Mr. Nandlall:** Sir, the Chief Justice drew attention to the provisions of article 218, in particular to article 218 (3), of the Constitution and I will read it in its entirety.

Article 218 (1):

“The Minister responsible for Finance or any other Minister designated by the President shall cause to be prepared and laid before the National Assembly before or within ninety

days after the commencement of each financial year's estimates of the revenues and expenditure of Guyana for that year.

(2) When the estimates of expenditure (other than expenditure charged upon the Consolidated Fund by this Constitution or any Act of Parliament) have been approved by the Assembly a Bill, to be known as 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 the appropriation of those sums for the purposes specified therein.”

Then it continues - the material part.

“(3) If in respect financial year it is found-

(a) that the amount appropriated by the Appropriation Act for any purpose is insufficient or that a need has arisen for expenditure for a purpose for which no amount has been appropriated by that Act; or”

The Chief Justice ruled that a dollar is like no amount.

“(b) that any moneys have been expended for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated for that purpose by the Appropriation Act or for a purpose for which no amount has been appropriated by that Act,

a supplementary estimate or, as the case may be, a statement of excess showing the sums required or spent shall be laid before the Assembly by the Minister responsible for finance or any other Minister designated by the President.”

Your Honour, the clear reading of this section allows the Minister, when there is a determination that there is an insufficiency of funds for any particular purpose, to come to the National Assembly prior to or *ex post facto* the spending and lay before the National Assembly a statement of excesses if it is a *ex post facto* finding. Those statements of excesses have been laid before the National Assembly long before the recess of this House. Those are the basis, Sir, upon which the Minister of Finance acted in accessing funds from the Consolidated Fund, in terms of the expenditure made.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mr. Chairman, as we are quoting from definitive documents, can I just, first of all, say that the decision by the Chief Justice clearly says it is a provisional decision? I do not know that the Attorney General should be tying his entire resources to that.

Secondly, can I refer you to page 31, which section relates to that cited by the learned Attorney General minutes ago? The sentence I want to draw your attention to is that in addressing the question of the inadequacy, and so forth, that the Minister may find, the wording seems, to me, not to permit the specific case that is being cited here. It states: "Additionally, if he is satisfied that there is an urgent need for expenditure for which provision has not been made." This, to me, refers to additional items. Provision was not only made in the budget but the House was very clear that the quantum being requested by the Minister was not approved by this House and was therefore reduced. That is a power that we have and we will continue to exercise, and nothing that the court has said can strip us of that responsibility. If the court had decision to simply authorise the Minister to spend then he should not come to us at all. In fact, they should not have been coming here. They should go and let the Chief Justice give them the money.

**Mr. Nandlall:** One final interjection on my part and hopefully we may lay this to rest. It is not the view, Sir, of the Government that the Chief Justice authorised or ordered moneys to be withdrawn. The Chief Justice pointed to the constitutional provisions and offered his interpretations. The operative article, Sir, is 218 (3) and the Chief Justice interpreted that on page 29, and this is what he said:

"The application of Article 218 (3) is premised on a finding of insufficiency of an appropriated amount for a stated purpose or for no amount for a purpose for which a need has arisen and which has received no appropriation or a finding of an excess of spending for a stated purpose or for a purpose which has received no appropriation."

Article 218 (3) enables the Minister of Finance to lay before the National Assembly a supplementary estimate of expenditure or a statement of excess of spending for its approval on the basis of a finding of insufficiency. My humble contention is that statement of excesses has been laid before the National Assembly, so the matter is beyond any reasonable controversy.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** I wish, Mr. Chairman, to make a response because this is where it is being treated halfway and not in the complete. That same article quoted by the learned Attorney General indicated that yes, it has to be laid here. Article 219, paragraph (2) states this:

“Where a supplementary estimate or a statement of excess is laid before the National Assembly under paragraph (3)...”

It is the one that Minister just quoted.

“...of the preceding article or paragraph (2) of the next following article and is approved by the Assembly by resolution, that resolution shall be authority for the issue of the sums in question from the Consolidated Fund...”

What they did here is that they have spent it already and they now are coming... Article 219 states in paragraph (2) that the Minister has to come to the National Assembly. This is where it is almost criminal. I know what the Chief Justice wrote; we were all there; but this is misreading and then misleading.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I have no doubt that the arguments are more or less saying the same thing that the court cannot give an instruction or authorisation. That is what I got from the decision of the learned Chief Justice. It would appear, from what the Attorney General has said, given the recitation by the Chief Justice as to the course of action available to the Minister, that the Minister acted based on what was permissible to him under the Constitution - all be it *ex post facto*. It states if it has been spent or..., at the end of the day it has to come back here for approval, which is the rightful place for it to be approved or not approved. I do not think there is any distance in terms of interpretation about that.

**Mr. Ramjattan:** Mr. Chairman, I just want..., and I beg to differ. It is not often you will find me differing with you on that score, but in relation to moneys and finances and the public purse, we have to be clear as to what the Constitution states. Moneys can only be spent and then come for approval here when it falls under that article call “Contingencies”, and there are certain requirements, that it has to be unforeseen and all of that. When we are in the National Assembly cutting the budget, it is foreseen here. The Minister just comes now – he had to come to the National Assembly for those cuts - and then goes back and takes out from the Consolidated Fund

without the Assembly's permission. It is going to be unconstitutional. What the articles were saying is in relation to... The Fiscal Management and Accountability Act (FMAA) also endorsed that position and indicated a criminal conduct on the part of any officer who does that and breach those regulations. It is important to understand that if he wants now to come back for what is something which is regarded as foreseen and not an emergency, whether it is that contracted employees be paid their moneys, he ought to come to the National Assembly and ask for permission, if we then approve he can get it, but he cannot go in the till and *tek um out as if he daddy gat it*. The only way he can do it is if there is a flood and it is something unforeseen and he cannot come to the National Assembly he can go in to the till for that emergency and then come with a contingency. That is what article 219 (2) is talking about. [Mr. Nandlall: And it is to encourage us to go to the till.] That is what you want. You are tilted with lawsuit, so you come here and do your nonsense.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I read recently when the Chief Justice was given to remark in his courtroom he said, "This is not Parliament". I now have to say this is not the court. It farcically becoming as a court of law. [Mr. Ramjattan: But it is.] It is, but I am saying what the Chief Justice said, "Do not bring your Parliament in to my court." This is becoming like a court. At the end of the day this money has been spent. It is for this House to approve or disapprove of that spending. That is what is before us this afternoon. I have to proceed and say that I will now put the motion.

**Mrs. Backer:** Mr. Chairman, the questions so far have been for line item 6116, which is the contracted employees, but we still have line item 6284 which we have not been...

**Mr. Chairman:** I had put both before. I have said that we consider both but if you want to ask a question go ahead. [*Interruption from Government Members.*]

**Mrs. Backer:** I thought there was one Chairman, Sir, but obviously, as usually, I have been mistaken.

**Ms. Shadick:** You were not paying attention; you are the Deputy Speaker.

**Mrs. Backer:** Sir, if I am not allowed to ask question that is fine.

**Mr. Chairman:** You are allowed to ask question, but what I said at the beginning was that I would have put both at the same time. I did say so. If Members wish to disaggregate I can go back, but I thought that I had put both. If you wish to ask a question on line item 6284 please, by all means, proceed.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Could the Hon. Minister state the details of the legal fees here which were being charged, the name of the attorneys or law firms to whom these fees were paid and the amount?

**Minister in the Ministry of Finance [Bishop Edghill]:** The legal fees were paid to Mr. Robin Hunte and Ms. J. Manickchand. The sums: Mr. Robin Hunte - \$400,000, Ms. Manickchand - \$600,000.

**Mr. Chairman:** Does that answer your question, Mr. Harmon?

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** It is one million dollars. Could the Hon. Minister state what is the position with the \$67 million and to whom it was paid?

**Bishop Edghill:** The total expenditure, as stated, includes consultancy fees, accommodation, airfare, wire transfers, legal fees and as well as stipend for facilitators.

**Hon. Members (Opposition):** For whom?

**Bishop Edghill:** Ask me specific questions, I will answer.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** A follow-up. Could the Hon. Minister state to whom these moneys were paid and what was the nature of the consultancy and the amount under each category?

**Bishop Edghill:** Consultancy fees were paid to six individuals. I will give their names and the amounts. Mr. Kevin Hogan - \$13,142,825, Mr. Sookdeo - \$3,880,946, Mr. Stephen Grin - \$15,733,438, Mr. Krepaul Mohabeer - \$12,661,032, Mr. Christopher Nascimento - \$1,390,500, Mr. Dario Mc Calman - \$3,600,000.

**Mr. Sharma:** I have a number of questions here and they are mind-boggling. It is to be noted that in the line item 6116, if I should refer back to that, there is a previous supplementary provision of a \$22.6 million and also in line item 6284 there is a previous supplementary

provision of \$11.3 million. A statement of excess was brought to this House here, Financial Paper No. 1 of 2012, and there was a resolution that was passed for that Financial Paper. That Financial Paper totalled \$1.4 billion, only \$1 billion was approved by resolution by this Assembly, Resolution No. 27. It is clearly stated here that the amount put in this statement of excess, in the column for supplementary provision, was not approved by this House and why it is there. That is the first point. I would like the Minister to address that.

In addition here, as for line item 6116, the Minister of Finance was misleading when the question was asked first, what this \$136 million was about. He said it was for nineteen employees. Here again, the junior Minister of Finance, the Minister within the Ministry of Finance, has been asked a question about what this \$68 million is for and this is a case where they utilised the funds after the budget was cut. This particular line item 6284, in the original budget it was \$104 million, it was put to one dollar. The explanation here is that they went ahead, again, and spent the money.

Now article 218 of the Constitution stipulates that statement of excess should be applied for if there was a voted provision. In the case of line item 6116, statement of excess should not be applied there, it should come as supplementary.

*3.19 p.m.*

However, according to the Chief Justice's ruling, if you consider \$1 as no money being allocated, then a statement of excess is applicable there.

**Mr. Chairman:** Dr. Singh, do you wish to advise?

**Dr. Singh:** Merely to correct the facts Mr. Chairman, that at no point in time did I say that the entire amount sought was entirely attributable to only 19 new recruits.

**Mr. Chairman:** Agreed. I did not get that impression either.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mr. Chairman, I have no more questions. I would request, if you wish, that the question be put.

**Mr. Sharma:** Mr. Chairman, one of my questions was in relation to the column: "Supplementary Provisions Previously sought". I did mention that there is a Resolution 27 by this House which never approved either the amounts stated in this Financial Paper.

**Mr. Chairman:** What is the question?

**Mr. Sharma:** How did it reach there? What authority put it there? Mr. Chairman, I could provide you with the Resolution and the Financial Paper.

**Mr. Chairman:** I had ruled earlier in the year, I think, on a point raised by Mr. Greenidge that even though there were cuts, there is nothing stopping the Government from returning for approval. Whether or not, however, it should have approval after you would have spent, is a different matter. Certainly, you should have the right to come back at anytime. I do not think I would ever stop that. However, both of you there would deal with the matter of whether or not you can spend and still come for approval. At the end of the day, we have to approve or disapprove these estimates. I will have to re-read the Chief Justice's agreement.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, just to give some clarity, I do not think in any way that this Financial Paper seeks to mislead the House. The column under which the figures quoted by the Hon. Member as stated says "previously sought". It did not say "approve". I think the layout of the Financial Paper was very clear for the Hon. Members to see that this was previously sought because it so clearly stated. Thank you very much, Sir.

**Mr. Sharma:** Mr. Chairman, just to rebut the Minister within the Ministry of Finance, the Minister within the Ministry of Finance is not a technical person. The Minister of Finance should have been answering this question. When you put an amount there, it is an indication that it was put and approved.

**Mr. Chairman:** Very well. Hon. Member, I will now put the motion which is that the Committee of Supply approves of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 3 of 2012, Statement of Excess, Current Estimates, totally \$204,609,821 for the period ending 31 December 2012.

*Item 1 01-012 Office of the President –President Advisory Cabinet and Other Services) – \$136,003,029 and \$68, 606, 792*



*Question put and negatived*

**Financial Paper No. 4/2012**

BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 4/2012 – Supplementary Estimates (Current and Capital) totalling \$2,713,939,675 for the period ended 2012-09-02 – 2012-12-17. [*Minister of Finance*]

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, Financial Paper No. 4 is quite substantial.

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to indicate that the Cabinet has granted its consent for the National Assembly to proceed with the consideration of Financial Paper No. 4 of 2012, Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates Totalling \$2,713,939,675 for the period of 2<sup>nd</sup> of September to the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012. I now move the motion.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members the motion is proposed. We will consider the motion in the usual manner taking items from both capital and current estimates in the order in which the Minister has set them out.

*Motion proposed.*

**CURRENT ESTIMATES**

**Item 1 01-012 – Office of the President – Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and Other Services) – Other – 161,988,349**

**Mr. Greenidge:** Would the Minister be good enough to explain the heading? If you look at page 1, for example, in which it speaks to a schedule of supplementary provisions, but below it, it speaks about advances, which of these headings should it be?

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, there is no inconsistency between those two. Advances have been made from the Contingency Fund and Financial Paper No. 4 of 2012 concerns transactions that involve advances made from the Contingency Fund. We are now seeing their inclusion in the Supplementary Appropriation Act.

**Mr. B. Williams:** Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say in relation to line item 6294 what is the amount reserved for the Commission of Enquiry in this \$161,988,349?

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, the total amount for the Commission of Enquiry out of the \$161 million is \$150,991,793.

**Mr. B. Williams:** A supplementary question, Sir: could the Hon. Minister indicate of that amount, what goes to administration and what goes to the payment of fees?

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, if you give me few minutes I would be able to do the math and I will give the Hon. Member.

**Mr. B. Williams:** A breakdown? How long would that take?

**Mr. Greenidge:** Can we proceed and come back?

**Mr. Sharma:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to know...

**Mr. Chairman:** The subject Minister is actually doing some calculations. Bishop Edghill are you ready?

**Bishop Edghill:** No.

**Mr. Chairman:** You are not ready?

**Bishop Edghill:** I asked for a few minutes, Sir, to do the math. We are getting it.

**Mr. Chairman:** There are other questions lined up so I need to know whether you would want to take them. What is your preference?

**Bishop Edghill:** Sir, we just need to disaggregate.

**Mr. Chairman:** I realise that, but there are other persons wishing to ask questions, can you proceed?

**Bishop Edghill:** I can proceed.

**Mr. Chairman:** Very well, Mr. Trotman and then Mr. Sharma.

**Mr. B. Williams:** Sir, if he is going to disaggregate, then let me ask him the final question. What from that amount is local fees and what relates to fees for non-local people?

**Mr. Trotman:** Mr. Chairman, I have a question under the same head. Can the Minister say, in relation to the two technical committees, whether they are up and running? If they are up and running, what work has been done in relation to their portfolio? Can he give the costs associated with each section of that work? If the committees are not up and running, can the Minister say why it is that there are costs associated with works which they have not done?

**Mr. Chairman:** Minister, the questions pertain to the two technical committees. I, myself, have not been very involved, but from what I read, these committees do not seem to be functioning or something is happening with them. I think the question is that if that is in fact so and that is public knowledge, what moneys are being spent on them given the fact that they appear to be dysfunctional at the moment or have been for some time.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, as it relates to the two technical committees, which as it relates to electricity and economics, I do not think I am the competent authority to pronounce on why and if work is being done. Government's position has been the establishment of these committees. In keeping with that decision, personnel were engaged to support the work of these committees. There are people who are in staff and who would have had to be paid.

**Mr. Trotman:** A follow up question, Mr. Chairman: the Hon. Member Mr. Greenidge had pointed out that there is a head here which says "Advances made from the Contingency Fund for the period 09-02-2012 to 2012-12-17". If these moneys are advances made and if these are moneys which have been spent, the Minister must be in a position to say to this Hon. House what the moneys have been spent for. If the committees are not working, what work has taken place in relation to the works of those committees? There have been no work and you spent money. We should know in this Hon. House what the moneys have been spent for.

**Prime Minister and Minister of Parliamentary Affairs [Mr. Hinds]:** Mr. Chairman, I cannot really understand the difficulty that the Members on the other side have on this matter. The Government was in a position where the committees were expected to begin their sittings and we retained persons to support them as would be required. Indeed, I think Members can recall that someone was appointed as chairman of the Electricity Committee, but subsequently resigned. So,

we have a situation where people have been contracted, at least for a three month period. Having made a contract with them, one would need to pay them. Also, we are constantly expecting that some agreement would be reached and the committees would begin functioning. So, these people have been in place. As I recall, they have been in place at the Colgrain House. I cannot understand the difficulty with the Members on the other side. If people are contracted to do a job, they have to be paid. The fact that we have not been able to reach agreement is no fault of theirs. We on the Government continue constantly and daily to expect that some agreement would be reached and that the committees would begin functioning.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mr. Chairman, I think we have difficulty understanding the Prime Minister's confusion. If you are saying that you had a plan and that you have contracted persons to lend support to the two committees, all we are asking is that you tell us what these moneys were used for. How much was paid to the contractees. The document says, Hon. Prime Minister, that these are expenditures that took place up to last Monday. I am asking you to give us a breakdown of those expenditures. Why is that difficult?

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can shed some light on this matter. Immediately, upon the concluding of the agreements and understandings on Linden and in particular, immediately upon the decision that the Commission of Inquiry be set up and that these two committees, electricity and economic development In Linden be established, so as to ensure that the lack of finances not be an impediment to the functioning of these committees, the Office of the President sought immediately an advance from the Contingency Fund to meet the costs that were anticipated to be associated with the workings of these committees and with the Commission of Inquiry. With the passage of time, of course, the Commission of Inquiry has advanced its deliberations, as is well known. At least one of the Committees was fully constituted and commenced its work. Its chairman subsequently resigned, that is the Electricity Committee. I believe there is an ongoing engagement on the matter of agreeing on a chairman for the Economic Committee. The fact of the matter is that once it was agreed to establish the committees, an estimate of what it would cost to have them discharge their obligations to the end of the year was prepared. A Contingency Fund advance sought by the Office of the President of the Ministry of Finance and a Contingency Fund advance provided by the Ministry of Finance to the Office of the President to meet those cost to the extent that at the end of the year those sums may not have been fully

exhausted, there may be unspent balances that would be returned to the Consolidated Fund. This Financial Paper relates to Contingency Fund advances made. So, an advance of \$10 million or thereabout was provided by the Ministry of Finance to the Office of the President to meet the cost associated with the appropriation.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mr. Chairman, will we be given the details? That is what we are asking for, not for these long speeches and explanations. What was the breakdown of the expenditure associated with the \$10 million? Why is that difficult?

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, I can give the Hon. Member the breakdown of what was actually spent and then I will answer Mr. B William's question. \$7,014,754 was what was actually spent. It was spent on salaries from September to November for four staff members and salaries for October to November for three staff members. I can give you their designations and the amount of money expended. An Administration Officer earned 576,000, a Recording Officer earned 192,000, a Cleaner earned 129,111, a Driver earned 108,000...

**Mr. Chairman:** Do you have vacancies?

**Bishop Edghill:** For?

**Mr. Chairman:** Anything.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, it seems that the Hon. Members did not understand what I just said. A Cleaner that was paid \$129,111 was for the months of September, October and November. The Administration Officer that was paid the sum of \$576,000 was for the months of September, October and November. I do not think that I could be clearer than that, Sir. An Office Assistant was paid \$108,000 for September, October and November. A Recording Officer was paid the sum of \$72,000 for October and November. National Insurance Scheme (NIS) deductions were \$137,401 for September, October and November. PAYE deduction for October and November was \$83,000, \$334,000. These amounted to a total of \$7,014,754. There was a purchase of two laptops for \$531,400.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, we have to understand, I think, that Government has to have some expenditures. The argument that the committees were established and there was a need to finance them immediately, given what was happening and prevailing at the time, the tensions and

so forth, I believe it was the expectation that these committees would be up and running. Some of the sums may be bit excessive, but at the end of the day it is natural to expect that there will be some expenditure. I believe that the questions were appropriate and I believe that the answers have been given. Minister, I believe you had to answer Mr. B. William's question.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, Mr. B. Williams requested to know what amount of the total were professional fees.

**Mr. B. Williams:** No. I requested to know what the administration fees were and fees, as the first things. The fees were then broken down into local and overseas.

**Bishop Edghill:** It is easy to answer, Sir; we have the information. Professional fees paid to the Commissioners, which would be separate from administrative costs, totalled \$68,500,000. It would mean that admin cost would have been \$82,491,793. As it relates to local and overseas, I would give the exact amount paid as professional fees. Mr. B. Williams and the other Members could determine if it is considered local or overseas; I know we pay Commissioners.

**Mr. B. Williams:** We are asking for local fees.

**Bishop Edghill:** As it relates to the Chairman of the Commission...

**Mr. B. Williams:** That is overseas.

**Bishop Edghill:** Well, I cannot determine overseas or local, Sir. As it relates to the Chairman of the Commission, he was paid \$16,051,195. Members of the Commission were paid as follows: C. Singh \$13,251,968, K. Knights \$14,267,728, S. Seetahal \$12,790,790, C. Kennard \$12,267,968. Thank you, Sir.

**Mr. B. Williams:** Local. There were other lawyers which the Government money was spent on.

**Bishop Edghill:** That is administration cost.

**Mr. B. Williams:** Mr. Chairman, I am asking the Hon. Minister to indicate, of the taxpayers' money, how much was paid on the lawyers involved in the Commission of Enquiry and paid by the state?

**Bishop Edghill:** Just for the record, I answered Mr. Williams' specific question, unless he is now asking a follow up question. As it relates to the lawyers that were paid, the following ascertains: Council to the Commission was paid \$1,000,000, Secretary to the Commission 1,000,000.

**Mr. B. Williams:** Attorney General, this is not adding up, but we are going to talk later.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members could we proceed with the other line items, they are quite a few.

**Mr. Sharma:** Mr. Chairman, my question is in relation to the same line item 6294. What I would like to know is the formula which was used to arrive at these rates for the Commissioner and whether the Hon. Minister could say to me what is the salary Mr. Kennard is receiving at Complain Authority per month or you can give me per year.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Member I would not allow a question outside of this.

**Mr. Sharma:** It has relevance, because I looked at the budget and it says the Head of the Complain Authority is receiving \$10.5 million per year. Here you are giving this individual \$12 million per a month's work. It has relevance to me.

**Mr. Chairman:** You said you know the answer of how much he is receiving for chairmanship of...

**Mr. Sharma:** I do not know the...

**Mr. Chairman:** You gave me a figure in excess of \$10 million.

**Mr. Sharma:** I said I looked at the Estimates for 2012 and I saw a figure. I do not know whether the Minister has another figure to give to me.

**Mr. Chairman:** I believe that is the salary that we approved for Mr. Kennard. Hon. Members I would like to say something. We are a very small country and very small society. Names of persons and their salaries, it is important that we know it yes, but let us be understanding and sensitive to what it is that we are doing, particularly as it pertains to the Commission of Inquiry. This is a Commission that we asked for. There are some other considerations like security and so that even the foreign members requested that have to be taken care of. We are a small society. Is

there an objection to Mr. Kennard sitting on the Commission, I do not know. He is a member of the Commission. He is to be paid. There is a figure there. I do not know whether a formula was arrived at; I presume it was negotiated, I do not know.

**Mr. Lumumba:** Mr. Chairman, a point of order. I think this is an attempt by A Partnership for National Unity (APNU) to torpedo the Commission of Inquiry.

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not agree with that. I do not agree with your thesis at all. This is a Commission of Inquiry that the Opposition requested, so I do not see how it is that they would want to destroy what it is that they have asked for. The question as to Mr. Kennard's salary as Chairman of the Police Complaints Authority, with respect I will not deem it to be relevant.

**Mr. Sharma:** Thank you Mr. Chairman. In relation to the formula, I would like to know if there was a formula implemented for this rate. My concern about the amount that they are paying the Commissioner was out of concern for my own Guyanese people, particularly in Linden, because of the compensation for their injury. I would have expected a very high amount for injuries.

**Mr. Chairman:** You feel that they are overpaid? What is the formula they used to calculate this?

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, I would just indicate to this Hon. House that the professional fees that are paid to the Chairman and the Commissioners are lower than the international and regional rates that are paid to any Commission of Inquiry of this nature. I am indicating that to you, Sir.

*3.49 p.m.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members these are consummate professionals. Some of us who sit in this House are professionals who will understand...

**Bishop Edghill:** This is the lowest price.

**Mr. Chairman:** ...that if you are going to bring foreigners in there is going to be some cost and you want to shop around. Maybe you might have spent a year shopping around, but we had an urgent situation we needed to address. And, particularly, at the request of the Opposition Members, we addressed it.



**Mr. Sharma:** Apparently, there was a formula indeed used; I am very happy to know that. However, I would like to know if this information was available at the time when the Terms Of Reference (TOR) was signed. At the tripartite meeting, was this known?

**Mr. Chairman:** Mr. Harmon, were you aware of the salaries of these people? Mr. Sharma's question is whether the Tripartite Committee Members were aware of the salary scale and the formula being used.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** No. Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Chairman:** Did you inquire, Sir?

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** As to the formula?

**Mr. Chairman:** Were you interested in knowing how much these people were going to be paid?

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Mr. Speaker that would require a long explanation. What I would say is that after the terms of reference were agreed, all of the other administrative arrangements were made by the State.

**Mr. Chairman:** Very well. Thank you.

**Mr. Sharma:** Thank you Mr. Chairman, no further questions.

**Ms. Shadick:** May I ask a question on item No. 2? [*Interruption*] I thought we had finished No. 1.

**Mr. Chairman:** We are putting them in block.

**Ms. Shadick:** You are asking questions in block. That is what I am asking.

**Mr. Chairman:** That is how I said I would do them originally; put them together.

**Ms. Shadick:** So can my question be asked now, Sir?

**Mr. Chairman:** Very well.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mr. Chair, can I ask that we take them line by line, please?

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I need a minute to confer with the Clerk. We had invited the Cuban Ambassador to be here for 5.00 p.m., but that is not going to be possible. We are going to defer the invitation to the Ambassador because I suspect that we are going to go late into the night if we are going item by item.

*Item 1 01-012 – Office of the President – President Advisory (Cabinet and Other Services) – Other - \$161,988,349 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 2 03-031 - Ministry of Finance – Ministry Administration – Subsidies and Contribution to Local Organisations - \$1,174,269,023**

**Ms. Shadick:** Mr. Chairman, may I ask my question now? I would like to ask the Minister if this sum of \$93,269,023 represents the amount by which the subsidies for 2011 was decreased in this year's Budget when consideration was being given to the amount paid for electricity charges in Linden that would have been increased in July. Does that represent the total sum and if that is so, then can the Minister confirm that the subsidy that has been given for 2012 to Linmine and Kwakwani Utilities Incorporated is at the level of the subsidy that was given in 2011 or is it more. [Mr. Williams: The annual subsidy you are talking about.] I am talking about the fuel subsidy; what was given in 2011. I think my question was clear.

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, indeed the supplementary provision now being sought to cover the contingencies fund advance granted does approximate that amount which was anticipated not to have been spent if an adjustment to the Linden tariffs had been implemented. So I can answer in the affirmative to the Hon. Member's question. This amount, just over \$900 million, was required as a result of the maintenance of the Linden subsidy at the levels that prevailed at the end of last year. The provision of this advance would in fact take the total subsidy provided for Linden and Kwakwani to approximately the level provided last year. So the answer to the Hon. Member's question is yes.

**Mr. Sharma:** Line item 6321: my observation here is that the original budget was \$6.7 billion. This budget was cut during the budget cuts by approximately \$224 million. However, in the Financial Paper No. 4 this particular voted provision was not adjusted. I am asking the Minister of Finance to answer why it did not reflect the budget cuts. That is one.

Also, the remarks put to this particular line item indicate that the increase was due to the acquisition cost of fuel. I would like to know when the budget was prepared what was the price of fuel indicated here and what is the increase. The reason I ask the question is because for Linden in 2011 \$2.5 billion was spent and \$1.8 billion is asked for in 2012. This is a reduction. In relation to Kwakwani there was also a decrease in the amount asked for in 2012. Why decrease the amount from 2011 to 2012 and then come back to ask for additional money?

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, I am not sure where the Hon. Member really was over the course of the last ten months or so. I believe the whole of this country knows that Budget 2012 was premised on the assumption that there would be certain adjustments to the subsidy provided and consequential adjustments to the electricity tariffs paid in Linden and Kwakwani. I do not believe this is not known to the entire country. So the amounts provided in the Budget were based on the assumption that a tariff adjustment would have been accomplished during 2012. In the course of things, that tariff adjustment was not realised for various reasons which are well known and as a result of which, the funds provided in Budget 2012 proved to be inadequate. The Government, in order to ensure that the people of Linden and Kwakwani continue to receive electricity, granted a contingency fund at the rates that prevailed last year without the adjustment that had been contemplated. They granted a contingency advance so that electricity could continue to be provided.

**Mr. Sharma:** Mr. Chair, that explanation may suffice for now. My first question is why is the voted provision here reflecting the original amount that is in the Estimates and not the budget cuts?

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, I am not sure what the reference is. I would be happy to have my technical officers examine that matter at some point in time.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister give an explanation for the \$261 million expended on expanded operations of Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA), and if this operation is in Region 10.

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, with your permission, the answer to the Hon. Member's question is that these resources were required and are required in connection with expanded operations at the Guyana Revenue Authority, throughout the Authority's operations, not exclusively to Region 10

or Linden, but across the entirety of the country. The Hon. Member would know the Guyana Revenue Authority has offices throughout the length and breadth of the coast and, in fact, several interior locations. Indeed, we have been trying over the years to increase our hinterland presence. We have opened, for example, an office in Lethem and other hinterland offices; outposts and other presences have been established. In addition, there is an effort to consolidate the operations of the GRA. It would be recalled that the very establishment of the GRA was intended to integrate operations and increase efficiency and managing across taxes. This saw not only the establishment of a single revenue authority but the establishment of a single Information Technology (IT) system and an effort is now being made to consolidate the offices. We are actually moving a number of the disparate locations of the GRA in Georgetown as far as we possibly can into a single location. I think it is public knowledge that single location is the building formerly known as the CLICO building on Camp Street. There are some costs associated with that migration as well.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Mr. Chairman, a follow-up question: I am happy that the Hon. Minister has outlined to us the plan which was explained by GRA. But with respect to the application now made could the Hon. Minister say whether this was an unexpected development.

**Dr. Singh:** Yes, Mr. Chairman, it was unanticipated.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mr. Chairman, it clearly cannot be unexpected. The Minister just explained very lucidly, very impressively, that it was part of a long running plan. If it was part of a plan countrywide it cannot be expected. Therefore, it does not fulfill the requirement of the law.

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, that is not the case. In fact, I thank the Hon. Member for recognising the lucidity of my earlier presentation. There has been a long standing and ongoing plan to integrate and consolidate the operations of the GRA, but not all costs and activities can be determined with perfect foresight and perfect anticipation. For example, we were not in a position to anticipate with precision to the dollar every activity and what they would cost. So what was provided in the budget was at the time of the budget anticipated to suffice for the operations of the GRA. But in the course of the GRA, in implementing its various activities, a position would have been ascertained that additional resources are required to discharge those obligations. Those resources were provided and are being provided in order to ensure the GRA is

able to discharge its important responsibilities to this country in an uninterrupted and unimpaired manner.

*Item 2 03-031 - Ministry of Finance – Ministry Administration – Subsidies and Contribution to Local Organisations - \$1,174,269,023 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule*

*Assembly Resumed*

*Sitting suspended at 4.00 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 5.10 p.m.*

*[Mdm. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]*

**Mdm. Chairperson:** This sitting is now resumed. Please be seated. I trust that Members did not have too much to drink during the break. The House will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to continue consideration of Financial Paper No. 4 of 2012.

*Assembly in Committee of Supply*

When we took the break we had just finished Ministry of Finance, Programme Code 03-031 and that sum was approved. So we now go to item No. 3.

**Item3 04-041 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Ministry Administration – Subsidies and Contribution to International Organisations -\$41,200,000**

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Anyone who has a question please stand. I will eventually see you. I mean I will eventually see anybody who stands.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mdm. Chair, once your sighting is not affected by my stature, it is quite okay.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** No, not at all, Sir. I never meant it that way.

**Mr. Greenidge:** I did not think so. It is just these malicious people, on the other side and the ones behind me as well. Mdm. Chair, I would like to know whether the Minister would be good enough to tell us what exactly has prompted the inclusion of this item in the schedule.

**Minister of Foreign Affairs [Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett]:** Mdm. Chair, it is included here because we did not include it in our budget. So we are asking for this money now.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Yes, I know it is included here because it was not there before. The question is why? This is not a project that has just started in the Region. I would assume that you would have known beforehand that funding would be needed. It is an explanation of why it is here. This just goes to show why we keep urging that full explanations be provided so we do not have to ask the Ministers what may appear to be trivial questions.

**Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett:** Mdm. Speaker, the House might aware that there were some issues with this particular institution, IMPACS, and an audit was being done. We were waiting to have some information from that audit before we make payments. This is why it is here now. We have some of that information, some measures have been put in place, and, so this is why you see it here now.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mdm. Chair, I do not want to make a *dog's dinner* of this. But I think that if an agency such as IMPACS, which is so important to us in the Region, has an internal problem, it cannot be a justification for not having provided for it at the time of the budget because later in the year you know that they will require payment. I do not want to make a big issue of it, but I think that is really not a good enough explanation.

*Item3 04-041 – Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Ministry Administration – Subsidies and Contribution to International Organisations -\$41,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule*

**Item 4 07-071 – Parliament Office – National Assembly – Refreshment and Meals - \$8,500,000**

**Ms. Shadick:** Mdm. Chair, I am aware that I am on a number of committees that have not met for the year and I am wondering how we have an increase in expenditure if we had a decrease in meetings.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I am not sure which minister is responsible for answering this question. Prime Minister?

**Mr. Hinds:** Mdm. Chair, I think we have been pretty active this year and I would urge we give the support.

*Item 4 07-071 – Parliament Office – National Assembly – Refreshment and Meals - \$8,500,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule*

**Item 5 21-211 – Ministry of Agriculture – Ministry Administration – Subsidies and Contribution to Local Organisations - \$449,000,000**

**Dr. Roopnarine:** Mdm. Chair, I wonder if the Hon. Minister would provide the House with some details in relation to the programme of relief that the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) is executing across the country. As we know, with the rainfalls we are presently experiencing, many areas are being heavily inundated.

**Minister of Agriculture [Dr. Ramsammy]:** Yes, Mdm. Chairperson, the number of activities related to this budget. In terms of this budget, most of this money is being requested for the period of September to December. It involves the cleaning of approximately 254,000 rods of channels in Water Users Association areas and some community drains in Region 10.

The areas where these works are being done with this sum of money is in the No. 52-74 Water Users area, Black Bush Polder, Crabwood Creek, Cane Grove, Golden Grove/Victoria, Blankenburg/Den Amstel, Canals Polder, Naamryck Water Users, Leguan Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC), Wakenaam NDC and Region 10. There are sums allocated for each. The amount of money for that activity is approximately \$101 million. We have a breakdown for each area.

There has been an increase in the amount of canals that we have to maintain mainly because during the agriculture sector modernisation programme, construction work was done at Crabwood Creek, Golden Grove, Victoria, Vreed-en-hoop, La Jalousie, Den Amstel and the Naamryck area. These now must be maintained on a monthly basis. In addition to that, we have been helping in terms of additional work that was done at Canals Polder, Belle Vue, Cane Grove, No. 52-74. And because of the housing programme a number of new secondary canals have to be maintained.

In Region 10, we used to support 21 Civil Defence Commission (CDC) groups, this year we are supporting 26 groups and there is a proposal to add another 14 groups. That is what necessitates the additional sums for canal cleaning. An amount of 70 million is requested for procurement of fuel and lubricant for drainage pumps excavators and for vehicles. Just to give an idea up to 2010 we used to maintain 99 of these pieces of equipment. At this time, we have 144, but if you look at the budget from 2008 to now for NDIA it has not changed.

For this last quarter we have added eight excavators, three pontoons, two high capacity drainage pumps at Greenfield, and one bulldozer. We have had to take on some responsibility in the municipality. At the moment we are engaged in some desilting work in the city which was not usually done by NDIA, but in recent times we have had to take on that responsibility. Those are some of the things with fuel and lubricants.

There is a sum of \$130 million that we are requesting for service and repairs to equipment and machinery. We have never had an amount of money that is enough for the maintenance programme. So the maintenance programme for 2012 so far has exceeded the budget that we had, particularly since we have additional pumps, additional excavators and so on. Next year it is going to be even more because fourteen new pumps will be added and at least six new excavators will be added.

The final sum of \$148 million is for the operation monitoring and security of equipment and machinery. This is to pay excavator operators and so on. That is for the sum of money. Overall we have been maintaining our canals better. We have been empoldering more areas. We now have each pontoon with two excavators in Regions 2, 3, 4, and 5. We are still contracting work in Region 6. We are desilting, and the question is asked quite legitimately why wait until rain comes because desilting has to be done continuously. When there is dry weather there is not enough water to flush out the silt so we wait until close to the rainy season to desilt. Desilting is going on in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 at this time. So those would be the main activities.

**Dr. Roopnarine:** A supplementary question, Mdm. Chair.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Proceed.



**Dr. Roopnarine:** It is a very commendable programme. But, I wish to ask the Hon. Minister, given the current distress the farmers at Dochfour, in particular, are experiencing with drainage since the construction of the Hope Relief Channel, is there a plan to provide them with the drainage which they have now lost as a result of the canal?

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Quite recently, we have cleaned some additional drainage canals, but they have to be parallel to the dams being constructed on the main relief channel.

*5.25 p.m.*

Additional canal, we encountered some early difficulties because the canal will necessitate us moving several feet into private property and these canals are being constructed to... additional drains, for the farmers. Not all of them have agreed to provide that additional space. If you do not have that additional space, the canal constructed will be extremely narrow and we cannot move it inside the dam area, so we have to move towards that land. There have now been agreements and that drainage canal is being constructed.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Hon. Member, Mr. Trotman.

**Mr. Trotman:** Thank you Mdm. Chairperson. While the Minister has presented some comprehensive information relating to the plans that he has outlined, I am wondering though if it is that he is prepared to provide us more specifics in terms of the works that he has outlined to this Assembly. More specifics meaning, works, areas, details about the areas and the associated cost to go with the individual works.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Hon. Minister.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Yes, Mdm. Chairperson.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Just for clarity, are you asking for it now or do you want it to be provided in writing – or are you asking now? Which one?

**Mr. Trotman:** I would prefer to have it now if he has it here to be circulated. But if not, he can give us in writing.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Mdm. Chairperson, I will give as much as I can give now and I can circulate the specific drains and so on. But you would appreciate 254,000 rods of canals. In the 52/74 area,

we are asking for \$10.7 million for 65,000 rods; for Blackbush Polder 73,300 rods and we are asking for \$11 million; Crabwood Creek is 29,300 rods and we are asking for \$11 million, they are two 10.9; Cane Grove is 36,000 rods at \$7.7 million; Golden Grove/Victoria is 27,000 rods at \$8 million; Blankenburg is 20,000 rods at \$7 million; Canals Polder is 7,500 rods and that is \$6.3 million; Naamryck Water Users is 38,000 rods at \$5.9 million; Leguan is 36,000 rods, we are requesting \$4.2 million; Wakenaam 21,000 rods, that is \$4 million; and the 26 CDCs in Region 10, \$25 million. In terms of the exact canals, it is a long list that we can provide.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you very much. I recognise Mrs. Hughes.

**Mrs. Hughes:** I am wondering if the Minister could just give us an idea, with regard to the drainage work, if this is work that was previously done and if so, maybe in what year or how long ago.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** In each of these areas there is different scheduling. For most of the Water Users Associations, it is monthly maintenance for the canals, the desilting of - which is not included here - outfalls are done during the rainy seasons, a cycle. Because we do not have enough pontoons we go one way and come back, because by the time we reach the other end the other one needs to be redone. So it is a continuous thing.

In certain areas like the community drains, such as Linden, it is twice per year. So if you look at the cost - I was explaining to the Hon. Member, Dr. Rupert Roopnarine, how the costs are determined and I know one of the disputes was with Linden and I offered Linden that they can take any of the other communities and choose the highest one and we will pay them that. They would not want it, because in fact the highest rate is in Linden.

So there is a scheduling of the cleaning of the canals and most of it is monthly; some of the community drains are twice per year.

**Mrs. Hughes:** Just a follow up. The Water Users Associations are they paying fees and how much would that be?

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Yes, when the Water Users Association Bill was passed in this House, the intention was that within five years they would become self sufficient, because they get a fee, a drainage and irrigation fee. But none of these Water Users Associations have reached the stage

of self sufficiency, partly because the rates are very low and partly because they are not, in any one year, efficient enough to collect 100%. So we have had to subsidise them. And because most of them do not have their own equipment, they have to contract and contracting is very high. So that is why we support them still.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Yes Mr. Harmon.

**Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon:** Mdm. Chairperson, two questions for the Hon. Minister. Could the Hon. Minister confirm whether the funds from this that is allocated here are coming from the Agricultural Sector Support Programme (ASSP) and if so, whether the projects that you indicated to us are approved under this programme.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** No, these are not funds being requested under ASSP, this is from the regular Ministry of Agriculture/NDIA budget. I think that answers your question.

**Lt. Col (Ret'd) Harmon:** Yes, that answers my question. Secondly, could the Hon. Minister state whether any consideration has been given to the cleaning of the canals in the city of Georgetown and the outflows?

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Well let me just say if any consideration, the answer is yes. But these are supposed to be under the Municipality budget. However, over the years we have taken on more and more of that responsibility and this is not just the Municipality. In other places, we are taking on more responsibility, but the budget has not been increased. Once we go into an emergency situation, for any place, for some reason the persons that we are helping then assume that it is our permanent responsibility.

The pumps at Kitty Foreshore and Liliendaal have largely been operated by us and one of the problems we have with it is that, because it works with that automated thing - the level of the water, the reservoir from which it pulls water is lowered within an hour of operation and the canals/drains leading to them, when they are not cleaned, it means the water stays in the city and we do not have water to pump. Therefore, we have had to take on the responsibility of doing some of those internal drains and we should not.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Mr. Greenidge.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mdm. Chairperson, I would like draw to the Minister's attention that whilst the initiative he has described is very commendable, it is not evident at all in terms of its impact. You happen mentioned Kitty; I do not know the last time the canal along Sheriff Street was cleaned. If you go there today, you would be astonished. Now the question is... your colleague is asking why do I not ask the question. What follows from that is that, I think most helpful to us here is not a description of all the things you have done, but those consequences that were followed from the expenditure that you are undertaking. If you just simply tell us what you are doing it is not much of a help.

The question is, relative to the flooding of 2011 and 2012, what impacts are these moneys, which are not insignificant, are going to have in the area that I am making reference to – Kitty, Bel Air Gardens? Three times already for the year you have had floods which occurred two or three hours after the rain stops falling. So the question is, what impact are these expenditures suppose to be having and how is it that the expenditure can be treated as unanticipated?

**Dr. Ramsammy:** No, Hon Member, as I explained those city canals and drains are not the responsibility of NDIA. We have taken on the responsibility of the pumps and keeping the reservoir areas clean, which we have done. But very often when we have rain, we have to come in and impose ourselves. So it is not that we take this as our regular responsibility, but when we have situations like a heavy rain and we have the floods in the city, we have pumps that are available to work. We have no choice but to come in and do some of those to bring relief.

That is something that has been talked about, whether we should take on this responsibility in a more permanent way and discussing of budgets and so on that is another thing. Let me just say this, that in 2012, the period of December to the end of March, we had four long rainy seasons and nobody is paying attention to the statistics, we had more rain in that period than we had in 2005. The difference is that in 2005 we had one short period, well not short, but about fifteen days of very heavy rainfall, where as this was spread out. But we had more rain and we had less flooding than we had then. So each year we have less.

If you take the fact that every year, up to this year, we have had to open both the Lama and Maduni Rivers. This is the first year in a long time that we have only opened the Maduni River. In every year, you would see that we have had to open it twice. This year we have opened the

Maduni River only once. So sometimes because we do have floods continuously and I have said that if there is a really heavy downpour we are going to have flash floods in the city. But in other areas, you see that we have had less and less floods, but it is hard sometimes for me to stand here and say that, because we do have floods. And if you recall earlier this year, let us take the period of December to May, there was so much articulation of the problems that our farmers face. Yet, if you look at the statistics and it is true, we have many problems, we also had more productions, which demonstrate, that whilst we continue to have problems and I do know that in 2013 we will have problems too, but it is becoming less.

So there is an impact. [**Mr. Greenidge:** In words.] Well, I am just saying, there is an impact and maybe what I have asked ... Because I agree with you, it is not only spending the money and describing the work, but we must now show the impact. So at some stage later, maybe in time for the budget, we will present a report on impact, because I have asked for an impact study to be done for these things.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mdm. Chairperson, I appreciate both the extent to which the Minister is prepared to explain and also his commitment to providing information in the future on the impact. But we are here faced with the question of a contingency, a request and I am suggesting, even if it cannot be done now, that in future when the Minister puts together a request that is so large that it addresses what specifically the law requires. Section 24 (2) asks specifically about impacts. Whilst that is not a contingency as such, it would help, because that is the issue as you correctly repeated. It is not really all the different areas you are going to do. Even in the case of the city you correctly pointed out that you are spending in supporting another agency. But if only one arm of a network is fixed then you may well find no changes taking place. That is why I was saying to you, often there is no evidence that the flooding is any less than before and we need to be sure that you are looking at the thing as a system, rather than just funding an element in it. Thank you.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you. Mr. Sharma... Mrs. Baveghems, do you also want to ask a question? I will take you next. This screen is blocking ... I am sorry about this. I think it is for a taller person. Please proceed.

**Mr. Sharma:** Thank you Mdm. Chairperson, I would like to commend the Minister of Agriculture for his presentation, but he seems to be taking credit for Mother Nature. In that, the amount of times he is claiming that he did not open these sluice doors, is basically because we had a dry spell, but not because of his work. But that is not the main question. I would like to know when it is that works on the Hope/Dochfour canals commenced, when did the contract commenced? And in so doing, when the contract commenced, what is the final contact price that we have now and when is the completion date?

In addition, the Minister must also take on board the cost for the pontoon and the excavator that was procured for the digging of the Dochfour Canal. So in giving us this cost, he must include the equipment that the National Drainage and Irrigation had to procure to dig the canal, including the present contract and also the final completion date that he is looking at and if any extension so far.

One thing that got me from the Minister's explanation and it is the situation where the Minister said he did not know that he had to dig an irrigation or drainage canal. When the Hope/Dochfour Canal was constructed, it actually took up both the drainage and irrigation canals in this 10 kilometres drainage that they put up there. That is the reason why I asked for the date. It had to be, if it was 2010, the Minister to now, did not know he had to...

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Mr. Sharma, do not answer for the Minister; do not make it easy for him, if I could say so. Let the Minister answer, because we have had about four parts of the question. Do you have any other question so then the Minister could answer?

**Mr. Sharma:** Well the Minister could answer and then I could do a follow-up.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Mdm. Chairperson, I am willing to answer these questions, but maybe the Member could ask me a question in the regular sitting of the National Assembly. None of the things he is talking about is related to the expenditure and to the request that we are making - none of them.

**Mr. Sharma:** Mdm. Chairperson, in 2012, \$1.1 million was allocated for the Drainage and Irrigation Board, out of that amount what was allocated for the Dochfour Canal?

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Mdm. Chairperson, again I am asking that the Member ask that question for either oral reply or for written response. The question the Member is asking is not related to the ... *[Interruption]* ... To avoid us setting these precedents, I am going to stick with the rules. I am asking for \$449 million, it has nothing to do with buying excavators and so on.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you Minister.

**Mr. Sharma:** Mdm. Chairperson, the Minister may have gotten me in a technically here, but when we are looking at the additional sums, we are looking at the entire project. Now I would like to know if... *[Interruption]* Well this is what the Minister does not understand, he asked for an additional amount of money. I want to know if it is because he expended additional money, which he did not cater for before for in the Hope/Dochfour Canals, is that why he is coming for additional money?

**Mdm. Chairperson:** My understanding is that, the Minister is saying that this expenditure has nothing to do with the canal. But he has also indicated to you and of course you know that, that you are free and in fact, you should be encouraged to ask questions that you may have about the Dochfour Canal. Is that an accurate reflection Minister?

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Yes.

**Mr. Sharma:** Mdm. Chairperson, I repeat the question, I said this line item here, it is designated, "Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations". In particular, \$1.1 billion was allocated for drainage and irrigation. My question is, in the National Drainage and Irrigation budget for 2012, what was the amount allocated and what was spent, if indeed he spent an additional amount of money? That is the reason why he is coming here for an additional amount of money and not for what he is claiming; that he is doing additional work.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Mdm. Chairperson, I have said clearly, nothing, not a dollar here is for that particular thing he is talking about. I want to remind you, Mdm. Chairperson, maybe the Clerk could, because this question was asked in this National Assembly last year, when Minister Persaud was the Minister of Agriculture, the question on the contracts and the expenses. It was distributed, a comprehensive answer and it was also on a Compact Disk (CD). I will ask the Clerk maybe to provide it.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I take your point, but that would have been in the Ninth Parliament; we are now in the Tenth Parliament.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Yes. I am willing to answer it again, but let the question be asked in the right way.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I appreciate that.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** I did volunteer an answer to Dr. Rupert Roopnarine on that, but I do not mind giving an additional answer but I think...

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Mrs. Baveghems.

**Mrs. Baveghems:** Thank you Cde. Deputy Chairperson, I would like to know from the Minister, if these moneys that he is asking for will entail doing work by NDIA in the Georgetown areas, especially West Ruimveldt, where it seems that no work has been done for the year. If we go there right now we will see people walking in their homes in water, because the alleyways have not been cleaned, so the water is coming back in the peoples' homes. I would like to know if moneys here will be going into those areas, so that people can be relieved. Thank you.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Mdm. Chairperson, earlier in trying to explain that the drains and the canals within the Municipality fall within the jurisdiction of the Municipality, not the NDIA. Whilst we do support the work, it is still the Municipality's responsibility.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** But Minister would you be able to indicate whether in fact, in your help, any money has gone into that area that the Hon. Member has asked for?

**Dr. Ramsammy:** Which particular area?

**Members:** West Ruimveldt.

**Dr. Ramsammy:** No, much of our effort has been in the main canals leading to the pumps and usually we come in after the Municipality fail to clean it. Right now we are engaged in desilting work, helping the City Council to do desilting works along the Demerara River. We also help with the operation of the other five pumps that they have full responsibility for. Oftentimes, virtually every time the rain comes, the one, two or three of the five pumps do not have fuel; do



not have the special kind of oil that they need to operate. Just this last rain fall, we have had to send oil and fuel lubricants and so on to assist. So that is the kind of expenses that we...

**Mrs. Baveghems:** Hon. Minister, could you say then that the NDIA is the responsibility of the Mayor and City Council?

**Dr. Ramsammy:** No, it is not the responsibility of the Mayor and City Council. The NDIA's work is outside of the city.

**Mrs. Baveghems:** That is why I am asking because the person who is in charge of that lives just in West Ruimveldt and no works seem to be done by her, only at her end.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Are there any further questions on item 5? If not, I will put the question.

*Item 5 21-211 Ministry of Agriculture – Ministry Administration – Subsidies and Contribution to Local Organisations - \$449,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Hon. Minister of Finance, Dr. Singh could you assist me and hopefully, by extension, the House. Is Agency/Programme Code No. 31-311 part of item 6?

**Dr. Singh:** Yes, there is 31-311 and 31-312, they both relate to the Ministry of Public Works and both relate to item 6.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I suggest that we deal with Agency/Programme Code No. 31-311 separately and then 31-312 which has various items, we can take them as Members propose their questions.

**Item 6 31-311 – Ministry of Public Works – Ministry Administration – \$5,700,000**

**Mr. Sharma:** In line item 6281 – Security Services - \$5,700,000 expenditure for 2010 was \$22.9 million; in 2011 it was \$19.5 million. If we should approve this additional amount of \$5.7 million it will put the 2012 voter provision to \$32 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain why there is a \$12.7 million increase in security charges? The explanation given here was: "Expenditure incurred in relation to the provision of additional security guards." If this is the case, \$12.7 million for additional security guards and where were these guards allocated?

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you. Hon. Minister Benn.

**Minister of Public Works [Mr. Benn]:** Thank you Mdm. Chairperson.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Who has been very quiet for the evening so far.

**Mr. Benn:** The requested additions relate to the additional cost for security services. We have had a new security firm coming into place – Strategic Action Security Ltd., from April of this year and a full complement of security persons who have who are provided with the new service.

In addition, we have had to take over the provision of security at Colgrain House, at Merle House as well as providing additional security to the Government Flats, in Kingston. The additional cost is to meet payments for November and December.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Mr. Harmon.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Mdm. Chairperson, could the Minister state, first of all, whether the Strategic Action Security, which is the new firm as he speaks about, was this not the same company that had been providing security for all the other Government Agencies when the estimates were being considered?

5.55 p.m.

**Mr. Benn:** Mdm. Chairperson, many of the areas for which the Ministry had responsibility had these services being provided through the special constabulary, but also we had a different security service which was attending to these areas.

**Mr. Felix:** Mdm. Chairperson, I would like to inquire of the Hon. Minister: How many locations are being secured and how many guards have been identified to secure these locations... [Inaudible] Of course, that is in it. ...and at what cost?

**Mr. Benn:** Thank you, Mdm. Chairperson. We do not have that level of detail at the moment, but we can provide that information to the House and to the Hon. Member.

**Mr. Felix:** My follow-up question: Is the name of the security company “Providing Security”?

**Mr. Benn:** I did say “Strategic Action Security Services”.

**Mr. Felix:** But...

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Hold on. I do not think that the Minister is finished. Minister, are you finished?

**Mr. Benn:** Yes. I had said... The previous security service was United Associate Security and Domestic Services.

**Mr. Sharma:** Thank you, Mdm. Chairperson. I need that similar information presented by the additional number of areas that are provided security. The Minister claimed that additional areas had been added on so we need to have the number of security guards and the number at each location. That is important. I heard the Minister say that we are providing additional security for the Government flat at...

**Mdm. Chairperson:** At Kingston.

**Mr. Sharma:** ...Kingston. Is that the location where the tenants do not pay rent?

**Mr. Benn:** Mdm. Chairperson, I did say, and I repeat, that we are providing additional security services at the Government Flats in Kingston.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Mdm. Chairperson, could the Hon. Minister state whether in fact Colgrain House, Merle House and the Government Flats at Kingston had security services provided at those locations at the time of the 2012 Budget?

**Mr. Benn:** Thank you, Mdm. Chairperson. The security arrangement at Colgrain House was being provided by the CARICOM Secretariat because the CARICOM Secretary General lived in that house. Merle House was an accommodation provided for Former Minister Mr. Shaik Bashk and he had his own private security arrangements. When we took over the building, again, we had to provide security for that. We have had to put in the additional security to secure the building. Similarly, as I said for the Governments Flats, we have had to put in full security arrangements. It is not only security at the gate but full coverage but there is also some arrangement with respect to judges and other persons who are in the area and we have had to take care of that.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I recognise Mr. Christopher Jones.

**Mr. Jones:** He has just answered the question.

**Mr. Felix:** Mdm. Chairperson, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the sums requested here are for services which have been paid for already or for services which are to be paid for now.

**Mr. Benn:** I said that these funds are for November and December payments. We have not paid it as yet. We need the monies to make those payments.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Okay. There being no further questions...

*Item 6 31-311 Ministry of Public Works – Ministry Administration – \$5,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 6 31-312 Ministry of Public Works – Public Works – \$30,694,997**

**Mdm. Chairperson:** As I indicated there are 12 rows in Item No. 6 and I propose that we take them together so that anyone wanting to ask any question on any of those heads please do so now.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Thank you very much, Mdm. Chairperson. Can the Minister tell us whether the line that reads, on the 12<sup>th</sup> row of item 6, whatever it is... The typing is so fine I am not sure if it is intended to frustrate us but is that line applicable to all of the 11 rows preceding it?

**Mr. Benn:** Mdm. Chairperson, all of these items are related.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** If I could, I think what Mr. Greenidge is asking is if, in the remarks column as they have written there “Expenditure incurred in relation to the operation of the sea defence unit.” I gather that Mr. Greenidge’s question is: Is that remark for all of them?

**Mr. Benn:** I am saying, “Yes”. The remark relates to this entire block here.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I think that that makes it clear.

**Mr. Sharma:** Thank you, Mdm. Chairperson. My question is in relation to the various line items I am seeing here for increases and because the explanation is for the sea defence unit I would like to know if the sea defence unit is a new activity or if it was there before and if it is a new activity why is there no increase in the employment cost?

**Mr. Benn:** Mdm. Chairperson, up to the end of the first quarter of this year the sea defence unit was with the Works Services Group. The Force Account Unit was put into the Ministry's establishment. There was no provision under the Ministry's budgeting for the year for this activity to be funded so the request we are making here is provide the funds so that these items could be covered under the normal budgeting system for the Ministry.

**Mr. Sharma:** A follow-up question: is the Minister saying that this was a project and as a result of some deliberation this project was now put over the Ministry proper, as a result there are these expenditures? If so, what happened to the staffing? If they took the staff on, where is the staff provided for?

**Mr. Benn:** Yes, I agree that up to the end of the first quarter they were with the Work Services Group as a project accounting unit and then they were put at the beginning of the second quarter into the Ministry proper but there was no, under the head provided for that in our budgeting, monies for it so we are trying to make up that now. The employment cost is under the Ministry of Finance and these are under other charges to that Ministry.

**Mr. Sharma:** A follow-up question: Now that this explanation has been given I have to look at if this is the proper arrangement. You have employment being paid under the Ministry of Finance and now you have the other charges being under the Ministry of Public Works. There is a division here; a separation of the two expenditures in relation to the same thing. I am of the opinion that the Ministry's staff was actually doing the work and the project staff was terminated but apparently they have been employed under the Ministry of Finance. Thank you.

**Dr. Singh:** Mdm. Chairperson, just to clarify, I do not think that there is a great difference between Mr. Sharma and the Hon. Minister. Mr. Sharma, in the first instance is right in his characterising of what transpired. These were really people who were previously treated as a project – almost like a PU – and they have been migrated across to the Ministry of Public works proper. The other charges are being met under the Ministry of Public Works, as explained by Minister Robeson Benn – those other charges that are now required to be met. The employment cost, when Minister Benn said that they are being met under the Ministry of Finance, are being met under the Ministry of Finance under the revision of wages and salaries vote which is typically used for new recruits and employment cost shortfalls under other Ministries when they

exhaust their employment cost allocations, which is quite a normal practice. Next year the entire activity will be budgeted in its fullness within the Ministry of Public Works, including employment costs, as of 2013.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you very much.

**Mr. Sharma:** An acceptable answer, however, apparently the Minister of Public works was unaware of the way it was treated. The answer is acceptable.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Okay, I do not think that that needed a response.

**Mr. Benn:** Mdm. Chairperson, I could answer the Hon. Gentleman in like vein. I did say that it was met under the Ministry of Finance. The Minister of Finance just came and added a bit more to it. I can answer his questions. I can make reply to the Hon. Gentleman in like vein.

**Mr. Greenidge:** I wonder whether, in view of the Minister's last response...

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Which Minister?

**Mr. Greenidge:** The Minister that spoke last.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** The last Minister, who last spoke.

**Mr. Greenidge:** ...whether he feels that this explanation that is typed and submitted to us is in consonance with the explanation that he had to have supplemented by his colleague, the Minister of Finance. This is our issue. If the Minister and his colleagues do not understand we will not support these items unless you properly document them. That is the point.

**Mr. Benn:** I did not come here making a request in respect of employment cost with respect to the Force Account Unit or the Sea Defence Unit. We are speaking specifically for other charges to the Ministry at these items and they are detailed here. [Mr. Greenidge: But the explanation was not...] We gave an explanation.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you, Minister.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Mdm. Chairperson, under Chart of Account 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, could the Minister give an explanation for the sum that he now seeks, \$15,267,573? Could he provide some details as to why he needs this money?

**Mr. Benn:** Thank you. Mdm. Chairperson, we have been bringing in, for the Ministry's Force Account Unit proper, excavators and tractors and trailers in replacement of old equipment or nonexistent equipment in many places for the Sea Defence Unit so there are now in the Force Account of the Sea Defence Unit excavators tractors and trailers being operated which they did not have before. Hence the increases with respect to fuel and lubricants that you see, the sums requested, relate to the activity that those machines do, particularly the excavators.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you, Hon. Minister.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Mdm. Chairperson, one follow-up question, please: I see no explanation here for an increase in the vehicular fleet of this unit and therefore, I wish to be advised as to how it is one can be paying for more fuel and lubricants when one does not have an increase in the fleet of vehicles. I see nothing here.

**Mr. Benn:** I am not sure to what the Hon. Gentleman is referring, where he seen no increase in the vehicular fleet. I just said that we have had over the past year excavators, tractors and trailers and other pieces of equipment... We could give you the listing of equipment. We could also give you the consumption of fuel and lubricants and the activity, the number of operating hours that they operate for, to be cross matched to satisfy your interest in this matter but if you are suggesting against this item that we should have entered an increase in equipment or so on, perhaps so but I am saying that we have the information and the level of detail to satisfy your interest, which could be provided.

**Mr. Sharma:** In reviewing the entire submission from line item 6222-6293 there is indeed the need for adequate information to be supplied. Each one of these line items has their own requirements. We need to know, by moving this unit from a project to the Ministry proper, what amount of staff we are speaking about, equipment and so forth because the amount being requested here, as compared to the budget proper for the Ministry is very substantial so we need details on each of these line items. Thank you.

**Mr. Benn:** We can provide the information. I am not sure that the Hon. Gentleman is ascribing the correct waiting...

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I am hearing some murmuring when you say “the Hon. Gentleman”. I think the accepted thing is “the Hon. Member”.

**Mr. Benn:** I am sure that he is a gentleman too.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** He may be but he may prefer to be called in this instance “Hon. Member”.

**Mr. Benn:** Okay, thank you, Ma’am, “the Hon. Member”. I am not sure that the weighting that he is ascribing is really accurate. I did say that the movement from the WSG to the Ministry proper occurred in the first quarter. We are now in the fourth quarter so the waiting has to be related to three quarters as against the first quarter so I got a suggestion, maybe, that he thinks increases or sums applied may not necessarily be related to the time over which the sums are required.

**Mr. Sharma:** I know exactly what I am speaking about. For instance, line item 6284: The entire Ministry’s budget there is \$80 million. In relation to supplementary which they are seeking is \$1.8 million. That is substantial for a small period so I need to know... Look at telephone charges in relation to the Ministry’s budget. Telephone charges are way above so it gives me an indication that this unit is bringing over a large number of staff members so I would like to know the particulars. If the Minister could give me the information on the amount of staff we are speaking about that will be coming over in 2013... Thank you.

**Mr. Benn:** Just let me clarify. The line item the Hon. Member referred to is an extreme one if one looks at all of them taken together so that is an outlier. The number of people in the Force Account Unit for the defence is of the order of 137 or 147. We will get the numbers for you. The character of the unit has changed. We now have rangers who are technical persons trained which they did not have over a period of time and also now, in each district, we have engineers, we benefited from the engineers who came back from Cuba and they are assigned to each district and we have beefed up the activity, the staffing and the resources they have at the various sea defence districts, a number of those districts. Those are the reasons but, as I said, we will provide all of the information at the level of detail that would satisfy Members’ interest in the matter.



**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you very much.

*Item 6 31-312 Ministry of Public Works – Public Works – \$30,694,997*

**Mr. Hinds:** Division.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** It seems that the Noes have it so Item 6...

**Mrs. Lawrence:** A division was called.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** A division? Sorry, Prime Minister, I did not hear your usual robust request.

### **Division**

*Assembly divided: Ayes 36, Noes 25, as follows:*

#### *Noes*

Mr. Morian

Mr. Allen

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Ms. Ferguson

Ms. Baveghems

Mr. Sharma

Mr. Bulkan

Mr. Bond

Ms. Kissoon

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Selman

#### *Ayes*

Mr. T. Williams

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Jaffarally

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Allicock

Ms. Wade

Mr. Felix

Ms. Hastings

Mr. Scott

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mr. Greenidge

Dr. Norton

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. B. Williams

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brig. (Ret'd) Granger

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Ms. Shadick

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Sukhai

Ms. Webster

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Benn

Dr. Anthony

Mr. Ali

Dr. Ramsaran

Dr. Westford

Dr. Singh

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Nandlall

Dr. Ramsammy

Mr. Rohee

Mr. Hinds

*Question put, and agreed to*

*Item 6 31-312 Ministry of Public Works – Public Works – \$30,694,997 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 7 48-482 Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security – Social Services – \$19,146,050**

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Mr. Williams, is your microphone on?

**Mr. T Williams:** Yes.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Please proceed.

**Mr. T. Williams:** Thank you, Mdm. Chairperson. We note the prevalence in the increase in the need for security and we are faced with a request for at least two-thirds increase of the previous allocation. What we would ask the subject Minister to do is to kindly give us a breakdown as to how much and where these guards or security personnel functioning and what they are securing. Thank you.

6.25 p.m.

**Minister of Labour, Human Services and Social Security [Ms. Webster]:** Mdm. Chairperson, in response to the question, first of all, let me say that you can recall that in April of this year, during the budget debate, I did say that we were about to terminate the contract of the United Associates and Security Domestic Services Inc. (UAS&DS) from providing security services to the Ministry. As a result of that, the Ministry, through a tender process, awarded a new contract to Brans Security Services to secure six locations under this programme. There are the Palms Geriatric Centre, the Drop-In Centre, the Childcare and Protection Agency, the Mahaica Hospital, the Mahaica Children's Home and the Night Shelter. The rates which were applied by the United Associates and Security and Domestic Services Inc., the daily rates, if I am to provide

them for this honourable House, at that time, were, for a baton guard, Monday to Saturday - \$140 per hour and Sundays and holidays - \$280 per hour, and for radio guard, Monday to Saturday - \$160 per hour, Sundays and holidays - \$320 per hour. However, with the contract being awarded to Brans Security Services, the rates, which were the lowest of the three tenders, were Monday to Saturday - \$240 per hour, Sundays and holidays \$360 per hour, hence the increase, and for a radio guard, Monday to Saturday - \$270 per hour and Sundays and holidays - \$405 per hour.

For the final question: At the Palms Geriatric Centre, there are four baton guards, daily, and one radio guard; for the Drop-in Centre at Hadfield Street, there are one baton guard and one guard with radio; for the Childcare and Protection Agency, there are two baton guards and a radio guard; for the Mahaica Hospital, there are three baton guards and a radio guard; for the Mahaica Children's Home, there are two baton guards and a radio guard; and for Night Shelter, there are two baton guards and a radio guard.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you very much for that very comprehensive reply.

**Mr. Felix:** During the budget debates, we were led to believe that the contract awarded to the preferred security service was for the entire year. If the contract for one security service was terminated around April, as the Minister outlined, my first question is: What has become of the money for the remainder of the year under the arrangements for the first security service? Secondly - I would have to ask this question for every other security service which is asking, or every other Minister who is asking, for increased moneys - is the Ministry in possession of a security appraisal of each location? When professionals are employed to secure a location they must do a security appraisal which would explain what is there, what is not there, what is required, physical security, and so on. Can the Minister present to us the security appraisal which would contain the considerations for security of every location? What is the recommendation of each security service the Ministry employs? We would like to see those appraisals as against what we are being told here.

**Ms. Webster:** First, let me say that there is documentation but I do not think that it is as detailed as what the Hon. Member is calling a security appraisal, if I understand him correctly. There is documentation. The amount of guards deployed at those locations was based on the numbers that were there previously but there is not a detailed security appraisal.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I think there is another question about the money, about if the Ministry had terminated the service in April.

**Ms. Webster:** Well, first of all, the moneys that were voted then were based on the actual figures being paid to that security service. You, Mdm. Chairperson, might note that I called out the rates. Let us take, for example, the increases. The UAS&DS charged \$140 and Brans Security Services charged \$240 which increased by \$100 per hour. For the radio guard, Brans Security Services charged \$270 whilst the Ministry paid to the UAS&DS \$100 per hour. In addition to that, Mdm. Chairperson, I should say that the Ministry of Labour had done the revision of the hourly rate for security guards and that too would have contributed to the increase from May of this year.

**Mr. Felix:** I thank the Hon. Minister for the details she has given. I am satisfied with that. My question is still unanswered. When we voted during the budget period, we voted for money for the entire year for that contracted security service. If it was terminated in part of the year, my question still stands about the money for the remaining part of the year.

**Ms. Webster:** The moneys that were voted were utilised and the moneys being requested now are to meet the shortfall based on the increases in the rates.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Thank you. I think that is fairly clear.

**Mr. Sharma:** I would like to know, what is the hourly rate established by the Ministry of Labour for security?

**Ms. Webster:** The hourly rate established by the Ministry of Labour...

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Just give me one minute Minister.

Sorry about that. I just want to inform Members, for the benefit of the House, that the motion that was to be debated immediately after this, an important motion on the acknowledgement on the establishment of forty years of diplomatic relations between our country and the Republic of Cuba, because of where we are now, the decision has been made to postpone the debate on that motion and it will be debated at our next sitting. You will appreciate that we cannot just have the Ambassador, His Excellency, waiting for a call to come. I just thought I should inform Members of the House.

Sorry about that Hon. Minister. I think we are at the stage where the question has been asked about the rate established by the Ministry of Labour.

**Ms. Webster:** Yes. You can recall, Hon. Member, that the revised rates were tabled in this House. I do not have all at hand, but I know that one of the standard rates is \$200 per hour.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Is this for security guards?

**Ms. Webster:** Yes.

**Mr. Sharma:** Mdm. Chairperson, I do not believe that rate is correct. I think it is about \$140. It was \$120 and it raised by \$20 more. It is not \$200. That is the point. There was a tender for this security service, I suppose. Was Brans Security Services tendered the lowest? There is Strategic Security Services which, I believe, tender was lower than that. I want to know if that company had tendered for the work.

**Ms. Webster:** I am advised that the Tender Board gave the award based on the evaluation done and the recommendation was for Brans Security Services, because it looked at the quality... I know that there were concerns about the quality of service being provided because prior to that, for example, at the Night Shelter, everyday the residents there have issues with marijuana and weapons – knives, and so on. So we had to look for a security firm that could manage and deal with those issues. That is just one example.

**Mr. Sharma:** I do not know if the Minister or any Minister, particularly the Minister of Works, could say then if it is an indication that the security contractor who received the highest contract, probably in the history of this country, is not a proper security company.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Are there any further questions?

*Item 7 48-482 Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security – Social Services – 19,146,050 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 8 51-512 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Police Force – \$105,320,000, \$58,665,600, \$3,950,000, \$30, 073,374**

*Question put.*

**Mr. Hinds:** Division.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** A division has been called, please ring the bell.

*Bell rang.*

*Committee divided: Noes 32, Ayes 29, as follows:*

*Noes*

Mr. T. Williams

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Ms. Ferguson

Mr. Morian

Mr. Allen

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Ms. Baveghems

Mr. Sharma

Mr. Bulkan

Mr. Bond

*Ayes*

Mr. Jaffarally

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Ms. Shadick

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Sukhai

Ms. Kissoon

Ms. Webster

Mr. Trotman

Mr. G. Persaud

Ms. Selman

Mr. Benn

Mr. Allicock

Dr. Anthony

Ms. Wade

Mr. Ali

Mr. Felix

Dr. Ramsaran

Ms. Hastings

Dr. Westford

Mr. Scott

Dr. Singh

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nandlall

Dr. Norton

Dr. Ramsammy

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. Rohee

Mr. B. Williams

Mr. Hinds

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

*Motion negatived.*

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Now that I have turned the page I have see that agency/ programme codes 51-513 and 51-515, obviously, which are also part of item number 8, and we will have to go through those, of course, because they were not proposed or put.

**51-513 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Prison Service – \$2,000,000, \$45,000,000**

*Question put.*



**Mr. Hinds:** Division.

*Committee divided: Noes 32, Ayes 29, as follows:*

*Noes*

Mr. T. Williams

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Ms. Ferguson

Mr. Morian

Mr. Allen

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Ms. Baveghems

Mr. Sharma

Mr. Bulkan

Mr. Bond

Ms. Kissoon

Mr. Trotman

*Ayes*

Mr. Jaffarally

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Ms. Shadick

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Sukhai

Ms. Webster

Mr. G. Persaud

Ms. Selman

Mr. Benn

Mr. Allicock

Dr. Anthony

Ms. Wade

Mr. Ali

Mr. Felix

Dr. Ramsaran

Ms. Hastings

Dr. Westford

Mr. Scott

Dr. Singh

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nandlall

Dr. Norton

Dr. Ramsammy

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. Rohee

Mr. B. Williams

Mr. Hinds

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

*Motion negatived.*

**51-515 Ministry of Home Affairs – Guyana Fire Service – 6,500,000**

*Question put.*

**Mr. Hinds:** Division.

*Committee divided: Noes 32, Ayes 29, as follows:*

*Noes*

*Ayes*

Mr. T. Williams

Mr. Jaffarally

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Ms. Ferguson

Mr. Morian

Mr. Allen

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Ms. Baveghems

Mr. Sharma

Mr. Bulkan

Mr. Bond

Ms. Kissoon

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Selman

Mr. Allicock

Ms. Wade

Mr. Felix

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Ms. Shadick

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Sukhai

Ms. Webster

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Benn

Dr. Anthony

Mr. Ali

Dr. Ramsaran

Ms. Hastings

Dr. Westford

Mr. Scott

Dr. Singh

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nandlall

Dr. Norton

Dr. Ramsammy

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. Rohee

Mr. B. Williams

Mr. Hinds

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

*Motion negatived.*

**Item 9 53-531 Guyana Defence Force – Defence Headquarters – \$20,000,000, \$4,000,000, \$40,000,000, \$16,400,000**

**Mr. Felix:** I would like the Hon. Prime Minister to explain to this House the reasons for the expenditures under the four headings.

**Bishop Edghill:** This entire expenditure is as it relates to the incidents at Linden where three hundred and one officers of the Guyana Defence Force, one hundred and eighty-three police officers, eighteen firemen and twenty civilians were deployed to deal with that situation.

**Mr. Jones:** Could the Hon. Minister explain who were those civilians being deployed?

**Bishop Edghill:** Those were operators of heavy-duty equipment - log loaders, front-end loaders, low beds, and so on - who were hired by the Guyana Defence Force to move logs and debris which were blocking the path of persons.

**Mr. Morian:** Mdm. Chairperson, it is on a Point of Order. Policemen were driving those vehicles and doing those jobs that the Member said civilians were doing. Policemen in uniform were doing those jobs.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mdm. Chairperson, I do not know if that is a question to answer, but I would think...

**An Hon. Member (Opposition):** Are you misleading the House?

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Bishop Edghill, direct your answers to me.

**Bishop Edghill:** I am directing my answers to you, but I will like to bring to your attention that it would appear that this House is being encouraged with religious bigotry, continually.

The answer to the question... [*Interruption from the Opposition Members.*]

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Please allow the Hon. Member to answer.

6.55 p.m.

**Bishop Edghill:** I cannot explain the comments of the Hon. Member, but I can tell you about what was deployed in Linden, during that period, and what transpired. The Guyana Defence Force engaged the services of the Guyana Defence Force (GDF) engaged the services of owners and operators of heavy-duty equipment who provided that service during that period.

**Ms. Kissoon:** Could the Hon. Minister say if those persons were allowed to wear the police force uniforms.... [*Interruption*]

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Members, I am at a disadvantage. I have not heard the question. Let us hear the Hon. Member Ms. Kissoon.

**Ms. Kissoon:** Could the Hon. Minister say to this National Assembly if the civilians whom the equipment was rented from were allowed to wear police uniforms to operate?

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Hon. Minister, are you in a position to answer that question?

**Bishop Edghill:** There are two things which I would like to say on this. I was not there, but I am advised by the competent authorities that the persons who drove the heavy-duty equipment were all civilians who were wearing overalls.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Members, with all fairness to the Minister, I do not think that the Minister can say more than that. He is saying that those are his instructions and that is what he has been advised, if I understand you, Minister, correctly.

*[Interruption]*

Members, we are nearing the break. I know that you are getting a bit uncomfortable.

*Item 9 53-531 Guyana Defence Force – Defence Headquarters -- \$20,000,000, \$4,000,000, \$40,000,000, \$16, 400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Item 10 72-722 Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam – Agriculture - \$7,622,000, 72-723 Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam – Public Works - \$2,193,000, 72-724 Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam – Education Delivery - \$28,954,000; 72-725 Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam – Health Services - \$11,519,000**

**Mr. Felix:** My questions are, on each of the four items where security services are mentioned, whether there is a security appraisal from the company and if that appraisal can be presented to us. Two, whether the moneys requested have already been spent or they are to be spent. We would like to have, explained, the circumstances which occasioned the request for these increases if they have not been spent.

**Minister of Local Government and Regional Development [Mr. G. Persaud]:** I am not aware that security appraisals in the detailed manner, spoken of by the Hon. Member, are available, and even if they are available, we are dealing with security and so security mapping is best handled by a security provider.

The second question was whether moneys have been paid or not. Under these heads, the moneys have been paid because the moneys allocated in the budget provision were exhausted in August of this year and that was because of the number of increased security which had to put in place at

the various locations. I think that it is well known to all of us in this House, that for Region 2 security workers were not paid for a prolonged period.

The increase is not an increase in location but an increase in the number of hours of security services provided. The Ministry was providing eight-hour services, and that is what it budgeted for, but then it had to increase the number of hours, both for our schools...

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Is somebody's cellular phone on? Sorry, Hon. Minister. Please be careful with your cellular phones if they are on. I am sure that it is not your phone, Hon. Minister.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** It is not mine, Mdm. Chairperson; I can assure you. It had to increase from the eight-hour coverage to twelve-hour coverage in some cases and in other cases twenty-four-hour coverage for schools, health centres, and administrative offices.

**Mr. Felix:** I just want to take up on the point made by the Hon. Minister about details. How is it that the security services, which are contracted, can determine what is the extent of the protection they are required to provide? If the Ministry does not appraise it cannot know how many guards are to be provided, what needs to be upgraded, and how many guards are needed for specific areas. The Ministry must know what it has to protect. That is why we are in this position.

At the beginning of this year when we were debating the budget...and you could recall that this very area had this particular Minister, on his legs for a very long time, querying the security figures for each location. Now the Government has come back for more money. One wonders about the integrity of the work done to assess these locations and the efficiency of the security companies which have been changed.

It is for me, now, to let the Hon. Minister and all of the Ministers know that when they are contracting a security company that it ought to give them an appraisal of the location, what facilities they need to put in, how many guards they need – whether they are baton guards or armed guards – radios and other equipment which are essential for the security of the location. If it is that they are providing security for a twelve-month period, then the situation that we are in, we ought not to be in this situation. Thank you very much.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I just want to remind Members that we are halfway through Financial Paper No. 4. I have been advised that the next break is due now, but we will press on for a short

while. There is no way we will be able to get through this entire Financial Paper No. 4 and Paper No.5 before we take the break. I am just letting Members know that.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** I want to thank the Hon. Member for the guidance given with regards to security appraisals and to say that I do not think that we have ventured in to that kind of detail. We have taken note and, maybe, when we go out to tender again we will seek to address some of those issues. The guards, basically, are providing the baton services. We do not have radios, and so on, as part of Region 2 security network.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I recognise Mr. Harmon, Mr. T. Williams, and Mr. Trotman in that order.

**Mr. T. Williams:** Mdm. Chairperson, I just want to say that my microphone was on first but it is not working well and that is why I stood up. I was not noticed for quite a while.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Mr. T. Williams, do you want to ask a question?

**Mr. T. Williams:** Yes, of course.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Okay, I will take your question after Mr. Harmon's. Do not depend on your microphone. The former Speaker always said that one should not depend on one's microphone. One should stand and one would be recognised.

**Mr. T. Williams:** Thank you.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Could the Hon. Minister state whether there has been tendering for the additional security services required in Region 2? If so, what was the process – whether those tenders were advertised?

**Mr. G. Persaud:** There is a security provider in place and that is as a result of public tender which was explained in this House. What had caused this request for increase allocation were the additional ranks from that very service. Whenever there is need annually to advertise through the tender process for a security provider, that is always done. The present security contract runs up to February, 2013. If additional ranks are needed, an additional contractor is not advertised for.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** The Hon. Minister said that a contract was awarded to a security company to provide security service of a specific nature and for a specific period. The Minister is



now saying that the Ministry has now required that service to be extended. I am asking the Minister whether it was not necessary for him to have a separate tender for that additional service.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** The Hon. Member may not have heard when I said that the number of locations has remained the same. For the benefit of the Hon. Member, I wish to say that the number of locations remains the same, but what has happened is that there has been extended hours.

**Mr. T. Williams:** Could the Hon. Minister, first of all, give us the name of this security provider in the Region?

We know that this is dealing with Region 2, but I would like to go a bit further because I would not be asking anymore questions on this topic. From agency codes 72-722 to 75-754, there are various increases – eighty per cent, eighteen per cent, sixty per cent, one hundred per cent, fifty per cent and two hundred per cent increases – in allocation. The Minister is saying that this is as a result of additional hours. We would like to know what circumstances in Region 2 required this increase in security presence, noting, Mdm. Chairperson, that this year there was one of the more disturbing dilemmas in Essequibo with the Onderneeming...I do not see anything here placed to beef up security for that institution.

What I would like to know is: What are some of the circumstances that required this twenty-four-hour presence of manpower at these locations?

**Mr. G. Persaud:** The name of the security company is Strategic Action Security Services, which I repeated many times in this House during the budget debate.

The second question is in relation to the quantum in the increase. If the hours are going to be increased from eight to sixteen, then that is one hundred per cent increase, indeed. If they are going to be increased to twenty-four hours, then it will be a one hundred and fifty per cent increase.

The reasons which may have prompted the increase in hours are pilfering and vandalism to our properties, both at the level of health care delivery and education delivery. I wish to assure the

Hon. Member that his concerns with regard to Onderneeming are not part of the purview of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

**Mr. Trotman:** Bearing in mind the concerns that the Auditor General has expressed over time and up to recently in his report about inability to ascertain whether or not hours claimed and paid for have actually been worked, I wonder if the Minister can say if these figures that he is referring to are inflated or if they have been accurately monitored and arrived at as a true reflection of moneys to be paid.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Let me thank the Hon. Member for raising that issue. Indeed, we have read the concerns of the Auditor General. The Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development along with the Public Service Ministry would have sought to address, in a significant way, the concerns and the issues identified in the Auditor General's Report.

Consequently, a number of security checkers were employed and we have maintained, in this year, strict scrutiny with regards to our record keeping and that of the security company. While the relationship over the year may not have been the best between the security provider and the beneficiaries, that is, the regional administrations, we have ensured accountability to the highest and so we only paid for hours that were verified by our checkers during their routine checks.

**Mr. Sharma:** Our Hon. Member, Mr. Winston Felix, made a good observation and it is that the Government needs to have a consultancy system in terms of how it arranges for security. It needs a security plan because it will be budgeting wrongly and wasting time in coming to this House for additional moneys.

In addition, I would like the Minister to say, since he already established that Strategic Action Security Services is the contractor for Region 2 and all of the regions, what was the contract lump sum? Since there are increases in all of the regions, what is the final contract sum for this particular contractor? All of the additional guards are going to the same contract company. If it is over one billion dollars, what is the additional? We want to know the final contract price for Strategic Action Security Services.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Is this for Region 2 or for the entire country?

**Mr. Sharma:** It is for the entire country because it is one package it is in.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** I am just seeking clarification.

**Mr. Sharma:** In addition, for Region 2, I would like to know if a twenty-four-hour security service was given to the schools.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Let me thank the Hon. Member for raising the issues that he would have raised and assure him that we are dealing with security issues here for Region 2. I am sorry to disappoint him, but I cannot give him a holistic figure. It is to say to him that what is presented here in supplementary is not for all of the regions. There are ten in our country but we are seeking supplementary for three. That is a difference of seven.

With regard to whether twenty-four-hour security is provided to our schools in Region 2, for our secondary schools, the answer is yes. For other schools, the answer is no. Nursery schools have varying hours and primary schools have varying hours of security that is provided.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** It is that the secondary schools, you are saying, have twenty-four-hour security.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Yes Mdm. Chairperson.

**Mr. Sharma:** I do not know if the Minister would agree with me that Strategic Action Security Services was issued one contract for the entire country. That is from my understanding. If the Minister would like to go region by region, he must give me what was the original contract sum for Region 2 and what is the increase. I will do the arithmetic.

In addition, I want to know when the contractor tendered, if Value Added Tax (VAT) was inclusive in the tender price. If it was a situation where VAT was not inclusive, is it because the contract was non VAT that it has caused the amount to increase and now there is need to increase the number of security guards to justify whatever is happening?

**Mr. G. Persaud:** Let me thank the Hon. Member and assure him again that there was one contract signed for each region. Each region was dealt with separately. I think that our House is fully aware of that.

The second issue, in terms of VAT, it was included. The total sum for contract in Region 2, the voted provision as approved in our budget, was \$73,201,000 and what we are seeking by supplementary provision is \$49,155,800.

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** The almost \$50 million being sought as supplementary provision and, in fact, paid for three and a half months, my question is whether it was foreseen, because it appears to me, very clearly, that this is a process of underbidding. It will replicate itself in all of the regions and therefore it is in fact a fundamental issue for this House in relation to accountability... when people put in low bids to get a contract and then there is a subliminal process by which these amounts are varied and increased by the contract terms being varied. It is an indictment on the tender process and that is why I ask if this was, in fact, foreseen because it is contingencies advanced and whether it is not an abridgment of contract terms that has been contemplated here, in which case it is a very serious issue of indictment.

**Mr. G. Persaud:** I want to assure the Hon. Member that this was an unforeseen situation. Security, the little that I know of it – I think that the Hon. Members in this House know more than I on this issue – is situational. Based on the circumstances, we could not have foreseen the escalation in vandalism and destruction to our schools and our health centres and so we sought during the year to do that.

Mdm. Chairperson, each one of these contracts were awarded based on hourly rate, number of locations, and number of guards required and so there was no way that this issue of underbidding could have been part of the procurement procedure. [**Mr. Ramjattan:** It was bad planning.] Maybe, bad planning, yes, but I am saying that I want to assure the Hon. Member that there was no way in which one could have encouraged underbidding. This is not infrastructure or any kind of work where there is varying price and scope. There were clear, specific details embodied in each of the region's tender and so people responded.

*Question put*

**Mr. Hinds:** Division.

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Please ring the bell.

*Bell rang.*

*Committee divided: Noes 32, Ayes 29, as follows:*

*Noes*

Mr. T. Williams

Ms. Marcello

Dr. Ramayya

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Mrs. Hughes

Mr. Nagamootoo

Mr. Ramjattan

Ms. Ferguson

Mr. Morian

Mr. Allen

Mr. Jones

Mr. Adams

Ms. Baveghems

Mr. Sharma

Mr. Bulkan

Mr. Bond

Ms. Kissoon

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Selman

*Ayes*

Mr. Jaffarally

Mr. Damon

Dr. Persaud

Rev. Gilbert

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Seeraj

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Chand

Ms. Shadick

Mr. Nadir

Ms. Teixeira

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Baksh

Mrs. Sukhai

Ms. Webster

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Benn

Mr. Allicock

Dr. Anthony

Ms. Wade

Mr. Ali

Mr. Felix

Dr. Ramsaran

Ms. Hastings

Dr. Westford

Mr. Scott

Dr. Singh

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mrs. Rodrigues-Birkett

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nandlall

Dr. Norton

Dr. Ramsammy

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. Rohee

Mr. B. Williams

Mr. Hinds

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

7.25 p.m.

*Motion negatived.*

**Mdm. Chairperson:** Before we go to item 11, the break should have been taken at 7 o'clock. It is now twenty-five minutes past seven o'clock. I want to suggest that we just take a fifteen to twenty minutes break and the first bell will ring at twenty minutes to eight o'clock. The Speaker may be back by then, if not I will continue. We will take the adjournment now for fifteen minutes.

*Assembly resumed.*

*Sitting suspended at 7.25 p.m.*

*Sitting resumed at 8:00 p.m.*

*Assembly in Committee of Supply.*

*Mr. Chairman in the Chair.*

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I am advised that we are still considering Financial Paper No.4 which...

**Item 11 73-734 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara – Education Delivery \$7,453,000, 73-735 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara – Health Services \$32,220,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Line item 6281 – Security Services Region 3: I understand that there was something happening with Region 2 already. I now invite questions.

*Question put.*

**Ms. Ally:** Division.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Whilst we are waiting for the others, who may be outside, can I just ascertain exactly which head we are voting on?

**Mr. Chairman:** We are at item 11, line item 6281.

**Mr. Greenidge:** I was going to suggest, Mr. Chairman, whether you did not want to take both of the items together.

**Mr. Chairman:** I was doing that actually.

**Mr. Greenidge:** Thanks. That is all.

*Committee divided: Noes 32, Ayes 25, as follows:*

*Noes*

*Ayes*

Mr. T. Williams

Mr. Jaffarally

Ms. Marcello

Mr. Damon

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Dr. Persaud

Mrs. Hughes

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Mr. Nagamootoo

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Seeraj

Ms. Ferguson

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Morian

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Allen

Mr. Chand

Mr. Jones

Ms. Shadick

Mr. Adams

Mr. Nadir

Mrs. Baveghems

Ms. Teixeira

Mr. Sharma

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Bulkan

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Bond

Mr. Baksh

Ms. Kissoon

Mrs. Sukhai

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Webster

Ms. Selman

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Allicock

Mr. Benn

Ms. Wade

Dr. Anthony

Mr. Felix

Dr. Ramsaran

Ms. Hastings

Dr. Westford

Mr. Scott

Mrs. Rodrigues –Birkett



Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mr. Rohee

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Hinds

Mrs. Backer

Dr. Norton

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. B. Williams

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

*Motion negatived.*

**Item 12 75-751 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice – Regional Administration and Finance \$3,815,211, 75-754 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice –Education Delivery \$20,356,232**

*Question put.*

**Mr. Hinds:** Division.

**Mr. Chairman:** One second. Kindly ring the bell.

*Bell rang.*

*Committee divided: Noes 32, Ayes 26, as follows:*

*Noes*

*Ayes*

Mr. T. Williams

Mr. Jaffarally

Ms. Marcello

Mr. Damon

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Dr. Persaud

Mrs. Hughes	Rev. Dr. Gilbert
Mr. Nagamootoo	Dr. Mahadeo
Mr. Ramjattan	Mr. Seeraj
Ms. Ferguson	Mr. Neendkumar
Mr. Morian	Mr. Lumumba
Mr. Allen	Mr. Chand
Mr. Jones	Ms. Shadick
Mr. Adams	Mr. Nadir
Mrs. Baveghems	Ms. Teixeira
Mr. Sharma	Bishop Edghill
Mr. Bulkan	Mr. Whittaker
Mr. Bond	Mr. Baksh
Ms. Kissoon	Mrs. Sukhai
Mr. Trotman	Ms. Webster
Ms. Selman	Mr. G. Persaud
Mr. Allicock	Mr. Benn
Ms. Wade	Dr. Anthony
Mr. Felix	Dr. Ramsaran
Ms. Hastings	Dr. Westford
Mr. Scott	Mrs. Rodrigues –Birkett
Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon	Mr. Nandlall

Mr. Greenidge

Dr. Ramsammy

Mrs. Backer

Mr. Hinds

Dr. Norton

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. B. Williams

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

*Motion negatived.*

## **CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

### **Item 1 03-031 Ministry of Finance – Ministry Administration \$170,399,839**

**Mr. Greenidge:** Mr. Chairman, first of all, it is to enquire: Are you taking these together? I would like to ask that they be taken separately.

**Mr. Chairman:** It is not together.

**Mr. Sharma:** Can the Hon. Minister say the total amount of money (CLICO) building for it to be occupied by the Guyana Revenue Authority (GRA)?

**Bishop Edghill:** The figure being sought is \$170 million, as it relates to the supplementary provision. The question I heard the honourable gentleman was asking was how much money has been spent to date which would have been provided for. I understand it to be in the vicinity of \$480 million in total.

**Mr. Sharma:** Supplementary: Can the Hon. Minister say what the amount of rent is that GRA would be paying to the owner of this property for the rental of the premises and if this amount will be discounted from the rent?

**Bishop Edghill:** The rental agreement and the price have not been concluded but whatever is expended as a way of us occupying the building will be set off as it relates to the rent.

**Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon:** Could the Hon. Minister state the nature of the critical works to be undertaken that is costing \$170 million or more?

**Bishop Edghill:** I think Hon. Members of the House are aware, and we were told earlier in the evening by the Hon. Dr. Ashni Singh, that GRA is consolidating its offices into one location. That necessitated that the entire Information Technology (IT) infrastructure be put in place to accommodate all the staff moving in, the supply of clean power, the installation of the cubicles, the Guyana Telephone & Telegraph Company (GT&T) connection, additional air-conditioning units, observing occupational health safety, a fire escape, because of the quantity of persons who would be occupying the building and other construction related works, including providing a lunch area for staff, putting in place filing rooms, and things of that nature.

**Mr. Chairman:** May I ask, though, whether there is some financial practice to expend that kind of money without a contract, a lease agreement being put in place? If so, how soon this will be done, because you just cannot go on a hope and promise and a wish that it can be and will be set off? It is going close to one billion dollars for something that is based on a... I do not know if it is a gentleman's arrangement, but certainly something such as that needs to be sorted out sooner rather than later.

**Bishop Edghill:** Mr. Chairman, the information available to me is that there are ongoing discussions between the GRA and the National Insurance Scheme (NIS), which is the owner of the building. Figures have been floated but there has been no concrete final price. The understanding is that whatever is expended to make the building habitable will be offset, but those discussions are continuing.

**Mr. Sharma:** Can the Hon. Minister say what the expected date of occupancy of this building is?

**Bishop Edghill:** I think it is public knowledge, because it was advertised in the press, by way of public advertising and press releases, that several sections of GRA are already in that building,

and even as we meet tonight other sections are moving in. Before the 31<sup>st</sup> December other sections would be moving in. Very soon all that needs to be moved will be there.

**Mr. Sharma:** Follow-up question. I do not know how the administration is doing business. If the building is being occupied the administration must pay rent. There must be a rental agreement. I expected it to fix the building and it is not to occupy it, but then there is occupancy then there must be a tenancy agreement.

**Mr. Jones:** Could the Hon. Minister please inform this House if the critical works being done includes additional parking facility for the staff of GRA?

**Bishop Edghill:** Parking arrangements are under consideration and there is a discussion that is ongoing, but what is being sought, here, is more particularly for the building project.

**Mr. Jones:** Could the Hon. Minister inform this House if one of those parking considerations is the Prade Ground of which the 1823 Monument was originally identified to be placed?

**Bishop Edghill:** The answer to that is a simple no. Thank you.

*Question put.*

**Ms. Teixeira:** Division.

**Mr. Chairman:** Ring the bell.

*Bell rang.*

*Committee divided: Noes 32, Ayes 27, as follows:*

*Noes*

*Ayes*

Mr. T. Williams

Mr. Jaffarally

Ms. Marcello

Mr. Damon

Mrs. Garrido-Lowe

Dr. Persaud

Mrs. Hughes

Rev. Dr. Gilbert

Mr. Nagamootoo

Dr. Mahadeo

Mr. Ramjattan

Mr. Seeraj

Ms. Ferguson

Mr. Neendkumar

Mr. Morian

Mr. Lumumba

Mr. Allen

Mr. Chand

Mr. Jones

Ms. Shadick

Mr. Adams

Mr. Nadir

Mrs. Baveghems

Ms. Teixeira

Mr. Sharma

Bishop Edghill

Mr. Bulkan

Mr. Whittaker

Mr. Bond

Mr. Baksh

Ms. Kissoon

Mrs. Sukhai

Mr. Trotman

Ms. Webster

Ms. Selman

Mr. G. Persaud

Mr. Allicock

Mr. Benn

Ms. Wade

Dr. Anthony

Mr. Felix

Dr. Ramsaran

Ms. Hastings

Dr. Westford

Mr. Scott

Dr. Singh

Lt. Col. (Ret'd) Harmon

Mrs. Rodrigues –Birkett

Mr. Greenidge

Mr. Nandlall

Mrs. Backer

Dr. Ramsammy

Dr. Norton

Mr. Hinds

Mrs. Lawrence

Mr. B. Williams

Ms. Ally

Dr. Roopnarine

Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger

*Motion negatived.*

**Item 2 47-472 Ministry of Health – Disease Control - \$207,000,000**

**Dr. Norton:** Could the Hon. Minister tell this House if, with this new equipment of \$207,000,000 million that is going to be acquired for the Caribbean Heart Institute (CHI), quite unlike the one that existed before, we are going to have so-called free passes as well as paid passes, that is, persons are going to have access to this equipment completely free off cost?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** Thank you doctor for that question. The machine, which is being bought, is an improvement on the existing one and the arrangements will be as before. The installation of this new machine will not change the operations aspect of CHI. In other words, there is an agreement, an arrangement, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and that is how it will go. The services will be paid for and the Government, from time to time, will be subsidizing or supporting patients who are needy. This, of course, will allow us to save overall because we will not have to send those patients overseas, or it is to definitely reduce the number that we are forced to send overseas for such management.

**Dr. Norton:** Thank you very much. I just wanted to know because so far all patients, whether they are supported by Government or not, are paying for the CHI services, but for this equipment there will be no free passes at all?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** The arrangements, which exist, are not changed by the physical replacement of an old machine with a new machine.

**Dr. Norton:** Could the Minister tell me if this, in terms of what we may refer to as the catalases, is the top of the line, state-of-art, best equipment there is that exists?

**Dr. Ramsarran:** This is a very good question and is one of the very hard questions. We have been advised by a team headed by Dr. Gary Stephens, who is well known in Guyana, and is a son of the soil, a Guyanese who went overseas, got qualified and responded to the needs of Guyanese and came back and started this whole idea of the CHI. We are confident that his team, which has taken many months to go through this process of selection, has given us the best. We also have a situation where we can, probably, get training for persons who can do repairs to the machine. This reflects the cost of the machine and the administration is confident that it has spent enough time and effort looking for exactly what we had spoken about – a good package that would give us a better service and probably even attract patients from overseas.

*8.28 p.m.*

**Dr. Norton:** The Hon. Minister spoke about maintenance. Is it not there a tied-in, so-called preventative maintenance in the acquisition of this new equipment?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** Yes. Obviously, what I was referring to is our need to probably have our local persons trained and that is an option. The package, which it comes with, comes from General Electric (GE), there is that service, but it is offering training for somebody who we should identify, so that we will have a sustainable service because this is a significant investment.

**Dr. Norton:** Could the Hon. Minister say if this equipment, at the moment, will be in the Caribbean Heart Institute doing the regular thing, which it used to do before, such as angiogram, studies for patients who need pacemakers, and so on? Is the Ministry intended to expand the services that this equipment, which is a state-of –the-art, can now provide?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** That is a very logical question, because we want to move on in our services provided and it is to send less and less patients overseas, even if they have complicated conditions. What you need to note, and I am certain doctors know this, is that we have our own cardiologist now, so we are building cadre, and that is Dr. Karpin who returned recently. That



means that the machine and the CHI now will be exploited in a more regular fashion. Previously, a lot of the works was done by visiting teams, which means automatically there would have been periods when there would have had relative inactivity, but now that we have our own local boy, as it were, well qualified, he can now act as the sheet anchor and exploit the capacities of the machine that we spoke of, and the added capacities that you spoke of. At the same time the foreign visiting teams will be coming back home to do the work that they would do periodically, but doing it now on a stronger base, because when they would have left there is somebody who is fully trained and who can take on the post operative management of those patients in a very sustained manner.

**Dr. Norton:** Let me take this opportunity of congratulating Dr. Karpin for returning, a son of the soil, but I was referring particularly to other areas, new areas outside of cardiology, for instance, orthopaedics...

**Mr. Chairman:** Dr. Norton, we are dealing with a piece of equipment for the Caribbean Heart Institute.

**Dr. Norton:** Yes. It is the same machine we are dealing with.

**Mr. Chairman:** Are we going out of the Caribbean Heart Institute now?

**Dr. Norton:** Yes, because the machine is the best there is and it can do other functions. The question is if, in these other specialties, such as orthopaedics, gynaecology obstetrics (gyn-obs) where this equipment can be applied to, the Minister is making arrangement, both in terms of infrastructure and a capacity, to get into these other areas.

**Dr. Ramsaran:** I think the doctor is hitting in the right direction. The machine is expensive; it has beautiful capacity for diagnostics, and we will explore it to its fullest extent. However, it is predominantly there for the cardiac patients. What the Member needs to note - he might have missed something – is that there is a population that is developing other diseases, the chronic Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). There is a population that is changing its lifestyle, and so on, and a lot of those diseases now are accumulating in our population, so there is a backlog of people we can expect, from the demographics, that in the near future, more and more of us, will need those services. Yes, whatever other capacity can come out of it..., but predominantly, now,

there are some people who are lining up for services - cardiac services. That is the predominant strike for this; that is the first line use for this equipment.

**Dr. Norton:** Last question. As the Minister get into these other areas, which he agreed that he will get into, is the Ministry already making arrangement to identify the necessary faculties that would be sufficiently informed to do these different procedures in different specialties?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** This is an ongoing process. As the Member knows the health sector, over the few years, has been expanded significantly in two areas - infrastructure and equipment and trained staff. For example, we have been receiving from Cuba, in the past year or two, approximately two hundred young graduate doctors. Many more are to come. We are going to be creating out of them, from these graduate doctors, the play dough, as it were, for the postgraduate programmes. It is known that they have started already - paediatrics, obstetrics and gynaecology, infectious diseases, general surgery, and many more will come. That gives us the base to create many more Dr. Karpins. At the same time, to answer the other section of your question, we definitely will have other teams coming in, such as the Dr. Stephen's team that will bring more and more capacity because there is more and more technology here now. It is like dropping a pebble in the water, the ripples keep going out. We have invested, teams have been coming and there are more teams, more takers. There are many samaritans stumbling over the other to get to come and help Guyana, not only in cardiology, but in the other related fields the Member spoke of.

For example, recently University of Calgary donated several machines to us, specialised ultrasound machines that can help also with diagnostic of the heart. Thanks to one of our other professors, Professor Kishan Naraine, who is a local boy, who went overseas for about thirty years, or so, and he is coming back and giving. We have those and probably the local professionals, young professionals, who are now having the real opportunity to realise the true potentials. We might have heard of, for example, Dr. Harvey and Dr. Ramsackal and a third doctor, Dr. Ramlall, I think is his name, who were trained by the University of Calgary team in diagnostic, using equipment donated by it. There are three pieces of equipment, I am told, which will cost about CAN\$20,000 each. Yes, that is happening and we will be bringing these services, more and more. As the doctor will understand, we try not only to import the teams, but to create our local people here out of the doctors coming out of Cuba.

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I have a question. Could the Ministers and their shadows get together at least once a month to discuss policies and what is happening in the sectors? It does seem to me that it is the most appropriate thing to do. With all of these innovations that are taking place, either you can ask the Clerk to arrange it if you want the meeting to be done formally or you go to lunch, or you meet somewhere, at the Ministry, but there should be... We need to get into the culture of speaking and a lot of the thoughts that we have about each other will break away. Thank you for getting us into that information, Dr. Norton, but I hope that we can mature to that position.

**Mr. Sharma:** I enjoyed the dialogue between the two honourable doctors, but what the people need to know, the people of this country, the ordinary people, is that we are putting, let us say, about G\$214 million, taxpayers money, into the Caribbean Heart Institute. What does this mean to the people? Would they have free heart surgery? That is one of the questions. The second question is: What was the emergency here? Why was this not foreseen?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** I want to thank Mr. Sharma for that question because it is good that we are having such an interest in this issue. Now, this type of intervention is expensive. We do not have some of the skills here. As I have explained, we are now creating it with people such as Dr. Karpin. It is an arrangement whereby teams come in with persons who are skilled. It is not forever we can get these things as *pro bono*. Dr. Stephen has been doing a good job in mobilising those teams, so that is why it cannot be totally free. Recognising that we are saving Guyana by not having to send patients overseas the same moneys, which we would have allocated under that overseas treatment/patient, that has been going on for some time, are now given to the patient and they find others. That is one.

We did have a machine which was old, and which we were petting it a long as we do in Guyana, and were getting work out of it, but after a time we have to say “enough is enough”. That old machine is still there. Hopefully, there is another aspect of it, if we do get it repair we can probably sell it to somebody who is now starting, as we did several years ago, small island or some other hospital. The new machine we need now because we can no longer continue, as it were, trying to repair, or trying to titivate, with the old existing piece, which has served us so well.

**Mr. Sharma:** I appreciate the information that I was supplied. However, I am concerned about the revenue collection aspect of the Caribbean Heart Institute. I would like to know what system is put in place to deal with the revenues. Is it that the revenues will be subsidising those doctors, in terms of their emoluments or will it be put into the Consolidated Fund?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** I appreciate that question with the concern for accountability. I can give the Member the records of how the moneys are collected and where they go. It has been going on for some time and so far there were no complains, but it is a legitimate question about accountability. I can freely share this information with him.

**Mr. Sharma:** Can the information be given now? The Minister of Finance is here. Can he say if that is the system in place?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** This piece of equipment is provided to replace an old piece. There is a system that already exists in which the patients are recorded and financial transactions are done. We are satisfied that the book system is okay, however, it can be checked. At anytime we can make the book totally available to you.

**Mr. Chairman:** The question is whether or not the moneys received are paid into the Consolidated Fund or there is a system that allows the use of the moneys to pay for the consultants and others who come?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** The moneys, which are given to subsidise our patients, are accounted for. Remember, this is an arrangement with a group, which provides the service. It could be characterised as a private/public partnership and then there are those persons who will be dealing in the arrangement, MOU, with the financial aspect of it. How they manage their resources, we do not interfere into that because we already have the agreement. The tax collection officer, and whoever, will be dealing with them. I would not know those details.

**Mr. Sharma:** A follow-up please. I do not know what that means clearly, but it means something to the Government side. It needs to simplify that for the public. However, is this system a model for the specialty hospital?

**Dr. Ramsaran:** This is a good model that can be used for many other things. This is the way to go. If the Member has been following, as a law maker and an informed citizen, governments

cannot alone continue taking the burden of increasing public services, so we need to get all of the resources that we can garner. This model is called a public/private partnership. It is one of the first experiences we have here. Previously we would have brought services from the Pioneer Dialysis Service because we did not have our service. It is why then to bring the equipment when there is a facility providing the services. It is to buy them, and that is evolving.

The Member is right. For the specialty hospital, which hopefully construction will start shortly, there will be a model similar to this because we do not have the skills to run that highly specialised hospital. A team will have to manage it. Those teams do not come cheap, there will have to be innovative ways now of health financing. This is one of the models which is being explored and we are learning from it.

**Mr. Sharma:** That was my concern, because here we are dealing with a small component of a massive project, but when this specialty hospital will come into effect we will be speaking about millions, probably billions, of dollars. Here, in this model, we do not have an idea of how to deal with finances at this very miniature level of expenditure. However, I need to be guided in relation... I am not too clear; I did not look into the aspect of the Constitution, but is it that free health care is not provided for in the Constitution?

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not know how to start to answer that question, but I will say that it is a matter that should be brought under review, perhaps by a motion about free health care.

*Item 2 47- 472 Ministry of Health – Disease Control - \$377,399,839 agreed to ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

## **FINANCIAL PAPER NO. 5 /2012**

“BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 5/2012 – Schedule of Supplementary Estimates (Capital) totalling \$393,000,000 for the period ended 2012-12-31.” [*Minister of Finance*]

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Chairman, in accordance to article 171 (2) of the Constitution, I signify that the Cabinet has recommended for consideration by the National Assembly the motion for the

approval of the proposal set out in Financial Paper No. 5 of 2012 - Schedule of Supplementary Estimates (Capital) totalling \$393,000,000 for period ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2012 and I now move the motion.

*Motion proposed.*

## **CAPITAL ESTIMATES**

### **Item 1 31-321 Ministry of Public Works – Public Works - \$100,000,000**

**Mr. Chairman:** Hon. Members, I believe that we each would have received a supplementary to the information provided for this Financial Paper No. 5, which has more information on the specifics. Are there any questions?

*Item 1 31-321 Ministry of Public Works – Public Works - \$100,000,000 agreed to ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

### **Item 2 51-511 Ministry of Home Affairs – Secretariat Services - \$293,000,000**

*Item 2 51-511 Ministry of Home Affairs – Secretariat Services - \$293,000,000 agreed to ordered to stand part of the Schedule.*

**Mr. Chairman:** This completes consideration of all the items.

*Question*

“That this Committee of Supply approves the proposals set out in Financial Papers Nos. 3, 4 and 5 of 2012 – Statement of Excess (Current) Estimates totaling \$204,609,821, Schedule of Supplementary Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates totalling \$2,713,939,675 and Supplementary Provision (Capital) Estimates totaling \$393,000,000 for the period ended 2012-12-31, 2012-09-02 to 2012-12-17 and 2012-12- 31.”

*put, and agreed to.*

*Assembly resumed.*

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has approved the proposals set out in Financial Papers Nos. 3, 4, and 5 of 2012 and I now move the Assembly doth

agree with the Committee in the said respective resolution subject to the amendments made in the Committee.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion, as amended, carried.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Prime Minister, we will need the suspension of Standing Orders 13 and 54.

**Mr. Hinds:** Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I move that Standing Orders 13 (n) and 54 be suspended to enable the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 for 2012) - Bill No. 30 of 2012 to be introduced at this stage.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Standing Orders suspended.*

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, in accordance of paragraph (2) of article 171 of the Constitution, I signify that Cabinet has recommended the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 for 2012) - Bill No. 30 of 2012 be considered by the National Assembly and I now present the Bill to the National Assembly and move that it be read for the first time.

## **INTRODUCTION OF BILL AND FIRST READING**

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

### **SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (NO.2 FOR 2012) – BILL NO. 30 of 2012**

A Bill intituled:

“AN ACT to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of Guyana for the fiscal year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2012, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” *[Minister of Finance]*

*Question put, and agreed to*

*Bill read a first time*

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 for 2012) - Bill No. 30 of 2012 be read a second time.

## **PUBLIC BUSINESS**

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

#### **BILLS – SECOND AND THIRD READINGS**

##### **SUPPLEMENTARY APPROPRIATION (NO.2 FOR 2012) – BILL NO. 30 of 2012**

A Bill intituled:

“AN ACT to provide for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet the expenditure (not otherwise lawfully charged on the Consolidated Fund) of Guyana for the fiscal year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December, 2012, estimates whereof have been approved by the National Assembly, and for the appropriation of those sums for the specified purposes, in conformity with the Constitution.” *[Minister of Finance]*

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Bill read a second time.*

**Dr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I move that the Supplementary Appropriation (No. 2 for 2012) - Bill No. 30 of 2012 be read the third time and be passed subject to the amendments that would be consequential upon the decisions made by the Committee of Supply.

*Bill reported, as amended, read a third time and passed.*

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, thank you very much. This brings us to the end of the consideration of our Financial Papers and I believe that at this point in time we are going to...

**Mr. Hinds:** Mr. Speaker, Hon. Members, there seems to be a feeling, which I support, and I propose that the House be adjourned at this time.



**Mr. Speaker:** One second, is it adjourned to a date or is it just to be adjourned?

**Mr. Hinds:** Yes Sir, I am proposing that the House be adjourned to the first Thursday in the new year, Thursday, the 3<sup>rd</sup> of January, 2013. I take this opportunity to extend Christmas greetings to all of us and best wishes for the new year.

**Leader of the Opposition [Brigadier (Ret'd) Granger]:** I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Opposition, and, in particular, A Partnership for National Unity, to extend Christmas greetings to all Members of the House, their families and particularly to express the hope that the year 2013 will be a year of goodwill for all of us and that we can continue our service to the people of this country that we are elected to serve. I wish you a happy Christmas and goodwill for the year 2013.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to extend our thanks to the staff of the National Assembly for their service during the year 2012. The media, not necessarily the media that interviewed you with such catastrophic results, the free media, I would like to extend the thanks of the Opposition for their coverage. I would like extend our thanks to the media for their service and their cooperation during the year and look forward to continued service next year. Thank you.  
[Applause]

**Mr. Nagamootoo:** Mr. Speaker, with your leave, I concurred with the views and sentiments of the Hon. Prime Minister and the Hon. Leader of the Opposition on behalf of the Alliance For Change. I wish, Your Honour, to convey to the Christian community of Guyana all the best for the Christmas holiday. This Christmas holiday must be special to them for a period of peace with goodwill and by that token also to all the people of Guyana for a happy holiday.

Your Honour, since this is the last sitting of the year 2012 the Alliance For Change wishes to say this: that this has been a very eventful and very challenging year, particularly for this Parliament, which has had to grapple with issues that it had not hitherto to grapple with. I therefore on behalf of the Alliance For Change commend you, Mr. Speaker, for the able and competent manner in which you had handled the affairs of this Parliament through these challenges, in the courts, as well, and through turbulent parliamentary phase for history. We wish also to thank the staff of the Parliament Office for working with us in this period and to all

people who have expressed goodwill for what they considered to be the good work done by the Opposition and the Parliament to hold their Government accountable.

The Alliance For Change wishes to extend holiday greetings and a better year for the farmers who have suffered from floods, for the workers who would have wanted, both in the private and the public sector, a bit more for the holidays and for all those workers and public servants who have worked conscientiously throughout this year. Saying this, we hope that year 2013 will bring a new dispensation of cooperation in this House, and in Guyana, and that we can realise unity throughout this land. Thank you. [*Applause*]

**Mr. Speaker:** Thank you Hon. Members. Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Granger and Mr. Nagamootoo, I thank you for the sentiments and indeed it has been a challenging year. My greatest regret has been that I have been unable to forge a greater peace and greater level of cooperation between the two sides. I confess to that. I know that we end this year, somewhat, on a sombre note.

The Clerk has prepared drinks, and there is a karaoke machine, and wishes to invite the Members to after proceedings...I do not know how they will be received, but I invite you all to tarry a while with the staff and the media in the lounge. I take the opportunity as well to say happy birthday in advance to Bishop Edghill who will be celebrating a birthday on Christmas Day and happy birthday to our Prime Minister who celebrates his birthday on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Thank you, everyone, and I wish you all a Merry Christmas.

I join in the remarks, because the staff has been exceptional and the staff has risen to the occasion and the challenges, and I would like to personally say to them... I am coming around tomorrow to share out some things, but I would like to say to thank you very much. We could not have made any progress without you.

Thank you very much and enjoy your Christmas holiday, to one and all.

*Adjourned accordingly at 8.59 p.m.*

