

Official Report

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION (2006-2011) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER, PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

147TH Sitting

Tuesday, 1ST February, 2011

The Assembly convened at 2.09 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION

BUDGET SPEECH 2011 – MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 2011

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

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

AND WHEREAS Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of Guyana for the financial year 2011 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on 2011-01-17

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2011, of a total sum of **one hundred and forty-six billion, eight hundred and seventy-nine**

million, six hundred and fifty-four thousand dollars (\$146,879,654,000), excluding fourteen billion, five hundred and fifty million, five hundred and two thousand dollars (\$14,550,502,000) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in the undermentioned schedule, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance.

[Minister of Finance]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will now begin consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure, starting from now, and for the next three days. The Assembly will therefore resolve itself into Committee of Supply to begin the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 2011.

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply

In Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: We are now in Committee of Supply, and will proceed with the Sub-Committee resolution and schedule. I will ask Members to turn to the Estimates of the Public Sector, Current and Capital Revenue Expenditure, for the year 2011, Volume 1. Hon. Member if you can turn to pages 32-33, we can start with the Office of the President.

Agency: 01 Office of the President

Current Expenditure

Programme: 011 – Administrative Services - \$1, 832,504, 000

Mrs. Lawrence: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: From the Staffing Details it is noted that there is an increase for 2011 of four contracted employees. Could the Hon. Minister inform this Committee of Supply what positions will those four persons fill and what are their emoluments?

Minister in the Ministry of Finance [Ms. Webster]: The four positions are two Drivers, an Office Assistant and an Accounts Clerk II.

Mr. Aubrey Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say what is the salary for the Office Assistant, and what is the salary for the highest paid person that is a contracted labourer?

Ms. Webster: The salary for the Office Assistant is \$37,893.

Mr. A. Norton: What is the salary for the highest paid person on contract?

Ms. Webster: The highest paid officer is a Special Assistant and that person receives \$149,000.

Mr. A. Norton: Am I to understand that the Minister is saying, of the persons on contract in this division, the highest paid is the figure she just gave?

Ms. Webster: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: It is contracted employees. Is that the question, Hon. Member?

Mr. A. Norton: Yes, it is for Contracted Employees.

Mrs. Lawrence: Could the Minister say how many Office Assistants are now contracted under this line item?

Ms. Webster: The answer is one.

Mrs. Lawrence: A follow up. Last year, under this very line item, we were told that there were two Office Assistants. Could the Minister kindly say what other positions would have taken those two Office Assistants that were in the twenty-five contracted employees, under Staffing Details, as noted in 2010?

Ms. Webster: I am advised that in 2010 there were two Office Assistants and the positions I identified just now were the four additional positions I was asked about. So the total amount of Office Assistants under that line item amounts to three.

Mr. A. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee of Supply what are the factors at the policy level which informed the decision to appoint Office Assistants as contracted labours as distinct from in the normal course of the Public Service?

Ms. Webster: I would like to refer that matter - because it is a matter of policy - for the Public Service Minister who deals with Human Resources Management and Development, and all matters related to recruitment in the Public Service.

Mr. A. Norton: Could I then further ask the Minister, in requesting persons for employment, what factors inform her request that resulted in an Office Assistant being a contracted labour?

Ms. Webster: I alluded earlier that I would refer any question pertaining to recruitment to the Minister of the Public Service.

Mr. A. Norton: Mr. Chairman, you would agree that if an entity is going to employ someone, even though the Ministry of Public Service is the guiding Ministry, that entity has to have a clear policy and other ideas as to inform that decision. I am merely asking the Minister something that falls within her purview.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you asked the question already. The Minister gave an answer. As the American lawyers would say, that question is argumentative. It is not a question; you are making a statement.

Mr. A. Norton: I disagree, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: You are free to disagree. But the thing is, you asked a question and the Minister said I cannot answer you because policy matters are dealt with by the Ministry of Public Service.

Mr. A. Norton: She did not say that. I think we need to observe in this budget that the amount of contracted labour is fast exceeding the normal Public Service, and, therefore, it is something that needs to be investigated. That is what I am seeking to do.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, we have to understand what we are about in relation to the Estimates. We are not about Government policy in relation to employment and other matters. We are about the items of expenditures as set out in the budget estimates. It is a matter entirely for you, but I do not know that items of expenditures in relation to Office Assistants are the most earth-shattering matters of importance in relation to the Estimates of Expenditure.

Mr. A. Norton: Could I ask, if it is not an earth-shattering matter, how did it end up moving from Public Service to contracted labour? It is that that makes it earth-shattering, because it is there where the Government conceals its bias. The Public Service Minister is here, so I assume my question can be directed to her.

Mrs. Lawrence: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: Could the Hon. Minister inform the Committee of Supply why there is some \$5.3 million increase in this line item for 2011?

Mr. Chairman: Is it line item 6282, Mrs. Lawrence?

Mrs. Lawrence: Yes Sir.

Ms. Webster: In response to the question by the Hon. Member the increase here will cater for the purchase of ...

Mr. Lawrence: This is maintenance.

Ms. Webster: Sorry. Is this line item 6282?

Mrs. Lawrence: Yes.

Ms. Webster: It caters for additional maintenance and servicing of computer equipment, stabilisers, fax machines, etc. The maintenance of fifteen computers and their Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS), that is what the money caters for.

Mr. Danny: Line item 6283 - Cleaning and Extermination Services: There is an increase here of \$3 million. Can the Minister say if the \$3 million is for cleaning or extermination services?

Mr. Webster: The sum here which is being requested meets the cost of the maintenance of the compounds by the National Parks Commission, and also for termite treatments because the buildings in the compound are wooden.

Mrs. Lawrence: I gave way to my colleague because I thought it was a followed up question to line item 6282. If you may permit me Sir, may I ask the Minister how many computers and equipment in 2010 were serviced or maintained for \$4.5 million, and how many additional computers and UPS will be serviced for 2011?

Ms. Webster: In response to the question asked by the Hon. Member, in 2010 there were twenty-five computers serviced, and this year there will be an additional fifteen, which will make it a total of fifty computers for servicing. There are three large UPSs, and also voltage regulators, stabilisers, and the three photocopiers. I have given the entire list of equipment to be serviced for 2011.

Mrs. Lawrence: I would just like to find out from the Minister, what went into the thought of spending almost one hundred per cent of the moneys that were spent last year just for the additional fifteen equipment?

Ms. Webster: Mr. Chairman, you would agree that we are in the time where Information and Communications Technology (ICT) is playing a more increased role in our country's development, and in the way we do our work in Government. It is with this in mind that the additional computer equipment would be acquired, and, hence, the need to make provision for maintenance of the equipment.

Mr. A. Norton: While it might be useful to buy new ones, I want to turn to line item 6321-Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations and ask, what is responsible for an increase of more than \$190 million?

Ms. Webster: That increase of \$190 million is really for the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission. Prior to 2011, the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission utilised its revenues for most of its operations, but because of decreased payments for lands leased by the Commission its revenues have reduced, and that is why this subvention is being provided in 2011, to meet the operations of the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission under this line item.

Mrs. Backer: Under the same line item 6321, if we turn to page 386 of the Estimates of the Public Sector, Current and Capital Revenue and Expenditure, Volume 1, we will see that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) receiving \$148,192 million. My first question to the Hon. Minister is: Does this figure represent the full figure that the EPA gets from the Government of Guyana, or any Ministry?

Ms. Webster: The answer is yes.

Mrs. Backer: Minister, I do not know if you are in a position to assist. Could you indicate whether the EPA has an in-house lawyer?

Ms. Webster: I do not have that information with me.

Programme: 011 – Administrative Services - \$1, 832,504,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 012 – Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and Other Services) - \$379,086,000

Mr. A. Norton: Again, the same question: What is responsible for the large percentage of contracted workers?

Ms. Webster: I will defer that answer to the Hon. Minister of the Public Service.

Mr. Chairman: Would you care to answer that, Hon. Member?

Minister of Public Service [Dr. Westford]: Something is wrong. Year after year I come here, to this Committee of Supply, with my other colleagues and we say what the reason is for contracted workers. In the House, in 2008, it was gazetted that all of the Band 1 and Band 2 positions were off of the Public Service Commission and there were contracted workers. Added to that, I have been repeatedly saying, in this Committee of Supply, that all workers of this country have a democratic right to decide whether they want to be a pensionable worker or a contracted worker - that is their right. And if they choose to do so none of us can question it, and that is responsible for the rise in contracted workers. We have two whole bands which are out of the pensionable workers and they have been gazetted and brought to this House.

Mr. A. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell me how much of the workers, before this decision, have opted to become contracted workers and how much have not?

Dr. Westford: I cannot give exact figures, but a large percentage of staff has been requesting to become contracted workers from all categories.

Mr. A. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister agree to provide this House with the details?

Dr. Westford: I will not say that I will provide the Committee of Supply... We have some books in front of us, here, stating every year how many persons are on contract by agency.

Mr. A. Norton: Again, that would not tell us how many workers have agreed to...
[*Interruption from Government Members*]...You all do not like to be questioned; you believe you are Christ. Mr. Chairman, you would agree that, for us to have a clear idea we need to have the information as to how many workers have agreed to change. It is not in the book...
[*Interruption*]...

Mrs. Lawrence: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister inform this Committee what positions the added twenty contracted employees for 2011 will hold, and their emoluments? I have two other questions but I will just post that one first.

Mr. Chairman: Did you get that question, Hon. Member?

Ms. Webster: I do not have all the additional posts here, but I can say that there are two Secretaries, Driver, Cleaner, two System Coordinators, an Attorney-at-law, Administrative Officer, Clerk II (General), three ICT Engineers and two Administrative Assistants.

Mrs. Lawrence: I wonder whether the Minister has with her the positions giving the total of one hundred and one contracted employees under that same line item for the advisers. How many advisers are employed under this line item?

Ms. Webster: I think that question was asked last year and I did say that there were two advisers.

Mrs. Backer: There is a ruling. Apparently, if a question is asked last year, in twelve months there may have been a change. I am sure that...

Mr. Chairman: I did not disallow the question, Hon. Member.

Mrs. Backer: Thank you very much Sir.

Mr. Chairman: There was a question and there was an answer.

Mrs. Backer: To my honourable colleague, line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: Under Staffing Details, one hundred and one in 2011 and Temporary Employees, fifty-one, could you indicate to this Committee of Supply what is the total number of advisers that His Excellency President Jagdeo has - his total number of advisers?

Ms. Webster: The answer is two.

Mrs. Backer: Seeing it is a very short number, could you, Minister, indicate to the Hon. House what areas of endeavour are these two advisers advising the President on?

Ms. Webster: The answer is the Presidential Adviser on Governance and the Presidential Adviser on Empowerment.

Mrs. Holder: I want to direct my question to the Hon. Minister of Public Service, it is the same line item, 6116, Contracted Employees, and it is a generic question. I am interested in the Minister's opinion on the impact the contract workers' system has on the Public Service as a whole. *[Interruption]*

Dr. Westford: I am not doing any agency as it is right now, only my colleague...

Mr. Chairman: I did not hear the question, Hon. Member.

Mrs. Holder: It is line item 6116, Contracted Employees, and the Hon. Member is the Minister.

Mr. Chairman: Direct the question to the person responsible. Did you get the question, Hon. Member?

Ms. Webster: I will defer the answer for the question being asked by Mrs. Holder to my colleague, the Minister of the Public Service.

Mr. Chairman: There is no answer, Hon. Member.

Mr. A. Norton: Line item 6291- National and Other Events: Could the Hon. Minister say what are the national activities that are not going to be held this year that were held last year with an aim of explaining the significant difference?

Ms. Webster: I think the sum budgeted here under line item 6291 caters for the Republic Anniversary celebrations, Independence Day, Enmore Martyrs Day, Remembrance Day, Arrival Day and Emancipation Day. Those are the activities.

Mr. A. Norton: Unless the question was not heard, I asked what are the activities that were not held last year that will be held this year that caused this significant change in the figure?

Mr. Chairman: Well the question has a certain assumption. I do not know if there is something else to it.

Ms. Webster: Those are the activities that are budgeted here for expenditure for 2011. It is the same activities as 2010.

Programme: 012 – Presidential Advisory (Cabinet and Other Services) - \$379,086,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning - \$57,491,000

Mrs. Lawrence: Would the Hon. Minister explain to this Committee of Supply how the line item 6284, Other, is almost three quarters of that paid for the contracted employees at line item 6116?

Ms. Webster: I did not get that question properly. Can the Hon. Member repeat the question please?

2.39 p.m.

Mrs. Lawrence: Could the Hon. Minister tell the Committee of Supply what amounts for the \$18.2 million under the line item 6284 – Other?

Ms. Webster: The expenditure here is for the provision of consultancy services.

Mr. A. Norton: There is line item 6112, Senior Technical, where there is no one and then there is line item 6116 where Contracted Employees are, and I assume. Could the Hon. Minister tell us in terms of policy formulation in this policy unit, what are the senior technical categories?

Ms. Webster: The categories here are Finance Officer, Technical Officer, Communications Officer, Office Assistant and the Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) Facilitators.

Mr. A. Norton: Did you say Office Assistant? Mr. Chairman, did I hear Office Assistant? I asked for the senior technical with policy formulation...

Ms. Webster: Let me repeat - Finance Officer, Technical Officer, Communications Officer and LCDS Facilitators. Those are the senior technical posts.

Mr. A. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister say, if those are the senior technical posts, why they are not categorised as senior technical?

Ms. Webster: I think the answer is that they are employed under contracts. Those officers would have opted to be employed on contract.

Programme: 014 – Public Policy and Planning - \$57,491,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 011 – Head Office Administration – \$4,887,500,000

Mrs. Lawrence: If we look at project 1212000 – Information Communication Technology - in conjunction with the profile page, reference 2, I am looking at description of profile item three which speaks to “Commencement of the One Laptop Per Family (OLPF) programme”, could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee of Supply what is the cost per laptop and what is the brand of the laptops that will be purchased?

Ms. Webster: The brand of the laptop is Lenovo which is the same brand that we use here in the National Assembly. The cost is quite competitive. The cost of the laptop as well as installation, which is in cooperated, is approximately \$295,000.

Mrs. Backer: On the issue of the laptops, I notice that the project, based on project profile, page 2, is a four-year project. But for this year, the sum of \$4,347,000,000 is budgeted. Could the Hon. Minister say how much of that \$4.3 billion is being allocated for the laptops? The second question is: How many lap tops are expected to be purchased this year? I noticed that it is not a one-year project.

Ms. Webster: Out of that \$4.3 billion that the Hon. Member is referring to, \$1.8 billion will meet the cost of the laptops to be procured. However, this year, it is estimated that twenty-seven thousand laptops will be procured because it is a phased project.

Mr. A. Norton: Project 1200200 – Office and Residence of the President: There is a very general thing here. Could the Hon. Minister say, essentially, how much will be spent on State House, the southern villas and the presidential guard barracks?

Ms. Webster: Rehabilitation works to the State House is projected at a cost of \$10 million. Rehabilitation of the presidential guard barracks and rehabilitation works envisaged for the plumbing and painting to the southern villas... There is also a sum included under this head for the construction of shelves for the library of Castellani House and for the construction of

some more cupboards, and so on, to store the artwork at the Castellani House. So that is included in the sum provided here under this project.

Mr. A. Norton: Mr. Chairman, you would agree that I asked for the Minister to give me a breakdown. The only figure I got is \$10 million. I cannot decipher what is happening if the Minister just tells me \$10 million.

Ms. Webster: Let me go back to it. For the two projects at the Castellani House, the sum of \$750,000 and \$620,000 will be provided. For the rehabilitation works at State House, that will be \$10 million. The rehabilitation of the presidential barrack rooms will be \$4.2 million and the renovation works to be done to the villas and the Castellani House compound would be \$14.7 million.

Mrs. Backer: Project 2400100 – Land Transport, and profile page is 4: When we look at the description of the project it entails purchase of vehicles and it is a figure of \$49.3 million. It is estimated to be completed this year. Could the Minister say how many vehicles we expect to purchase - I say “we” because this money belongs to the people of Guyana - in 2011 for the Office of the President of Guyana?

Ms. Webster: In response to the question, the answer is: six vehicles will be procured this year.

Mrs. Backer: As a follow up, Mdm. Minister, could you indicate to us, with this purchase of six vehicles, what the fleet of vehicles in the Office of the President will move to?

Ms. Webster: There are seventy-one vehicles and there will be an additional six.

Mr. A. Norton: Project 1700100 – Minor Works: A project profile should tell us something, but this does not tell us anything. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what will actually occur with this minor works?

Ms. Webster: I think the profile explains that the funds here will be used for developmental and humanitarian activities as identified by His Excellency.

Mr. A. Norton: Could I ask the Hon. Minister what these humanitarian activities are, what these developmental activities are and how much money will be allocated to them? If it is to be identified by the President, as it is claimed, how did the figure arrive at?

Ms. Webster: As I said earlier, the projects will be identified by His Excellency and this is a budgeted figure.

Mr. A. Norton: The two questions have not been answered. I agree that they will be identified by the President but if a figure is being put, there must be some basis of how the figure was arrived at. I am asking the Minister what that basis is. Then I am asking the Minister to tell me, how much money is allocated to development and how much is allocated to humanitarian? I want to add another question: What are the criteria for humanitarianism?

Ms. Webster: I think it is based on historical costs and, in addition to that, all the projects undertaken throughout Government, the criterion which is used is that we evaluate the amount of beneficiaries and the social impact they will have on the citizens of this country.

Mrs. Holder: I will like to go back to project 1212000 – Information Communication Technology. The legend states: “Provision for development of information technology- CHINA.” I will like to ask the Hon. Member whether the laptops to be distributed came from there or the additional ones will come from this source.

Ms. Webster: The laptops are being procured through a competitive tender process. In addition to that, I think the Hon. Member made reference to the legend which states: “Provision for development of information technology- CHINA.” Some of the funding for the entire project is being provided by the Government of China.

Mrs. Holder: If I understand the Hon. Minister properly, is there a connection between this and the laptops which are going to be distributed?

Ms. Webster: Yes. If the Hon. Member were to look in the budget book she will see, under foreign, the sum of \$2.5 billion provided for this project and another \$1.8347 is being provided from our local budget for the entire project.

Mr. A. Norton: Project 3300300 – Lands and Surveys: It is noted here that it is “Provisional for occupation and cadastral surveys and purchase of surveying equipment.” Could the Minister say exactly where each particular survey will be held? There is just a list of places.

Ms. Webster: Cadastral surveys will be done at Port Kaituma and Port Barbina. There will be regularisation of new lands in the Mabaruma Settlement, Pomeroun River, and Canals Polder. There will be cadastral surveys from Boerasirie to Hubu, Yarowkabra and its environs, and the Soesdyke Linden Highway.

Mr. A. Norton: There are two. The Minister only gave one. There are cadastral and occupational surveys.

Ms. Webster: I called out all the areas where cadastral surveys will be done and I have also indicated where regularisation of new lands will be done. I said it as I went through the areas.

Mrs. Backer: If I could have a re-committal, Mr. Chairman, because there were two conflicting answers from the Minister. However, I am confident she will clear it up. Project 121200 – Information Communication Technology, profile page 2: She did say, when asked about the individual approximate cost...Please do not let Minister Manniram Prashad distract you, Minister. The Minister had indicated the make of the computer as Lenovo and she gave us an approximate cost, but a bit later on she said it was a competitive bidding process. How could you, Mdm. Minister, speak about a competitive bidding process when you already had given us the brand and the cost? Is the process completed or is it ongoing? That is what I want clarity on.

Ms. Webster: The budget is an estimated cost. The process is ongoing because it is over a period of three to four years.

Mrs. Backer: Through you, Sir, could the Minister then indicate to the House what other bids...because she gave us a figure which I am now assuming is a bid – Lenovo computer around \$200,000. What other bids is the Minister in possession of?

Ms. Webster: I am in possession of no bid. The cost that I provided is the estimated cost given by the Project Management Unit.

Mr. Chairman: I put the question that Programme: 011, Capital Expenditure...

Mr. A. Norton: Mr. Chairman, there are other areas to be explored.

Mr. Chairman: Well you are not standing, Hon. Member. If you want to explore, you stand. If I see no one standing, I will close the matter.

Mr. A. Norton: Okay Mr. Chairman.

Project 3301000 – Land Use Master Plan: Could the Hon. Minister set out clearly what this entails?

Ms. Webster: The Land Use Master Plan is a project which is meant to aid in the development of land use planning and to provide the technical and other resources to the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission. This is a project that was signed between the Government of Guyana and the European Commission. The key activities of this project entail enhanced capacity building in the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission in regional land use planning, mapping and database management. It also deals with improved interaction and linkages between the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission and external agencies and stakeholders. It also entails doing the groundwork for the rationalisation of planning legislation. Those are the three main components of this project.

Mr. Chairman: While Members are waiting and taking their time to stand and explore the matters, we have seventeen items to complete between 2 o' clock and 4 o' clock. One hour has elapsed. We started reasonably early - I think five minutes after 2 o' clock. It is now 3 o' clock. One hour has elapsed and we are still on the second of seventeen items so I want Members to bear that in mind.

Mr. A. Norton: Project 450230 – IAST: The legend reads: “Provision for pilot projects.” Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this Committee of Supply what the factors that informed the choice of these pilot projects are?

Ms. Webster: One would agree that Government has placed renewed emphasis on science and technology and, with this in mind, the criteria and factors which have influenced the choice of the project have to do with the impact they would have on our country's development.

Programme: 011 – Head Office Administration – \$4,887,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 09 Public and Police Service Commission

Current Expenditure

Programme: 091 - Public and Police Service Commission - \$48,726,000

Mrs. Backer: Line item 6231 - Fuel and Lubricants: We see a figure here of \$420,000. It is not a large figure, but my question is: Do the Police and Service Commissions have any vehicles which are owned by these entities?

Minister of Transport and Hydraulics [Mr. Benn]: The Commissions have the use of one vehicle.

Mrs. Backer: Secondly, contracted employees have moved from seven to thirteen. It is not a long list. Could we be provided with the list of contracted employees who are employed by those two Commissions?

Mr. Benn: There is a Confidential Secretary, an Office Assistant, a Typist Clerk and three Clerk II (General).

Mrs. Backer: That is not thirteen but it is okay.

Mr. Benn: I am sorry. Mr. Chairman, to complete the list of thirteen, there is a Driver, a System Development Officer, a Telephonist, three Clerk II (General), and a Typist Clerk.

Programme: 091 - Public and Police Service Commission - \$48,726,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 091 - Public and Police Service Commission - \$1,300,000

Programme: 091 - Public and Police Service Commission - \$1,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 10 Teaching Service Commission

Current Expenditure

Programme: 101 - Teaching Service Commission - \$63,227,000

Mrs. Backer: Line item 6281 – Security Services: We notice that \$3.1 million was budgeted for last year. In fact the Teaching Service Commission spent less on security. Having done that, this year it has budgeted \$3.15 million. Could the Minister indicate to us what is the reason for the reduced figure? That is the first question.

Mr. Benn: The requisite amount of ranks was not provided. Therefore, the expenditure was lower than anticipated. This year, it is expected that the necessary amount will be provided.

Programme: 101 - Teaching Service Commission- \$63,227,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 101 - Teaching Service Commission- \$3,500,000

Programme: 101 - Teaching Service Commission - \$3,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 11 Guyana Elections Commission

Current Expenditure

Programme: 111 - Elections Commission – \$1,280,564,000

Mrs. Holder: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I can understand in an election year this is increasing to the extent it has increased, but it would be beneficial to the Committee of Supply to know which specific areas attracted the increase of contracted workers – what particular specialties?

3.09 p.m.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, under the Contracted Employees there is a provision for the appointment of a legal officer and ten AROs.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, Item 6284, while I realise that it is an election year and I expect an increase, could the Hon. Minister state what the activities are to be covered under the category of “Other” to the tune of over \$100 million?

Mr. Benn: Under Item 6284- Other- we have consultancy services provided by Ram and McRae, hiring of consultants, production and broadcast of electronic advertisement for the third cycle of continuous registration, the hosting and updating of websites – \$50,000 a month – the payment for certain legal matters pending in the courts: 3 civil appeals, 5 actions, 1 petition, 4 suits and 1 appeal. The consolidation of electoral laws for new and refined legal procedures for GECOM – this is again for legal and technical consultancy – to prepare strategic plans and implement the new and amended legislation for GECOM and a review of all internal processes and procedures to insure credibility and transparency; document systems and procedures for the guidance of stakeholders and the general public by having a manual detailing step by step procedures for various activities. There is going to be a GECOM security box, the rental of a container, the weeding of compounds, the hiring of labourers for 27 permanent registration offices and sub-offices; the production, publication

and broadcasting of appropriate motivational messages to publicise various aspects of registration; the distribution of identification cards (ID); the hire and use of mobile units, caravans, the use of print media, fliers, posters, t-shirts, bell criers and the hiring of public address systems. The payments to contractors for other goods and services; civic and vote education in the registration period; the publicising again of ID cards not collected in the districts by providing lists of names of persons whose cards were not collected and relevant information about venues; to produce, publicise and broadcast catch phrases and motivational measures.

Mrs. Holder: As a supplementary question, may I ask the Hon. Member whether funds have already been utilised in advance for the provision of some of those services.

Mr. Benn: Emphatically no, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Holder: I would like to draw the Hon. Member's attention to line item 6302- Training. It says "including scholarships". It is indeed an election year and the amount is still quite substantial. Could you indicate to me what it covers?

Mr. Benn: I would like to point out that in 2010 under the revision, it was \$4,791,000 and in this year, which is called an election year, it is \$3,720,000. As such, it is not an increase, it is less.

Mrs. Holder: I did not say that it was an increase.

Mr. Benn: I am pointing it out. It was said that it was a substantial sum. I am pointing out that it is less in this election year compared to the previous year. Secondly, it does not relate to scholarships in themselves for this year, but it relates to training sessions and seminars for various categories of staff: the voter registration staff at the secretariat and staff at the district sub-offices, registration officers, AROs, Registration Clerks I, II and III, the purchase of the training materials, seminars for senior staff and other electoral administrators. That is what the money is intended for.

Agency Code: 11, Programme: 111 – Elections Commission - \$1,323,168,000 agreed to and stand part of the Estimates

Agency Code: 11 Guyana Elections Commission

Current Expenditure

Programme: 112 – Elections Administration - \$1,751,361,000

Mr. B. Williams: Mr. Chairman, for line item 6302- \$170 million- Training and Scholarships- could the Hon. Minister say what categories and numbers of persons are in training?

Mr. Benn: This is for the training sessions for all categories of the staff, the training preparations for the conduct of elections. This is for GECOM's training of approximately 4,000 persons. These are trainers, field managers, assistant registration officers and clerks at 139 venues, civic and voter education in support of the elections and for the conduct of the pole GECOM's training of all related staff to perform duties in conducting the general and regional elections at 40 venues. Approximately 14,000 persons will be trained. In addition, there will be final training for all appointed staff, final briefings for the conduction of mock poles and the final briefing for the overage.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, having said what he would have said could, he dealt with the "Other"? [**An. Hon. Member:** "Could he"?] That is what he has been describing people as. I have been saying "Hon. Member" all of the time. I only started when he did. I am talking about Item 6284. Could the Hon. Minister outline what the use will be here?

Mr. Benn: I think the Hon. Gentleman is referring to Item 6284 - "Other".

Mr. Norton: That is what I said.

Mr. Benn: This is payment for goods and services as it relates to three activities. The first activity is the preparations for the conduct of elections; this is for claims and objections which includes the preparations for the conduct of elections, the rental of public address systems for public awareness exercises of GECOM, the conducting of finger print cross matching exercise of persons to avoid any possible duplication, the printing of 70,000 forms relevant to the claims and objections, registration objections, corrections and transfers, the cost of the daily cleaning of 271 offices.

The second major activity; civic and voter education in support of elections to carry out the following activities: produce additional appropriate motivational messages, jingles, banners, posters, produce stickers, hiring of caravans, placement of billboards and produce appropriate messages on television, radio and in the newspapers.

The third activity for the conduct of the pole: the payment of polling place signs, 24x18 inches with a yellow background; the payment for the daily cleaning of 200 main offices and 2,100 polling stations throughout the regions; rental of public address systems... [**Mr. Norton:** It is the same thing that he is saying all of the time, so one cannot know which one...] Mr. Chairman, I want to say that it could not be the same thing. These things are put in appropriate areas under the various headings. It is not duplication. I am calling from a different heading and line-item and it will be accounted for under those sub-heads. ...the insulation of communication networks prior to Election Day and onwards; the payment for the production of statements of poll, tally sheets, ordinary ballot paper and tendered ballot paper.

Those are the three main activities under “Other” which will be addressed under Item 6284.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, for line-item 6294, could the Hon. Minister indicate what is happening there and, secondly, could I ask that this Hon. House be provided with a breakdown of the spending in these areas?

Mr. Benn: We will be happy to provide a breakdown of the expenditure estimated under these sub-heads.

Mr. Norton: The Hon. Member did not explain Item 6294.

Mr. Chairman: I think he was about to.

Mr. Norton: He sat down and then I got up.

Mr. Benn: I am not sure what great interest is under this heading. For Item 6294, “Other”, the preparations for the conduct of elections claims and objections. Payment for operating expenses related to three activities as listed below: the distribution of ID cards in all locations for who were registered in the claims and objections exercise. This will be done at 271 offices and there will be payments... the payment for honorarium for a total of 1,519 temporary employees involved in the claims and objections period of three months. I could call out the number of persons: 10 supervisors, 271 AROs, 271 clerks, 271 clerks of the AROs, 542 registration clerks, 16 drivers, 17 C(Civic) and VE (Voter Education) staff, 20 logistic staff, 50 encoders, 4 support coordinators, 1 logistic coordinator, 1 logistic supervisor and 1 communications coordinator.

For civic and voter education support of elections – this is for the payment of temporary staff – for the conduct of poll again the payment of an honorarium for 13,109 temporary employees involved in the conduct of the poles for at least two months. Again, it is a long list of persons: 40 trainers, 14 supervisors, 74 clerks and supervisors, 14 clerical assistants, 10 returning officers, 10 clerks of the returning officers, 10 clerical assistance return officers and 180 deputy returning officers. The purchase of plastic base padlock seals with GECOM’s print and numbering, the purchase of voting compartments to ensure secrecy of the ballot, the purchase of P and E envelopes, the overseeing of the printing of ballots overseas – this would involve two commissioners and a deputy chief elections officer for operations – the packaging, handling and freight for ballot boxes for ballots in Guyana to ensure that the adequate time for their use on Election Day. Those are the main activities and expenditures related under “Other”.

Mrs. Holder: I would like to guide the Hon. Member to Item 6281 - Security Services - and ask for an explanation for the significant increase from \$14 million to \$143 million.

Mr. Benn: There was not an election in 2010, so the ten-fold increase relates to the fact that we have elections this year as was said by Members on the other side and therefore it is for the provision of the security services for all of these places – polling stations, offices, etc. There would be 2,100 polling stations.

Mrs. Holder: As a supplementary question, surely those polling stations are only going to come into existence a day or two before the elections. Are you telling me that this pertains to additional security services for over a thousand polling stations for one or two nights?

Mr. Benn: No. I will clarify it for the Hon. Member. There are district offices throughout the regions which, as you know, are operating as we speak so all of those places have to be provided with security for the claims and objections period.

Mrs. Holder: I would have assumed that those offices have been in existence this year. The Hon. Member pointed out to me that it was very low when it was not an election year. I am fully aware that those offices exist, so there is still a marked and significant increase and so even with those offices and with the explanation of the polling station security, it is still astronomical.

Mr. Benn: I am hoping that the Hon. Member has an interest in ensuring that there is security for the ballot activities for the elections. This is the expenditure anticipated and

funding that will be basically spent on these activities. The Hon. Member could have all of the details she wants to do any study she may contemplate.

Mrs. Holder: I was going to indicate to the Hon. Member that I might very well do that. I would like to direct you to Item 6282- Equipment Maintenance- and I would like to know what type of equipment you are talking about.

Mr. Benn: This is for the routine maintenance of equipment which will be used during the period and this includes photocopiers, computers, fax machines, reso-graphs, printers, air conditioners, generators and other accessories to be utilised for the preparations the poll and for the conduct of the poll.

Mr. Norton: Back to the question of security. Could the Hon. Minister tell us how much money is allocated to protect the offices and how much is allocated to the other areas of security?

Mr. Benn: We do not have that level of detail here at the moment, but it can be provided.

Mr. A. Norton: Is the Hon. Minister prepared to give me just the details of how much it costs for security for the offices at present?

Mr. Benn: We are undertaking to provide that information with that level of detail to the Hon. Member in due course.

Agency: 11, Programme: 112 – Elections Administration -\$1,751,361,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Agency: 11 Guyana Elections Commission

Programme 111 – Elections Commission – \$96,144,000

Mrs. Holder: Project Code 2501000- purchase of boats, office furniture and equipment- the question I would like to ask is what happened to these capital items since the last election.

Mr. Benn: I think this relates to the issue of wooden boats and it is a number of years since the last election and they have been either damaged, in need of being replaced and so forth. It is only for three boats, if I may point out. Three boats are required to come into the current capital fleet.

Mr. Norton: The Hon. Member is saying that some of them are damaged. If that is the case, is it more economical to get a new one or to repair that one? What informed the decision?

Mr. Benn: Well I said that we are replacing three boats. They are damaged. They are no longer serviceable and it is more economical to replace them with the three new boats.

Mrs. Holder: Could the Hon. Member give the House the assurance that these capital items would be better taken care of this time around?

Mr. Norton: The conduct of elections in Guyana is a very rigorous activity. You know our rivers. Our creeks are shallow and have rocks and such like and they will be heavily taxed during the elections. As such, the boats will be used to assure the proper conduct of the elections.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister answer the question which asks if the Elections Commission is prepared to preserve the stock of boats as best as possible so that our expenditure... that is what we want them to do.

Mr. Speaker: I do not suppose that you would expect a “no” to that question, Hon. Member. What is your answer? “Yes”, I presume.

Mr. Norton: There are a total of six boats. Some of these boats have been in existence over the course of two elections already. Three are being replaced. During the elections I would expect to ensure the proper conduct of the poll that even if a boat is damaged, so as to get the results of the people’s poll on time, the boats will be used. I cannot guarantee that in trying to deliver the polling boxes or the materials under certain circumstances that a boat may not be damaged. All that I am saying is that we have to be prepared even to loose a boat to ensure the proper conduct of elections. I think that is the important thing here. **[Interjection by Mr. Norton: That is not the issue.]** That is the issue – the proper conduct of free and fair elections in Guyana. I cannot give the type of assurance that the gentleman is asking for.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, to the Minister, you would agree, by your very utterances, you were saying that some boats were protected to some extent and left over. We on this side of the House believe that elections must be free and fair. That is not the issue. The issue is whether in the handling of these boats you are prepared to do everything to ensure that the tax payers’ money is properly handled.

Mr. Benn: That is always the case. If a boat or a vehicle gets into an accident while trying to get the materials, so that we have a credible poll, that is a different matter.

Agency 11, Programme 111, Capital Expenditure – \$96,144,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Chairman: We will now deal with the matter which was incorrectly placed under Teaching Service Commission.

Capital Expenditure

Agency: 11 Guyana Elections Commission

Programme 112 – National, Regional and Local Government Elections – \$43,365,000

[Interjection by Mrs. Deborah Backer: We just finished that.]

Mr. Chairman: No. We have not finished that one, 112. It is alright if you do not want to ask any questions on it; I will just put it for approval.

Agency 11, Programme: 112 – \$43,365,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Agency: 53 Guyana Defence Force

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 531 – Defence Headquarters – \$453,000,000

Agency: 53, Programme: 531 – Defence Head Quarters – \$453,000,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Agency: 57 Office of the Ombudsman

Current Expenditure

Programme: 571 – Ombudsman

Mrs. Riehl: Mr. Chairman, I do not know who will answer this question, but I wish to ask about the Office of the Ombudsman at page 239. I see the grand total of current and statutory expenses budgeted at \$12,349,000. My question to the Hon. Minister or whosoever wishes to answer, I see the actual figures in 2009 as \$3.5 million. The actual revised figure in Budget

2010 is \$3,002,525. Why do you keep budgeting \$12 million for the last several years when there has not been an ombudsman in place in excess of 5 years? Why this hefty \$12 million when you keep using \$2 million and \$3 million every year? Why are you budgeting for this \$12 million?

Mr. Benn: There is a secretariat, the Office of the Ombudsman, and of course budgetary provisions have to be made for the eventual appointment of an ombudsman.

Mrs. Riehl: May I ask a follow-up? If the Hon. Minister can tell us when this will be? We have not had one in excess of five years.

3.39 p.m.

Mr. Benn: I thought that the Hon. Member had the answer. This matter is under some discussion and, with great will on both sides, it will be resolved.

Mrs. Riehl: I do not understand what the Hon. Minister is speaking about. I go to the heading “Staffing Detail” and I see COA: Item 6113 – Other Technical and Craft Skill. In 2010, there was 1. No staff is budgeted for under that heading in 2011. Could the Hon. Minister explain? There were five staff in 2010; one goes and four remain.

Mr. Benn: I think that there was a resignation in the Office of the Ombudsman over the one year period.

Mrs. Backer: I would like to go back to Account Code 6011 – Statutory Wages and Salaries. Could the Hon. Minister say to this Hon. House what efforts have been made by his Government during 2010 to fill the position of the Office of the Ombudsman?

Mr. Benn: I do not believe that this is a question that is related to the Budget. I understand that it is a bipartisan effort and that information is being examined.

Mrs. Holder: Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I would like to draw the Hon. Minister’s attention to the same line item and point out to him that there is no administrative staff. Who will be responsible for the money being approved today? I simply see Clerical and Office support at line item 6114 and Semi-skilled Operatives and Unskilled at line item 6115. Who exactly will be responsible for the sum being allocated here?

Mr. Benn: There are some administrative matters which are being handled through the Public Service Ministry. If one looks at staffing details, it would be evident that there are four members of staff.

Mrs. Holder: the Hon. Member has not answered my question. Who will be responsible for the moneys being approved here today when, in fact, there is no administrative staff?

Mr. Benn: The Permanent Secretary of the Public Service Ministry is the individual who is responsible.

Mrs. Backer: I was trying to ask a supplementary question earlier. The Hon. Minister said that bipartisan efforts are being made to fill the post. However, constitutionally, there is no requirement for any bipartisan approach to fill that Office. Could the Hon. Minister help us to understand this? If that is so, a bipartisan approach is required, the Opposition Members may be able to advise the Leader of the Opposition and have the position filled.

Mr. Benn: I was not aware that the Hon. Member is rejecting any efforts at consultation on this matter.

Mrs. Backer: Mr. Chairman, we cannot make this matter into a joke. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition has clearly told Mrs. Riehl and me that there has never been any discussion on the matter of the Office of the Ombudsman. If that is not so, and the Minister is saying that our Leader has lied to us and there is bipartisan approach, could he share with the nation what level the bipartisan approach is at and how soon would an Ombudsman be appointed? It is a constitutional office.

Mr. Benn: I cannot answer for what the Hon. Leader of the Opposition may tell his people. I am saying, again, that efforts have been made to have consultation on this matter and I hope that Members on the Opposition side would not be rejecting those efforts.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Member tell this House with whom these consultations were held?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members we are departing very far away from the Estimates.

Mr. Benn: I do not see this as a line item in my Estimates. I am trying to help the Hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House to find this particular line item that relates to this matter.

Mr. Chairman: These questions are going beyond the Estimates.

Mrs. Holder: I would like to direct the Hon. Member to line item 6133 – Benefits & Allowances. Since there are no administrative staff, no senior technical staff and no other technical and craft skilled, will be the Hon. Member tell me to whom these benefits and allowances will be given.

Mr. Benn: In the likely event that an Ombudsman is appointed, does the Hon. Member expect that he would not have benefits to draw down from?

Mrs. Riehl: My question relates to the same line item 6133 – Benefits & Allowances. With no resident Ombudsman, the money utilised in 2010 was \$213,000. Who benefited from that \$213,000?

Mr. Chairman: Is that a question about last year Hon. Member?

Mrs. Riehl: I am asking the same question Mrs. Holder asked: Who will benefit this year?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, there are four staff members and they will benefit from the allowances provided.

Programme: 571 – Ombudsman - \$3,351,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 58 Public Service Appellate Tribunal

Current Expenditure

Programme: 581 – Public Service Appellate Tribunal - \$6,552,000

Mr. Williams: Line Item 6011 – Statutory Wages and Salaries. Could the Hon. Minister say what the sum of \$10,434,000 is for?

Mr. Benn: This is intended for the payment of the salary for the Chairman when he is appointed.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Minister, did you say the Chairman?

Mr. Benn: Yes.

Mr. Williams: I have a follow-up question. Could the Hon. Minister tell us when the Public Service Appellate Tribunal will be constituted, this being the eighth or ninth year it has been in existence?

Mr. Benn: I cannot give an answer, specifically, as to when the gentleman or woman would be appointed.

Mr. Williams: You are saying that Government is budgeting but has no idea, as has been for the last five years, at least, when is it going to fill the vacancies on the Public Service Appellate Tribunal. The people of Guyana want to know. The public servants want to know. When is the Government going to constitute the Public Service Appellate Tribunal which it has been budgeting for last five years, at least?

Mr. Benn: Provisions are being made for the payment for the gentleman or woman when appointed.

Programme: 581 – Public Service Appellate Tribunal - \$6,552,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 581 – Public Service Appellate Tribunal - \$3,000,000.

Mr. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister tell us where this building is situated?

Mr. Benn: The Public Service Appellate Tribunal is situated on Brickdam.

Mr. Williams: Brickdam? What is the address?

Mr. Chairman: The Land Court Building.

Mr. Williams: I go to that building every day.

Mr. Chairman: So do I, but not every day; every six months. It is there.

Programme: 581 – Public Service Appellate Tribunal - \$3,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 02 Office of the Prime Minister

Current Expenditure

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat - \$167,758,000

Mr. Norton: Line Item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance. Could the Hon. Minister explain the increase in finances for equipment maintenance, with no increase in staff or new equipment added?

Mr. Benn: It is basically the same number of equipment. It is the same amount that was budgeted in 2010 with a minor increase in the Budget of 2011. In the revised budget, less was spent in 2010 and it is anticipated that that deficit in maintenance will catch up with the Office in 2011.

Mrs. Backer: Line Item 6264 – Vehicle spares and Service. Could the Hon. Minister inform this National Assembly of how many vehicles the Prime Minister’s Secretariat has.

Mr. Benn: There are seven vehicles, one of which is currently unserviceable.

Mrs. Holder: I would like to direct the Hon. Member’s attention to Line Item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies. Could the Hon. Member please explain to me what the Hon. Prime Minister is doing with drugs and supplies of this magnitude?

Mr. Benn: These are the normal supplies of drugs, first aid kits, Limacol for the Offices, residences, vehicles and field trips. I think this is pretty innocuous. I am not sure what the Hon. Member is driving at.

Mr. Norton: Line Item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance. In 2010, the budgeted sum was \$1.2 million. The revised amount is \$749,000. Could the Minister say what is actually responsible for this increase, noting what the actual amount was?

Mr. Benn: I think I did say that the budgeting was done before the year came to an end. As I said, there was lower maintenance to the value of \$749,000 done in 2010. Prudent budgeting means that the figure that was used in 2010, slightly above that amount is the appropriate figure to use.

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat - \$167,758,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister’s Secretariat - \$2,832,531,000

Mrs. Lawrence: Line Item 2604900 – Lethem Power Company. Could the Hon. Minister kindly inform the House whether this generator has the capacity to give the residents of Lethem 24-hour electricity service?

Mr. Benn: This relates to the final payment for and transportation of the generator to Lethem. The intention is to provide Lethem with 24 hours of electricity.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what the capacity of the generator is and what length of service it is estimated will be given to the people of Guyana?

Mr. Benn: I cannot give the exact capacity of this generator at the current time, but I think it will be supplementing a couple of other generators which are already in place.

Mr. Norton: How could someone tell this House that the generator is going to give 24 hours service and he/she does not know what the capacity is and what it is adding to. It baffles me.

Mr. Benn: I will clarify and give the information to the Hon. Member. It is a 750 KVA generator. There are a couple of other generators which are in place. I did say that the intention is to provide 24-hour electricity service to Lethem.

Mr. Norton: I also asked what is the guarantee – how long is it expected to service the people of Lethem? May I also add: Can the Minister tell us when it will be installed and when will it become functional?

Mr. Benn: On the question of service, the equipment will be maintained as is necessary.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member wants to know what the life span of the equipment is.

Mr. Benn: I did say that I would provide information on this level of detail later.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I assume that a project profile has been prepared. If the Hon. Member is buying a generator, the project profile must state if the generator will give four or five years usage. This is unless planning is not being done. The second question I asked is when installation will be completed and when will it become functional and start providing 24 hours electricity to the people of Lethem.

Mr. Benn: That level of information will be provided tomorrow.

Mrs. Holder: I would like to direct the Hon. Member's attention to a similar Line Item – 2601100 – Electrification Programme. When I look at the profile - Description and Projects,

Item No. 2, it says construction of seven new 69, 13.8 KV substations. Could the Hon. Member tell us where these substations will be located or where they are, if they are located already?

Mr. Benn: I will provide that information later.

Mrs. Holder: I have a question on Item 4 of the profile - Installation of supervisory and controlled data acquisition system. What precisely will that do and who are the people who will actually be manning this system?

Mr. Benn: The engineers of Guyana Power and Light (GPL) will be manning this system. As far as my information goes at this time, it is to be located in Kingston.

Mr. Norton: Line Item 1701000 – Minor Works. Could the Hon. Minister provide some details as to what constitutes these minor works and where will it be carried out?

Mr. Benn: This is the normal assistance, through the Office of the Prime Minister, to communities and individuals with respect to activities they may have ongoing such as block making, minor community road building and issues like those. This assistance is at the discretion of the Hon. Prime Minister.

Mrs. Holder: I would like to direct the Hon. Member back to the line item which deals with electrification and item 4 of the project profile on which he answered the question I previously asked. Could the Hon. Minister indicate what purpose this equipment will serve and how will it be beneficial to GPL. I am talking about the installation of supervisory and controlled data acquisition system.

Mr. Benn: We are all aware that the Hon. Member included that GPL has large line losses. This is an upgrade of the equipment to have better control over the supply of electricity and to reduce those losses.

Mrs. Lawrence: Line Item 2404000 – Land Transportation. Could the Hon. Minister inform the House how many vehicles will be purchased and what are the types of vehicles?

Mr. Benn: This relates to the purchase of three vehicles. I think I did say already that one is unserviceable and a couple of others are over ten years old. This will deal with the replacement of those vehicles.

Mrs. Lawrence: What type of vehicle?

Mr. Benn: It will be vehicles suitable for the Prime Minister's Office.

Mrs. Holder: Line Item 2601100 – Electrification Programme. Is China providing this equipment to the Government of Guyana?

Mr. Benn: Yes. This equipment is being supplied out of China.

Mrs. Holder: Is it a gift or is it being paid for?

Mr. Benn: This is a loan designed to improve our electricity delivery to the public.

Mr. Norton: Line Item 1701000 – Minor Works. Would it not be much more appropriate for minor works to be included in the Ministry of Works' budget rather than the Office of the Prime Minister?

Mr. Benn: I did say that the issue of minor works is at the discretion of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Norton: I did not ask if it was at the Prime Minister's discretion. I asked if it is not more appropriate in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and the nature of government.

Mr. Benn: The answer is no. These items are examined, recommended and on advice to the Prime Minister, he exercises his discretion.

Mrs. Holder: I would like a description of the kind minor project and programme that the funds entail and which areas benefit from these works.

Mr. Benn: I think I described these types of works before. I can submit a sketch of the types of help provided via this line item.

Mr. Norton: What criterion is used to decide that a project is a minor project?

Mr. Benn: The funding relating to this programme totals \$7 million. In as far as I am aware, somebody may turn up with some distress or need help to do something. These items sometimes cost \$15-\$20,000 at various times. I said that we can provide a profile of the types of help provided. They are minor works. The Ministry does big things.

Mr. Norton: Under that you can get some polish for your shoes.

Mr. Benn: I do not know why the Hon. Member is worrying so much about my shoes. I just came from a road being done at Rahad Scheme being constructed at Providence on the East

Bank of Demerara where I walked with members of the community in the mud and my shoes got dirty. As soon as I open a position for a bootlicker, the Hon. Member can apply.

Mrs. Holder: Can I get the attention of the Hon. Member rather than him being preoccupied with making disparaging comments unbecoming of his office? I would like to direct the Hon. Member's attention to the same minor works and ask him whether or not the Members of the Opposition are privileged to send individuals to the Hon. Prime Minister to be beneficiaries of these minor projects.

Mr. Benn: Any Guyanese person, including Members of the Opposition, can apply for assistance under these minor works.

Programme: 021 – Prime Minister's Secretariat - \$2,832,531,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 07 Parliament Office

Current Expenditure

Programme: 071 – National Assembly - \$730,434,000

Programme: 071 – National Assembly - \$730,434,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 071 – National Assembly - \$16,900,000

Programme: 071 – National Assembly - \$16,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

4.09 p.m.

Agency 31 - The Ministry of Public Works and Communication

Current Expenditure

Programme 311- Ministry Administration - \$230, 684, 000

Ms. Lawrence: Line item 6112. Mr. Chairman, I see no increase in the senior technical staff position. It was one in 2010 and it remains to be one in 2011. Could the Minister, then, tell the Assembly why the amount budgeted is some \$1.2 million more?

The Minister of Public Works and Communication [Mr. Brindley R. Benn]: Mr. Chairman, programme 1 is Administration, programme 2 is Technical.

Ms. Lawrence: Look at it, at line item 6112 it says senior technical officer. Those are the pages that were put.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, this relates to the employment of one person.

Ms. Lawrence: Yes. You have &108...

Mr. Benn: That person was employed in December, 2010.

Ms. Lawrence: I thought you did not have an answer.

Mr. Ernest Elliot: Line item 6281-Security Service. Could the Hon. Minister say what has caused an increase of \$18.8 million to this line item?

Mr. Benn: This relates to the provision of security services at additional locations. We have occupied the embankment and we have a couple of other locations in the fields which we have to provide security for.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister give us more detail about the amount of places rather than just say "we occupy the embankment"? That could be from Linden to, possibly, Enmore.

Mr. Benn: The head office at 4th Street, Kingston, the Embankment which has two locations, Water Street, the sea defences- those are a number of the locations.

Mrs. Holder: Mr. Chairman, line item 6281-Other. I notice a significant drop. I would still like the Hon. Member to give us a sense of what areas the allocation is intended for and what is responsible for the significant drop in the allocation.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, there has been a rationalisation of some of the internet and other telephone services in the Ministry and this is visible in the reduction.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, under the same line item, could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of the cost of security of each of these locations?

Mr. Benn: We do not have that level of detail at the moment, Mr. Chairman, but we can provide it.

Programme: 311 – Ministry Administration - \$23, 684,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme 312- Public Works

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, line item 6251-maintenance of roads. There is a sum budgeted here of \$215 million. Could the Hon. Minister indicate to us where these roads are situated and if the railway embankment on the East Coast of Demerara is included in this line item?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, the railway embankment is always included in the miscellaneous roads programme under Maintenance of Roads. Let me call out some of the streets or roads that will be attended to. Vlissingen road, Erving Street, Sheriff Street, Duncan Street which has some issues, JB Singh road, Water Street, UG road, Camp road, Barrack road, Young Street, Thomas road, Mandela Avenue, Homestretch Avenue, Kitty, Carifesta Avenue, the railway embankment as I stated before, the East Bank of Demerara road, the West Coast of Demerara road, the Soesdyke to Linden Highway, and the West Bank of Demerara road.

Let me clarify that these relate to the declared public roads under the Maintenance of roads. It does not relate to roads that are done as urban roads or roads which are in NDCs or municipalities.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, in the contract, the employees or the senior technical officer, I do not know which one. Could the Hon Minister tell us what is the professional staff that is qualified in road construction.

Mr. Benn: I am not sure what the Hon. Member is...

Mr. Norton: Let me explain.

Mr. Benn: Which line item are you referring to?

Mr. Norton: I am saying you have here one senior technical, 28 contract employees; I am trying to find out, of these employees, how many are technically sound engineers, i.e. engineers who are qualified to deal with road construction etc?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, all of our engineers are qualified and they are sound. In the case where the Hon. Member was referring to a senior technical officer that specifically related to a Chief electrical engineer.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I would believe that an engineer would know if I am asking about road construction. He cannot tell me about an electrical engineer. I asked a direction question. How many engineers in the area of road construction?

Mr. Benn: Our engineers are distributed over force account employees and work services group employees. I state, again, that our engineers are qualified and they are sound...we can provide...I really do not want to get into a discussion which...

Mr. Norton: It is not a discussion. It is yes... six engineers, two, one or none.

The Minister of Agriculture [Mr. Robert Persaud]: All are qualified and are sound.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, void of the arrogance, are we in this House not entitled to ask the Hon. Minister how many engineers they have to implement this programme? Can he not answer a simple question like that?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member set out on a premise to question, to disparage whether our engineers are qualified or are sound. I am saying that all of our engineers qualified and I am saying that say are sound!

Further, Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to give a list of all of our engineers, their qualifications and their appointments to the Hon. Member if he wants to suss them out.

Mr. Norton: If it pleases you I withdraw the soundness etc. Could the Hon. Minister tell us how many engineers dealing with road construction does he have in this section? That is all he needs to tell us.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, I already undertook to provide to the Hon. Gentleman a profile of all of our engineers, their qualifications and their appointments.

Mr. Norton: With all due respect I did not ask for a profile I merely asked: could you tell me if it one, two, three, four or five...

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, I...

Mr. Chairman: Where are we going with this?

Mr. Benn: I pointed out that before that the engineers who mostly deal with civil aviation engineering are not only the line item that the Hon. Gentleman is trying to put. They are under the work services group.

Mr. Norton: Where is the work services group? I have been looking for it all day.

Mr. Benn: We are discussing 'Ministry Administration' here.

Mr. Norton: In the administrative section you used to have engineers.

A Member: How many do you have there?

Mr. Benn: I said it before. You are not listening.

Mr. Chairman: Is there anything else Hon. Members?

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, back to line item 62.54 - maintenance of roads. The Minister indicated to us that a number of public roads will be done under this line item. Could the Minister indicate to us how much money will be spent on the railway embankment on the East Coast of Demerara?

Mr. Benn: These are force account works. We do not have the amounts or details relating to the railway embankment as yet.

Mr. Basil Williams: The same line item. Is the Burma Road included in this expenditure?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, I took the pains to point out that I was referring to declared public roads.

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, line item 6252- Could the Minister indicate to this House if under this line item the bridges on the railway embankment will be catered for under this. We have some problems on the railway embankment. If you are carrying out works on the railway embankment then you have to be looked after.

Mr. Benn: The answer is yes. We have done quite a bit of work. We have assigned the task largely to the Harbour Bridge Corporation. They rehabilitated the bridge at Turkeyen recently, if you noticed. They are working on some other similar bridges along the way and they have the task to work on the bridges along with the roads.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, is the Minister prepared to tell this House if he is prepared to carry out a reassessment to determine if the work that is being done on those bridges at this time if it is value for money? Because the minute they are done you know that the next year you have to deal with them.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, what the Hon. Member is asserting is not true. It is not true that when we rehabilitate a bridge we have to do additional work on it the next year.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I wish to submit, having used both areas, it is true at Liliendaal and at Plaisance.

Mr. Benn: We are speaking about the rehabilitation of a bridge. I have said that we rehabilitated the one at Turkeyen and I am saying that if the bridge is rehabilitated I could not be that we will be rehabilitating it again the following year.

Mrs. Holder: Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw the Hon. Members attention to line item 6282- equipment maintenance. I see an increase of some import. Please indicate what kind of maintenance. Is it an indication of additional work being done in an election year?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, is the Hon Member referring to 6282? This is the normal maintenance of photo copiers, office equipment, printers, air conditioners etc.

Mr. B. Williams: Mr. Chairman, line item 6254-maintenance of sea and river defences. Could the Hon. Minister indicate the areas identified for this expense?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we have a long list: we have to procure something called rina mattresses, the procurement of cement, the procurement of sand or the Essequibo coast, Wakenaam, Leguan, East and West coast Demerara...

Mr. B. Williams: The areas. Whether it is Essequibo, Berbice, and Demerara...

Mr. Benn: ... the purchase of construction tools, the raising and repairs to a section of the northern embankment at sections along the sea defence, Blairmount, Content, Mahaica, No. 76 Village to Line Path, Region 6-this is the construction of masonry coping, the raising of river embankment at Region 3- West Coast Demerara and Wakenaam, timber revetment construction in Region 6, rehabilitation and timber revetment in the Essequibo Coast.

Further details: rehabilitation of river defences at Fort Island, rehabilitation of river defences at La Bagatelle, Leguan, the rehabilitation of river dam at Roden Rust and Naamryck on the East Bank of Essequibo, emergency works at New Hope on the East Bank of Demerara, emergency works at Friendship on the East Bank of Demerara, rehabilitation works at Friendship, Wakenaam, emergency sea defence work at the Leguan Island, Frow Anna; Frow Anna East and West.

Mrs. Holder: Mr. Chairman, I would like to draw the Hon. Members attention to staffing details. You have at least 16 less staff members but I do not see a commensurate reduction in the payment of National Insurance. In fact, there is an increase similarly in the benefits and allowances, as wells as the direct labour cost. An explanation would be appreciated.

Mr. Benn: This related to the flow through of 16 new engineers, almost all Cuban trained, who were transferred to other agencies.

Mrs. Holder: A supplementary question: that does not explain why there has not been a commensurate reduction in the cost related to staff. That is the question. As a matter of fact the NIS contribution has gone up; benefits and allowances have increased even though there are 16 less members of staff.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, in 2010 the allocation thereto was \$61 million; the revised estimate was \$28,668,000; the budget this year reflects a reduction of \$6,432,000 because the budgeted amount is \$22,236,000.

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, my final question on this aspect, line item 6255- maintenance of other infrastructure. Could the Minister tell us what are the other infrastructure under this line item?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, this relates to the additional maintenance cost for the additional maintenance of traffic lights and street lights. We are putting in an additional number of street lights, particularly, and there have been issues of damage to traffic lights. This reflects the work required.

Programme: 312 –Public Works- \$12,543,045 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme 313- Communication and Transport

Mrs. Holder: Line item 6255-maintenance of other infrastructure. What are these?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, this relates to the maintenance of aerodromes in the interior.

Mrs. Holder: Can I ask the Hon. Member a supplementary question? Will your Ministry seek to utilise the services of the people in the areas where these aerodrome are as distinct from flying in contractors?

Mr. Benn: We always utilise the services of the locals to maintain these airstrips. Regular maintenance, weeding, maybe a bit of pothole patching and draining off of water from the

airstrips is done by the communities. I would say additionally that we have programmes with 41 airstrips for regular attention.

Mr. Norton: Could the Hon. Member tell us what is the function of the one contracted employee in this department?

Mr. Benn: This relates to the Senior Aerodrome Inspector, he is an expert in this area. He is the one who plans, inspects, and programmes these maintenance works inclusive of examinations of areas where we may decide to place new aerodromes.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister, I am not saying it is impossible, explain how this person operates because it is only him? I see no forms of assistance whatsoever.

Mr. Benn: He relies on support for specific engineering activities, not only from the Ministry itself, but also from the Guyana Civil Aviation Authority. Usually he is out every two weeks or more flying to various aerodromes, updating and inspecting to maintain out aerodromes so that all of our people can have safe landing.

Mrs. Holder: Mr. Chairman, I would like to direct the Hon. Minister's attention to line item 6134- National insurance. Is the Ministry paying National Insurance for this contracted employee? I see since 2009 no NIS has been paid.

Mr. Benn: The answer is yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mrs. Holder: You kaffuffle me Minister. Yes but there is no evidence of it here so perhaps you can tell me where it is hidden.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman this would come out of the pay role records. Since the Hon. Member has an intimate interest in this matter, we will provide her with the information.

Programme: 313 – Communication and Transport - \$363, 573 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Capital Expenditure

Programme 311 - Ministry Administration - \$14, 800,000

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, project code number 1100100-Demerara Harbour Bridge. Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of this \$550 million as against the four items listed under the description of the project?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, in terms of details at hand: firstly, the construction and rehabilitation of pontoons, secondly fabrication of distribution beams which is \$40 million, buoys \$50 million, end posts \$41 million, junction transom \$7.5 million, the supply of sheaves and shackles \$16 million, the construction and installation of concrete anchor blocks \$140 million, the replacement of electrical cables and juncture boxes \$85 million.

Mr. Elliot: A follow up question. Could the Minister tell us how many pontoons will be constructed and how many will be rehabilitated and at what costs?

4.39 p.m.

Mr. Benn: It is \$170 million we are expending in terms of the construction and rehabilitation. Twenty-nine pontoons will be rehabilitated.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, line item 1201800 Government Buildings, we note in the project profile “Completion of Multipurpose Centre at Unity and Government Quarters at Kingston”. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what the Multipurpose Hall entails and secondly the cost and also the cost of the Sea Defence Building at Leguan.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, the Multipurpose Centre is for Unity. We had budgeted \$47 million last year. There is a balance to be paid for \$7.5 million to complete the building. It is a normal multipurpose centre for the community. In terms of the rehabilitation of the Sea Defence building at Leguan, mainly related a replacement of the boarding and so on, the wood in the building, is \$5 million.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member has not given me the cost for Kingston and the actual cost of the Sea Defence which I have asked for.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we have to check this matter in the Estimates, and we will give an answer later.

Mrs. Holder: Would the Hon. Member direct his attention to “Public Works” line item 1201900 Infrastructural Development – Provision of Street Lighting, more exactly...

Mr. Benn: “Lighting”, not “lightning”. I heard you say “lightning”, and I want to be very careful about it.

Mrs. Holder: Where exactly will these *system* lights be given, which areas?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, lighting to a tune of \$50 million will be provided on the Essequibo Coast at Suddie and at Charity. I might add that we have completed New Amsterdam to Palmira, Fyrish to Tain, the Corriverton area is fifty percent completed. I thought I was being helpful to the Hon. Member.

Mr. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman may I turn to page 416

Mr. Speaker: We are at page 415 Hon. Member.

Mr. Fernandes: I would like to....416

Mr. Speaker: This item does not appear at page 416.

Mrs. Backer: Are we doing page 415 separate from page 416.

Mr. Speaker: No, we are doing the whole item. If it continues on page 416 then it includes page 415 and page 416.

Mr. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, I then wish to ask the Hon. Minister of line item 1600400 Stelling: the Kumaka stelling is overboard, but there is another Government stelling there called the KMC (Kumaka Marketing Complex). I would like to ask the Minister whether the TLAG stelling will be repaired or whether the KMC stelling.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we intend to do a revetment work along the frontage at the Kumaka wharf area. Some confusion apparently relates to – in fact the newspaper seems to be suggesting that the stelling collapsed and fell into the river, which is totally untrue. The stelling has not been in use for over thirty years. The stelling was abandoned many years ago and the Kumaka Marketing Stelling was the one which was always being used. The stelling which they claimed, in the Keieteur News, have not been used for over thirty years. In fact, it was given under some arrangement to a private person. We told that private person to remove himself from the stelling because the frontage of the area was collapsing into the river, and that we intended to come and do revetment works. For safety we told him to remove himself from the area. The framework that he left there in a slipshod manner is what fell down into the river. What is being pushed here is absolutely not true, and also what have been published in the newspapers. I am saying that we will do revetment work along the front, and the current area where the ferry vessel comes alongside, will have some work done on it.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, line item 1208200, could the Hon. Minister say how much will be allocated to construction of culverts, to rehabilitation of culverts, and also to construction of bridges and how much to the maintenance of roads.

Mr. Benn: Could the Hon. Gentleman repeat the code and question?

Mr. Norton: Line item 1208200 Bridges Rehabilitation, I am asking how much will be allocated to the construction of bridges, how much to the rehabilitation of culverts, and also how much to the rehabilitation of bridges and how much for the maintenance of roads.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman this is an omnibus question. Mr. Chairman, under the transport infrastructural programme from Timehri to Rosignol \$839 million will be spent for rehabilitation and construction. In terms of the reconstruction of roads a specific sum for civil works of \$484 million is budgeted for and \$73 million for supervision.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, you would agree that, that does not answer my question. I asked specifically how much was for the construction and rehabilitation culverts, how much for bridges and how much for the maintenance or roads. If I get that I can add up and see whether we are making sense.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we will provide those details later. It is a long list.

Mr. Fernandes: Mr. Chairman, a follow up of the Kumaka Stelling. I understand what the Minister is saying. I would like to know how much of this \$165 million would be allocated for Kumaka Stelling and when the works will commence.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we have an amount of \$41 million allocated last year, and this year's allocation is \$22 million.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, line item 1400300 Dredging – Equipment, could the Hon. Minister tell us how much will actually be spent on docking and rehabilitation and how much will be spent on the spare parts for the Steve ‘N’.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, in terms of dredging equipment, we will spend \$21 million of national funds on the spares. In terms of docking, as new projects, the docking of the dredge Steve ‘N’ and the docking of the Split Barge, \$70 million in the first instance and \$29 million in the second instance. The spares required for these new projects are \$30 million.

Mr. M Williams: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the rolling stellings, will the Hon. Minister care to tell the National Assembly the total projected cost of the modification of Parika and Supenaam roll-off stellings, the projected date of commencement of works and the estimated time of completion with respect to those two projects?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we have no rolling stellings. It is not in my budget as any line item.

Mr. M Williams: That was a slip Sir. I think the Minister is playing petty. I sought to read from project profile 111 with respect to 1600400 Stellings, specifically item two of the project profile with respect to modification of Parika and Supenaam roll.... Sorry Sir, it is not away, it is “on or off” stellings, my apologies Sir.

Sir could you sensor that utterance that is coming from across there. I think it is an insult. I believe I saw something on the internet about this sitting being carried live, and with that kind of interjection from the gentleman across there I think you would be quite in order to sensor this gentleman with all the utterances.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, with the large number of interjections which are made in the House from both sides, it is totally impossible for me to hear....

Mr. M Williams: Sir, with great respect, I wish to identify to you that he asked me whether I wanted...

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Member, I am not going to acknowledge any utterance that is made while a person is sitting down.

Mr. M Williams: Very well Sir, I will deal with it outside.

Mr. Speaker: If any Member is sitting down and disturbing the House, I will caution that Member. Until such time Members on both sides of the House unfortunately do not limit themselves with the old day to creative interventions.

Mrs. Holder: I wanted to ask....

Mr. M Williams: I beg your pardon Sir. I did not get an answer from the Hon. Minister. I do not know if he is declining to answer or whether he was distracted by the interjections from behind him Sir.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, I think I said we have no rolling stelling. [Interjection] Did he correct himself?

Mr. Speaker: I think the Hon. Member was talking about “roll on – roll off” facilities at Parika and Supenaam.

Mr. Benn: With respect to modifications and additions to the Parika and Supenaam stelling to allow them to have roll on - roll off capacity, \$80 million will be spent at Parika and \$55 million will be spent at Supenaam. Works are already ongoing as we speak with respect to modifications I spoke about in December.

Mr. M Williams: I beg your pardon Sir, there was one other component to the question; the estimated time of completion.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we anticipate that by November/December we will have two new ferry vessels in place and by that time the modifications will be complete.

Mr. M Williams: Sir, a follow up question. The \$55 million allocated to the Supenaam Stelling, would the Hon. Minister tell the National Assembly whether that includes or whether it is for additional works to \$400 plus million that would have been spent on that stelling already.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, obviously the Hon. Member did not hear the answer I gave him just now. I said that these were additional modification. I gave an answer before to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition. He asked a simple question and I provided it to him on paper. As for works, as we speak it is ongoing.

Mr. M Williams: With great respect Sir, will the Hon. Minister then tell the National Assembly what the projected total cost from conception to final completion of the stelling at Supenaam.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman we will provide that answer in due course.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, line item 1401500 Bartica/Issano/Mahdia Road, could the Hon. Minister tell us what material they will use and what is the cost per mile to do that road?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, an allocation has been made for the rehabilitation of critical sections to the Bartica/Issano/Mahdia Road. Maybe the description gives an impression that we can do that whole road for this amount of money. Basically it is to take the work that we have just done to the Bartica Airstrip area.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, unless the question was not clear, I asked; what is the cost per mile to do this road and what material is being used?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, it is basically rehabilitation and maintenance of the road. If my memory serves me right, the distance over which crusher-run and other materials will be placed is about four or five miles.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I still did not get the answer. What is the cost per mile?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, I will provide that information to the Hon. Member in due course.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Member tell us how he knows that this is the cost to do this work, but yet he does not know the cost per mile.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, this is the amount we have allocated and...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member you have to be fair sometimes. All these great details are not always possible for officials to have on their fingertips. You are being unreasonable. It is not possible for two officials to have all this detailed information at their fingertips. It is just not feasible.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, I do believe that in normal countries if you are constructing a road you have an average price per mile. With technical people the information should be at their disposal.

Mr. Chairman: Yes, but there is one technical person here.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we are rehabilitating sections of the road. Various mileages along this road have various amounts which are applied to it. So I will not give the answer at the level of detail he is suggesting that he wants. We will provide it later.

Mrs. Punalall: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister say how miles of road along the Bartica/Issano/Mahdia road has to be rehabilitated.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, I did say that somehow the description here was giving the impression that we were going to rehabilitate the road all the way to Mahdia, which is 114 miles from Bartica, or all the way 72 miles from Issano. This is not the case. Those areas will be dealt with under another item. This is an entirely different matter.

Mrs. Punalall: Mr. Chairman, is the Minister saying that this money allocated to redo the 1-5 mile road is sufficient for the upcoming project?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, this is the optimised intervention that we do at this moment.

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, line item 1500402 "Emergency Works on Sea and River Defence"; Mr. Minister, please name the area in my Region where the works will be done and the amount of money to be spent, in Region 5.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Member advise me which Region she comes from.

Ms. Wade: I said Region 5.

Mr. Benn: Oh, she said Region 5, okay. Mr. Chairman, construction of 550 metres of rip-rap Sea defences at Abary to Profit, West Coast Berbice Region 5. \$268 million, \$99 million budgeted for, and works are ongoing. These are new contracts. Construction of 200 metres riprap from Abary to Profit, Region 5, \$95 million; construction of 500 metres riprap sea

defences at Kingelly of West Coast Berbice, and I think I made reference to this area in the debates, \$65 million; rehabilitation of works to 500 metres riprap defences at Hope West Coast Berbice Region 5, \$20 million, those are the works that are ongoing in that Region. Construction of 60 metres riprap river defence at De Edward Village, \$704 thousand in addition to moneys which were spent, \$28 million last year. Additional work on the construction, rehabilitation at Brand West Coast Berbice, \$14 million in addition to the \$291 million spent on the contract. I refer to the Abary work which is \$99 million for this year.

Ms. Wade: Mr. Chairman, can the Minister give the estimated time of completion at Abary, Profit, Kingelly, Brand, Hope and De Edward.

Mr. Benn: We expect that these works will be completed this year. There is some ongoing issue with the pace of works as a result of field conditions and supply of certain materials. The intention is for these works to be completed this year, as was said. I might remind the Hon. Member that I am still prepared to take her and others on a special tour.

Mr. Norton: We are not interested.

Mr. Benn: I know you would not be interested. I want you to stand up in the House and say that you are not interested. Tell the Nation that you are not interested in sea defences.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, on the very same line item, 1500402 Emergency Works, I note that the profile is not exhaustive. So, I would like to ask the Hon. Minister how much of this amount budgeted will be with respect to river defence at Leguan and how much at Wakenaam. That is my first question.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, I am prepared to give the Hon. Member....

Mr. M Williams: I beg your pardon Sir. I am asking how much money, how many dollars out of this is allocated to Leguan, and how much to Wakenaam. I am not asking for a list of anything.

Mr. Benn: We do not have that readily, but we can give you listings of all. He wants the totals of Leguan and Wakenaam separately now, I do not have that information immediate, we have a total list.

Mr. M Williams: Could I then ask the Hon. Minister, how many miles of river defence currently needs attention at Leguan and how many miles at Wakenaam? Secondly, of the number of miles that require attention on each of these islands, how many miles does the Hon. Minister undertake to pay attention to out of this sum provided in the budget?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we are paying attention to all of our sea and river defences. The details as to the quantification between miles will be provided later. We are right now reformatting the information with respect not only to the sea defences but to roads, into a new GIS format.

Mr. M Williams: My final question on this line item, when does the Hon. Minister propose to commence works with respect to these two islands in particular, and when does he intend to

conclude the works projected and provided for in this budget with respect to these two islands?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, works are ongoing at Leguan by contractors as we speak. At Wakenaam, we are not only having contract works being executed but also the Ministry's equipment is working on the island. I would invite the Hon. Member to go to Maryville Leguan where works are ongoing at the moment. I am inviting the Hon. Member to go to Henrietta and Phoenix Leguan where works are ongoing. At La Bagatelle Leguan works are ongoing.

5.09 p.m.

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Chairman, Line Item 1401800 – Miscellaneous Roads - in the description of projects the completion of roads in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Could the Minister say how much of this money will be paid out for the completion of these roads?

Mr. Benn: How much money will be paid out? All of it.

Mr. Elliot: On the completion of these roads in Regions 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

Mr. Benn: All of \$217,670,000.

Mr. Norton: Mr Chairman, Line Item 1401800, could the Hon. Minister tell us which are the new roads to be built and in which Region?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, I believe I was reading out in my budget speech a long list of roads.

Mr. Chairman: I am not going to accept a long list of roads being read out.

Mr. Norton: Mr. Chairman, I did not ask him for the whole list. I asked him for the new roads. He said rehabilitate and new. I would like to know which the new roads are. It cannot be a long list of new roads.

Mr. Benn: It is a long list.

Mr. Chairman: Whatever it is I am not going to allow a lengthy list of roads or any lengthy list of any item. Questions are to be answered briefly and to the point.

Mr. Benn: I am prepared to call out all the roads; over 400 of them.

Mr. Norton: Three hundred new roads?

Ms. Hastings: Mr. Chairman, Line Item 1600200 – Hinterland Coastland Airstrip. Could the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly how much money is exactly budgeted for the Kamarang Airstrip, and how soon it is expected to be completed?

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we are expending \$54 million in building the airstrip at Kamarang.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members we need to conclude these items so I urge you to limit yourselves.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, just a quick question on the same line item. Since the Government spoke about consultation, the people of Leguan prefer to have the sea and river defence addressed ahead of any airstrip. Is the Government prepared to take the \$34 million allocated for the Leguan Airstrip and apply it to river defence?

Mr. Chairman: I am not aware of that premise, Hon. Member.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Chairman, we have allocated \$83 million to do the construction of an airstrip at Leguan. I spoke on this matter in my budget presentation. I neglected to say that the People's National Congress' plan with respect to Leguan was to abandon the Island. We will not only do the roads but will also do an airstrip at Leguan.

Mrs. Backer: Mr. Chairman, on the same Line Item (**Interruption**) Yes, but because of the speeches of the Minister... You heard me dealing with policy?

Mr. Chairman: Ask your question Hon. Member.

Mrs. Backer: Thank you, Sir, for your protection. Sir, the same Line Item which is the Hinterland/ Coastal Airstrip, when we look at project page 117 we see construction of the Leguan airstrip, but the project is scheduled to end this year. Could the Hon Minister indicate to us whether he anticipates that the Leguan airstrip will be completed in this year?

Mr. Benn: That is my anticipation.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, the last question.

Mrs. Backer: Thank you. I wanted to make a suggestion but I will hold it until we come back. So you are saying it will be finished this year.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much we will pass on from this item.

Programme 312 - Public Works - \$11,770,454 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 313 – Communication and Transport - \$305,000,000

Page 417.

I will allow a limited number of questions. We are running out of time. I am allowing a limited number of questions to close off this Ministry then we will have the break.

Mrs. Holder: Mr. Chairman, I would like to direct the Minister's attention to Line Item 1600800 – Ogle Aerodrome, Completion of Airstrip, EU funding. I see evidence of construction going up in the path of this airstrip. Are you aware of it, and is this likely to impact adversely on the project?

Mr. Benn: I am not sure what construction the Hon. Member is referring to. I landed at the airstrip on Sunday and did not see any obstruction in the flight pad of the aircraft I was in. But if there is something you want to specifically advise us of we will look at it.

Programme 313 – Communication and Transport - \$305,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you Hon. Members. We can take the suspension now and we will resume shortly.

Sitting suspended at 5:14 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 6:04 p.m.

Assembly in Committee

Agency 21 – Ministry of Agriculture

Current Expenditure

Programme 211 – Ministry Administration - \$2,287,230

Pages 100 to 101.

Mr. Williams: Would the Hon. Minister tell this National Assembly, with respect to Line Item 6116, if the 54 contract workers increased from 36 has anything to do with transfer of staff into the Guyana Livestock Development Authority and the new NAREI, and if so in what capacity?

Mr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, the increase in the contracted employees is as a result of the abolition or closure of the Livestock and Crops Department. These employees were then moved to this programme which is Programme 211.

Mr. Williams: And will the Hon. Minister say in addition to those transferred whether there were any newly retained contract workers outside of the old Crops and Livestock Department and, again if he could complete the response with respect to what capacity these persons were taken.

Mr. Persaud: No. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Williams: The second part please, Hon. Minister; the areas.

Mr. Persaud: These were particularly clerical and office support staff, and crop reporters. For instance, the Clerk-in-Charge; they are mainly staff for the office that were employed on contract. This is what we used to call Programme II, Crops and Livestock Department. These were brought into Programme I which is Ministry Administration.

Mr. Williams: A final question on this Line, please, Sir. Would the Hon. Minister say if in this \$98.3 million provision there is a provision for the person who served as Chief, Crops and Livestock Officer, and if so in what capacity?

Mr. Persaud: The answer to that is no.

Mr. Williams: Thank you Sir.

Line Item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants. Would the Hon. Minister be kind to tell this National Assembly why the significant increase?

Mr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, it's primarily due to the fact that we have increased the vehicles we have as a result of the services we have to provide, as well as we found that many of our vehicles have passed the age of 10 years. And there is additional cost in maintenance and operation which is something the administration will have to look at in terms of having aged vehicles around.

Mr. Williams: That fits into the next question, Sir. Line Item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure. Is there a significant increase in the infrastructure that requires maintenance or is it a case where the existing infrastructure has deteriorated to the extent that you have to double the provision in 2011?

Mr. Persaud: From time to time we would have to undertake repairs and rehabilitation to our facilities. And for some of those that were identified, particularly at the head office, and some other locations, because of what is happening with the weather, we have had to lift the compound, sometimes lift the floor, to protect our equipment and information. So it is also making some adjustments in terms of dealing with the changing weather patterns as well as improving facilities for staff.

Mr. Williams: I will be grateful Mr. Chairman if the Hon. Minister could make available at some point a schedule of the infrastructure that would make up this list.

As I move on to Line Item 6281 – Security Services - is there a change in service provider at a different rate, Hon. Minister, which is responsible for this?

Mr. Persaud: Well, the increase has been nominal, and I would say I wish there was a change.

Mr. Williams: With respect to Line Item 6294 – Other – could I also ask that at some point the Hon. Minister provides the National Assembly with a schedule of the line items that would make up this \$6 million?

Mr. Persaud: Most of this is going towards the operations of the Rice Assessment Committee. And these committees are in several regions. Under this Line Item 6294 is where we finance the operations primarily of the Rice Assessment Committee. Then there is a small allocation which we would utilise for emergencies when farmers face hardship particularly during the extreme weather patterns.

Mrs. Holder: Mr. Chairman, if I may, Line Item 6320 – Training (including Scholarships) – I would just like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the scholarship programme is geared towards meeting the deficiencies in the Ministry and what they are; I mean technical provisions mainly.

Mr. Persaud: This particular heading is for internal training, staff development, not necessarily for scholarship as I think the Hon, Member is inquiring. That is managed primarily through the programmes that are available through the Ministry of Public Service in this regard. This is more for staff development at junior levels.

Programme 211 – Ministry Administration - \$2,287,230 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme 213 – Fisheries - \$100,346,000

Pages 104 to 105

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, with respect to Line Item 6112 – Senior Technical – I would like to ask the Hon. Minister to provide us with the capacity within which these persons which number three at Senior Technical are employed. I note the average is about \$1.8 million per annum.

Mr. Persaud: The senior technical staffs are skilled personnel which we require within the fisheries department in terms of animal biology and of carrying out data management and so forth. Those are the types of skill sets we look at in the senior technical area.

Mr. Williams: Would that Mr. Chairman, include provision for a specialist marine biologist?

Mr. Persaud: We are looking for a specialist marine biologist. We do not have one at this point in time. It is a skill that is unfortunately not widely available, and in Guyana I cannot point to one marine biologist that is available. In fact we have even sought the help of the FAO in terms of recruiting and they too have found that the available pool of marine biologists is very limited.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, with respect to Line Item 6116, would the Hon. Minister advise the National Assembly with respect to the six persons drafted in as Contracted Employees, in what capacity have they been brought in and how is their addition to the staff of contracted employees benefiting the fisheries area?

Mr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, these are primarily TED (Turtle Exclusion Device) Inspectors because we have to comply with the requirements to enter into the US markets; also personnel for data management. We are currently carrying out stock assessment, working with the Japanese and other players in this regard. These are skills to augment our capacity in stock assessment, and also in ensuring we remain compliant in having the compliment of Turtle Exclusion Device Inspectors that are so required.

Mr. Williams: Minister, could they not have been included somewhere in Senior Technical or Other Technical and Craft Skills as opposed to Contracted Employees?

Mr. Persaud: Again, it goes back to giving the employees the option of falling within the pensionable establishment or opting for contract. We like to go with the wishes of our employees.

Mr. Williams: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, I move quickly to Line Item 6281 – Security Services - and propose a question to the Hon. Minister as to whether there has been a significant increase of the number of locations to be covered, and whether there is a change of service provider, and who that service provider might be, and whether there is an increase in rate of coverage.

Mr. Persaud: The intention is for us to go and seek a wider cross section of security providers. We are not sure who that person will be and as such we needed to cater using the rate we paid last year. Certainly we know those rates have gone up, and we would want to have adequate provision should we be able to attract a competent and capable security service provider.

Mr. Williams: Is the Minister suggesting, Mr. Chairman, that the disparity in the actual 2010 expenditure and the projected 2011 expenditure is based solely on the expectation of an increase in the rate of coverage as opposed to number of facilities to be provided security services?

Mr. Persaud: It is also aimed at enhancing the security at our stations. Take for instance the Sash Saw aquaculture station at Mon Repos, from time to time we found instances of larceny and that is sometimes due to under-coverage in terms of security personnel. We hope to correct that because we are expanding the fingerling operations there. We have just built a new cluster office at that location and have much more equipment there; and because of our trust in terms of agriculture. Those who know the geography know the area is remote, a good distance down and not very populated; so that is an example. We also have the facility on the Essequibo Coast, the facility at the wharf here in Georgetown, the Georgetown Fishing Co-op Society. So it is about beefing up and enhancing security at these locations.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, I move on to Line Item 6302 – Training (Including Scholarships). Could the Hon. Minister tell us how many persons benefitted from scholarships last year and in what field of study? And, again, in what field of endeavour does the Hon. Minister propose to make this scholarship programme available.

Mr. Persaud: In terms of training again this is not for the purpose of scholarship but more so in terms of enhancing persons skills in the areas of aqua-culture, farm preparation, data collection and specie identification. And it is a combination of training staff as well as farmers, and other stakeholders. What we have sought to do is not only build capacity within the department but we are also looking to widen that knowledge and that skill to the wider stakeholdership, including and especially our farmers and those who are getting involved; also our fisher folks too.

Mr. Williams: Final question for me please, Sir. Is the Hon. Minister suggesting by his answer that Line Item 6302 provides for financial support for the farmers field school?

Mr. Persaud: It will not be inaccurate to say we have a semblance of a farmer's field school because our facility at Mon Repos is in fact intended to be for training but this is not only for aquaculture but for also marine fishery. So we also do training in terms of going to the wharfs

especially for new staff coming in - going out in the boats and letting people understand, , how to go about identifying species, how to go about collecting data and so forth. So it is a combination of training activities.

Programme 213 - Programme 213 – Fisheries - \$100,346,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme 214 – Hydro-meteorological Services - \$323,886,000

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister at Line Item 6222 tell the National Assembly what is the single largest proposed purchase of field materials and supplies, and what is the cost associated with that single largest proposed purchase?

Mr. Persaud: We have a number of automatic rain gauges and we are also installing a number of automatic weather stations. We have identified these to be done within the context of the low carbon development strategy because we need to capture real-time data. Sometimes we have difficulty in communicating with the person who is reading our equipment, so we prefer to have the automatic system which comes in real-time and we are able to process those. The cost of an automatic weather station coming out of the UK is within the vicinity of \$G2 million and that is at the low side, because it is a very expensive device. We are also working with 5C's in this regard because they are assisting us in expanding that range, particularly too within our hydropower basin. This is linked to supporting what is taking place in terms of rainfall data because we also need to plan and be aware of what is taking place hydrologically as we move and embark on hydro project development. This is an important role that the HydroMet Services too will have to undertake.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister then say how many units of automatic weather stations he intends to procure and where does he propose to have them installed?

Mr. Persaud: We are currently in discussions with 5C's. In fact over the Christmas holidays there was a team here headed by Drs. Leslie and Dr. Trotts who is a Guyanese. They conducted an assessment and based on their feedback and on how much contribution we will be getting from them that will inform how many we will be purchasing. As I said the area targeted will be what we consider the hydrological basin in the context of hydro power; that is the first area. But we are also looking at remote areas, hinterland communities in particular, where we have seen some very erratic weather patterns. What is also required? Take for instance our efforts to develop the intermediate savannah, the Rupununi Savannah, the investors want rain data too because crops and other development require a certain amount of rainfall. So it also depends on how much help we would get and based on our allocations that will inform how many units we will purchase.

Mr. Williams: At the time, Hon. Minister, of putting the estimates together how many units did you project?

Mr. Persaud: In fact what I can tell you is how many we need. Right now we need close to thirty. The allocation we have there would allow us a limited number, but as I said that will be based on our discussion with 5C's

Mr. Williams: Thank you Hon. Minister, I recognise the absence of some kind of planning.

With respect to Line Item 6243, I hate to appear to be a bit petty Hon. Minister but, though the number is small it is a significant increase over what it was last year. Would you care to offer an explanation, please?

Mr. Persaud: This is because we have extended our presence within the Timehri area. As you know we have the radar facility there. We have moved the staff out of the Cheddi Jagan International Airport facility, and they are now being housed there. There is more staff and more activities. We are extending the area because it is an area we are required to take care of along with our staff and ensure the facility is kept clean. It is taking care of that expanded presence at the radar site.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, Line Item 6281 – Security Services. Hon. Minister would you care to advise the National Assembly how many new locations have to be covered by the provisions of this Line Item?

Mr. Persaud: It is primarily to extend and enhance security presence at the National Weather Watch Centre where the radar is located. It is not only to protect the equipment - because we have some very expensive equipment - but also to protect our staff. We have staff who work there around the clock, especially young women, and we want to ensure that they are adequately protected – equipment and people.

Mr. Williams: I respect the need for security for both equipment and people. Could the Hon. Minister confirm then by way of answer that he is telling the National Assembly that the more than double proposed expenditure with respect to security services has to do with one location?

Mr. Persaud: That is the area where most of the new resources would be spent, but we also have other locations, for instance, the office at Lot 18 Brickdam where we have staff working. But the bulk would be going to the National Weather Watch Centre.

Mr. Williams: Thank you. That is it for me, Sir.

Programme 214 – Hydro-meteorological Services - \$323,886,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme 211 – Ministry Administration - \$3,689,000

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the project profile 66, I observe there is a continuation of the practice of not providing, first of all, complete profiles because this one includes, so that means there could be some other thing someplace else. As a first could the Hon. Minister say what other projects in addition to the items numbered one to six in the profile should have been there in the first place.

Mr. Persaud: Mr. Chairman, there are seventy-six other activities. Should I go on and list the activities?

Mr. Williams: Sir, the Hon. Minister could provide a printed copy in the future. And could he advise when he would be able to do so.

6.28 p.m.

Agency: 21 Ministry of Agriculture

Current Expenditure

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services – \$323,886,000

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services – \$323,886,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 211 – Ministry Administration – \$3,689,000

Mr. Mervyn Williams: With respect to the project profile description, page 66, National Drainage and Irrigation Authority, I observe that there is a continuation of the practice of not providing, first of all, complete profiles because this one indicates the word includes, so that means that there can be some other things some where else. As a first, could the Hon. Minister say what other projects, in addition to the items numbered one to six in the profile, should have been there in the first place?

Minister of Agriculture [Mr. Robert Persaud]: There is seventy-six other activities, should I go on and list those seventy-six activities?

Mr. M. Williams: Sir, the Hon. Minister could do well to provide a printed copy sometime in the future, if that would be okay, and he could advise when he will be able to do so.

Mr. R. Persaud: This information will be on the Ministry of Agriculture's website by Friday.

Mr. M. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister tell the Committee of Supply, Sir, what percentage of the sum provided here will be expended on rehabilitation and what percentage will be spent on actual construction?

Mr. R. Persaud: The projects which are listed entail, yes, rehabilitation, supervision and also, in terms of construction of new structures, excavation of canals. There are different activities. But if rehabilitation versus new construction is going to be looked at, new construction would be in the vicinity of about thirty per cent; rehabilitation tends to take up a greater chunk. I would say approximately half of the budget, and the others will go to some of the activities that I listed.

Mr. M. Williams: On the same project 1301600, Sir, would the Hon. Minister tell us, at profile description, page 66, item six, how many excavators are projected for, here, and which of the ten Regions are going to benefit from them being permanently placed in the Regions?

Mr. R. Persaud: We are looking at procuring one new excavator and there is a pool, currently, of about thirty-eight excavators and those are deployed across the country and, depending on the exigencies of the situation, additional sets of excavators will be mobilised and deployed, but at any one time the Ministry seeks to have at least one excavator in a particular Region depending on the situation and then increase that based on the needs of the farmers and other communities.

Mr. M. Williams: I move to project 1301700 – Drainage and Irrigation. Hon. Minister, would you tell the Committee of Supply how much money has so far been spent on the construction of an alternative outlet at Hope? What is the projected total cost associated with that particular project? Could you also tell the Committee of Supply by what date that project described project profile item one will be completed?

Mr. R. Persaud: The amount expended so far last year was about \$614 million and the estimate for the cost for the canal and the accompanying structures is \$3 billion. If we look at the allocation, this year we are looking at an allocation of \$1.2 billion in terms of the expenditure programme for 2011. The duration of this project was intended to be close to eighteen months, so we are seeing this project also rolling over into 2012.

Mr. M. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister tell us whether a study has been done to weigh the cost effectiveness of this undertaking against the possible completion of the final phase of

the Mahaica-Mahaicony- Abary - Agricultural Development Authority (MMA-ADA) project and if so, could we have a copy of that study, please?

Mr. R. Persaud: Those are two different activities for two separate set of objectives.

Mr. M. Williams: They are the same thing.

Mr. R. Persaud: They are not the same and I will tell you why. The Hope Canal is intended to relieve the pressure which, during the heavy rainy season, is put on the East Demerara Water Conservancy Dam, threatening farming and residential community on the East Coast and as far as Georgetown, and also may be forcing...Also there is the MMA-ADA II project which is, in fact, intended to enhance drainage and also irrigation and open new farmlands within the Mahaica and Mahaicony areas. There are two separate projects. It is not that one can be done in the place of the other.

Mr. M. Williams: Then, could the Hon. Minister tell the Committee of Supply where provisions, with respect to the new projects he just alluded to, can be found?

Mr. R. Persaud: The Government, over the last several years, has made a number of approaches to the Japanese as well as to the other donor partners in terms of submitting this project which estimated cost is close to US\$50 million. We are hoping under the Japanese Cool Earth Project that we would have seen some movements in this regard. This project continues to be one that the Government will aggressively pursue in terms of attracting resources, but given the enormous cost of this project, in fact, every year it spends about \$5 million totally on drainage and irrigation, its ability to finance a US\$50 million will put tremendous pressure on its resources, hence the need to engage our partners, and also within the context of climate change adaptation, to have this project as one that we will put on the front burner should those resources and facilities be available, both at the multilateral and at the bilateral levels.

Mr. M. Williams: Project 1301800 – Drainage and Irrigation Support Project: I wish to direct the Hon. Minister's attention to profile page 68, and to ask whether the Minister does not believe that such a provision would have been better placed within the regional budgets where they could be managed at the level of the Local Government organs which, in my estimation, might be a better place for them to be placed.

Mr. R. Persaud: Following the 2005 floods, it was found that the Local Government systems needed further support, and having the communities involved, in terms of the maintenance of the system, has proven to be effective and has been seen, and the results subsequently. It is a way of engaging communities in the management of the operations of the internal drains. I think this complements what it is that the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (NDCs) as well as the Regions are doing. I think the more involvement there is, by the citizenry in the management of our drainage system, will help the Regions and the NDCs in this regards and this is what the Ministry seeks to do.

Mrs. Holder: I would like to direct the Minister's attention to project 2604800 – Bio-Energy Opportunities. I see the project profile description indicates it is for: "Institutional strengthening of the agro-energy sector; provision for pre-investment studies; provision for capacity building and technology transfer." I would like the Minister to indicate to the Committee of Supply what is the end product, the core objective? Is it e-tender policy, or what?

Mr. R. Persaud: The general objective of this project which support was given from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) through a Japanese grant is for us to develop the institutional capacity and some framework through which there can be a bio-energy sector should investors, or others, are willing. The primary deliverables of this project are one, a demonstration plant which is currently being engaged, a bio out of Brazil, in having. Also the pre-investment study and work have started in this regard. It is looking at what it is we can do in, terms of technology transfer. This project is collaborating very closely with the Port Mourant Training Institute in Berbice because the synergy with sugar is very important, in terms of building some of that capacity, and those who come through or come out of that training institution could also have some skills and awareness within an eventual bio-energy sector that we hope that we can have in Guyana. It is preparing the groundwork for a new sector.

Mrs. Holder: [*inaudible*] if I may ask a supplementary. Minister, you still have not mentioned to me, what is the core objective? What are you preparing for? The preparatory work must be for some purpose.

Mr. R. Persaud: It is for us to have the capacity to access projects; for us to have some sort of skill base, and for us to have some familiarity with the technologies which exist within the

realm of any advance bio-energy sector in the country. As I said, it is laying the foundation ahead of this sector coming on stream.

Ms. Wade: Project 1301600 – National Drainage and Irrigation Authority, Civil Works, MMA-ADA: I have noticed the Abary Conservancy Dam is listed for works, Mr. Minister. Can you say to us the amount to be spent there and the estimated time of completion of work?

Mr. R. Persaud: It is primarily the maintenance of the conservancy dam in this regard. There is about thirty-five miles of dam there which has to be constantly maintained. The amount which has been allocated in this regard, for that particular activity, is about \$18 million.

Mr. M. Williams: With respect to project 2100400 - Conservancy Adaptation Project: Would the Hon. Minister say, from a policy perspective, what are the indicators of a successfully managed institution in the context of how it is placed here? This is very vague. What are his expectations and how soon does he anticipate that the question of efficient management will be obtained out this kind of spending?

Mr. R. Persaud: I should say what this project entails and that would give the Hon. Member an idea as to where the Ministry is going with this project and what it seeks to do in the wider context. One, there is a pre-investment study in terms of doing the engineering designed works - in terms of system mapping, assessment of the East Demerara Water Conservancy (EDWC) system integrity, flow modelling of the EDWC.

Then there is also institutional strengthening in project management which is looking how it is the National Drainage and Irrigation Authority (NDIA) can be enhanced in the long run, or the East Demerara Water Conservancy Board, the Commissioners, in terms of managing it.

There is also a set of designed works, for the engineering work, doing, in terms of the assessment of the integrity, topographic mapping and then the other component is the procurement of equipment, in terms of undertaking some of those works.

Very soon we will be... In fact, we have just concluded the negotiations and have sent the document to the World Bank for no objection which will see us doing light detection and ranging, which is considered as radar in terms of capturing of the low lands, and a number of flow models and other technical work. It is for us understanding this organism that we know is called the EDWC and there are some critical data that we require in moving forward. That is what this project seeks to do, which at the same time is reinforcing certain sections and

allowing us to undertake some civil works. The Lamaha sluice has already been able to be rehabilitated on the conservancy dam itself as a result of this particular project.

Mr. M. Williams: Will the Hon. Minister therefore tell the Committee of Supply where the Secretariat of this project is located? What is the staff strength and how many specialist consultants are on board?

Mr. R. Persaud: This particular activity is managed jointly by the Agriculture Sector Development Unit (ASDU) whose senior engineer is Mr. Frederick Flatts as well as the National Drainage Authority. Also there is an external consulting arrangement coming out of the United Kingdom that is also working with the project. There is also some World Bank consultants too who are engaged. So there are both external and local consultants and staff who are working in terms of managing this. But the day to day management of this particular activity falls within the ASDU.

Mr. M. Williams: Sir, I move on to project 2501300 - Project Evaluation and Equipment.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, do you intend to spend all of your time on this one item? We have four items under Capital Expenditure. You can choose to do so if you wish, but I am just alerting you.

Mr. M. Williams: Well, I honestly thought that we are here to question the Estimates, Sir, with the greatest of respect. Sir, I will skip that one and move on to project 2604800 - Bio-Energy Opportunities - and ask the Hon. Minister to tell us what area of focus is the priority of the Government with respect to the agro-energy sector? Is it from the sugar cane industry? Is it from the *physic nut* proposed project? Or is it from the oil palm? Which one of those, or which other, is the Government's priority in this respect?

Mr. R. Persaud: The ranking in terms of priority is ethanol using sugar cane as the biomass, and also biodiesel using palm oil. At this point in time the Government has ruled out using *physic nut* because it is an invasive species and enough work has not been done in Guyana to know what will be its effects on other crops under our condition. So we are focusing primarily at ethanol sugar cane and also biodiesel from palm oil.

Mr. M. Williams: Could I then ask the Minister...? Because I am aware, and I am sure that Hon. Minister is aware, that study was done with respect to the *physic nut* project and it was determined that there should be a plantation. Studies would have indicated, Hon. Minister,

may wish to guide on this one, that some geographic area in Region 10 was identified as having the best soil type. Could the Hon. Minister say whether it is on account of the geographic location as identified as best suited that the Government abandoned this *physic nut* plantation project?

Mr. R. Persaud: I consider that question a bit to be out of place, but I want to reiterate that this study, and the invasive nature of this particular plant species, is not been concluded by us, it was concluded by an international organisation within the United Nations and it has advised a number of countries to proceed very cautiously in terms of the development of biofuel utilising the *physic nut*. It is not where it is located. In fact the trial plots which were done were done on the East Coast, and once that additional scientific information was got hold of we have to step back very quickly. It is not that the Government will be engaging in these investments; it is private investors who will seek into developing the agro-energy sector, and it is our responsibility too, as a Government, also to heed the advice of our scientists, locally and internationally, and if they said to tread cautiously, I think the responsible thing to do is to tread cautiously until we have information to the contrary.

Mr. M. Williams: Could the Hon. Minister say, on the same project, whether this provision includes financing for a specialist laboratory? Could the Hon. Minister also say how soon in the estimation of the Government is Guyana likely to benefit in a material way from the agro-energy sector?

Mr. R. Persaud: The laboratory at the Institute of Applied Science and Technology (IAST) has already being improved as well as the soils and the plants laboratory, the new laboratory which is under construction at the National Agriculture Research Institute (NARI) location. Also the Ministry is working very closely, this project, with Guyana Sugar Corporation (GuySuCo) utilising its laboratory facilities, so it is using different points in terms of strengthening. Rather than creating another laboratory it is looking at how the existing laboratories can be enhanced and consolidated so that it can solve this and other purposes.

Mr. M. Williams: Sir, project 1209700 – Agriculture Export Diversification Project, profile page 72: Would the Hon. Minister agree with me, Sir, that provision, as the one included at description of profile, item two, “Strengthening of National Agricultural Research and Extension Institute and Guyana Livestock Development Authority” would not be best provided for directly to NARI since, as a statutory body, the Act that governs NARI provides for revenue inflows into that organisation?

Mr. R. Persaud: This particular activity funded under Agricultural Diversification Project (ADP). In fact, one of its key activities is to strengthen those two new institutions, both NARI and the Guyana Livestock Development Authority (GLDA) and work has advanced – I referred to the new laboratories which have been constructed, personnel that was brought in, additional training in this regard - to bring them up, as it were, to the modern age, as to what is required for the new sector that we are building and seeking to transform.

Mr. M. Williams: Sir, with respect to promotion of three-cluster groups, the Minister is aware, I am sure, Sir, that it has been, to date, a seven-year year programme. Could the Hon. Minister say whether he is satisfied with the result of this programme and whether this promotion is likely to conclude sometime soon? If not, how soon into the future does he see it going?

Mr. R. Persaud: I cannot comprehend how this can be a seven-year project already when, in fact, this project started last year. The promotion of cluster groups accelerated towards the latter half of last year. In fact, the Minister only recently was able to appoint all three cluster managers: Mr. Nigel Cumberbatch, Mr. Tajnarine Geer and also it was able to secure the services of the fruits and vegetables cluster manager. So this is going just less than a year. I cannot comprehend how it is in existence of seven years when in fact the project only came into existence at the start of 2010.

Mr. M. Williams: I just want to confirm, Sir, that the Hon. Minister is saying that nothing has been happening for the last seven years with respect to the three-cluster project.

Mr. R. Persaud: We were speaking in relation to this particular heading of this particular project, and what I am saying is that the clusters within this... because under the ADP there are three activities which have been identified for support - apiculture, livestock, primarily beef, and also fruits and vegetables - and based on the technical works done and looking models in Chile, also in Brazil, it is found that the cluster approach is the preferred and workable approach and, hence, when the project started these clusters were put together, staff were identified and the farmers, who formed part of these clusters, are now getting into their strides, as it were, in starting to benefit from this project.

Mr. M. Williams: Sir, with respect to project 1301200 – Agriculture Support Services Project, profile page 74: I referred specifically to the third item, “Provision for completion of rice seed facility.” Is the Hon. Minister aware that there was such a facility across the rice

producing belt in Guyana? Would he tell the Committee of Supply whether he is satisfied that the neglect of those facilities, and now starting over from fresh, is of significant benefit to the rice sector as oppose to continue the maintenance of those facilities?

Mr. R. Persaud: First of all, the facilities were given away before this Government came into being. They were handed to private sector. So if they were neglected, it started before then or by who those inherited those facilities. The other facility which remains within the State, which is at the MMA-ADA at Onverwagt, continues to service farmers and it continues to invest. What the Ministry is proposing to construct here, both at Burma, at the research facility for rice, as well as Number 56 Village is to extend that range so that as to ensure our farmers have quality seed, and also using new technologies and augmenting what is there. So if there was neglect, it was neglect as a result of poor privatisation policy and the investors totally disregarding those assets.

Mr. M. Williams: Very interesting that the Minister would suggest that an alleged neglect by one administration is good enough reason to continue neglect by the succeeding one. Project 1301900 - Mangrove Management: Would the Hon. Minister agree that with this project, while it is a necessary one, perhaps, what is happening here is not sufficient in this regard? If he agrees then, could the Hon. Minister say what other contingency measures are in place to support the mangrove replanting programme?

Mr. R. Persaud: I am a bit disheartened by that observation because it does an injustice to the hard work of people like Ms. Annette Arjoon and even Dr. Simpson DaSilva, a former Minister in the PNC Government, who heads that project and they have worked over time in rolling out this project. In fact, the European Union (EU) indicators have put them far ahead of what they were supposed to be fulfilling, in terms of the replanting. We hope that this year this will continue in terms of having the seedlings nursery, having close to two hundred and ninety thousand mangroves seedlings produced and close to one hundred thousand of those planted across several Regions in our country. There is also public awareness. There is a list of activities. Importantly, this year too the project will be looking, based upon the resource that it will be able to attract, to construct groynes. As you know, many of our groynes were neglected, if you are to talk about “neglect”. Areas where there are high siltation, take for instance at Hope, under this project we are looking at the rehabilitation and also the restoration of those groynes within the context of mangrove. Minister Benn will tell you that the mangrove option is, in fact, the least cost option in terms of protecting our coast and

managing the effects of rising sea levels. So this is the priority and I am quite sure that the activities listed here for this year, certainly, will add to that effort.

Mr. M. Williams: Sir, I am not sure that the Hon. Minister heard what I said. He seems to suggest that I am saying that it is not a worthwhile project. I am saying it is a necessary but there is not sufficient intervention, and I was asking what else does the Government have in mind to support this project? That was the question, Hon. Minister.

Mr. R. Persaud: This project here, in terms of protection of our coast line, also has to be seen in relation to what Minister Benn's Ministry is doing, in terms of our sea defence rehabilitation and maintenance, which we went through in details. So it is part of the larger sea defence management plan or the sea defence strategy. There are coastal and river defence strategies that the Ministry has. This is an important part, but it also allows us to manage effects of climate change.

Mr. M. Williams: Sir, it is known that within Guyana's coastal ocean areas there is an ocean degradation which is a known fact and we know it is cyclic operation. It happens over a period of time repeatedly. Have there been any studies done, Hon. Minister, to determine the specific areas which are most vulnerable to those kinds of breaches in the future? If so, does the Hon. Minister have here, or some place else, a list of the most vulnerable areas and a programme as to how the Government proposes to approach the planting of mangroves and the doing of other stuff that Minister Benn will undertake?

Mr. R. Persaud: In fact, the excellent assessment works done by the Sea Defence Unit in the Ministry of Public Works and Communications would have generated that data, and the areas which were identified were based on that factor as well as where it is we can develop and restore the mangrove forest. For instance, there are Hope, Mon Repos, Victoria, Ruimzigt, Windsor Forest, Buxton, also on the Corentyne, La Belle Alliance. We are looking on the Essequibo Coast, and so forth. So those are some of the areas which were identified to be vulnerable, but it also complements the works and the effort being made by the Sea Defence Unit and the assessment it would have carried out, a conditioned survey, of our sea defence and says which areas are the most vulnerable, where do we point and where should we invest in terms of concrete structures, riprap designs or also looking at mangroves.

Mr. M. Williams: My final question, Sir. Could the Hon. Minister say by what point in time in the future he anticipates that our coastline area is likely to enjoy some kind of substantive

benefit from the programme, given the fact that the mangrove trees take an average of seven to ten years to mature, and so on, and to regenerate?

6.58 p.m.

Mr. R. Persaud: I think with all the projections by the climatologist, in terms of what is happening with our sea levels rising, will cause us to make this a priority in terms of protecting our shoreline. We are below sea level, let us never forget that, and will always remain vulnerable, hence, the need for us to have constant vigilance and for us to have a coastline and a river defence system that can protect our farmlands as well as our population. It is ongoing work, continued work. I think it will be ill-advised of me to even say by the year 20 so much, or 21 so much, we would have accomplished full proof defence from our seas, our river structures. It is work, and it is a priority as would be seen from the allocations in the Ministry of Public Works and Communications, as well as what the Ministry of Agriculture is seeking to do here through some innovative means.

Programme: 211-Ministry Administration – \$3,689,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 212- Crops and Livestock Support Services - \$2,671,900,000

Programme: 212 – Crops and Livestock Support Services - \$2,671,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 213 – Fisheries - \$12,000,000

Programme: 213 – Fisheries - \$12,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 214 – Hydrometeorological Services - \$24,000,000

Programme: 214- Hydrometeorological Services - \$24,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency 44: Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

Current Expenditure

Programme: 441 – Ministry Administration - \$155,797,000

Ms. Selman: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Minister say what is the new position and the emolument for the same?

Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports [Dr. Anthony]: The Ministry has two new positions, or two new contracted employees. One of the persons is a vehicle Driver and the other is a Typist Clerk.

Ms. Selman: The emolument for the same, please.

Dr. Anthony: The salary for the Driver is \$47,762 and for the Typist Clerk, it is \$45,663.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister say what is responsible for the decrease from \$10,951,000 to \$8,440,000?

Dr. Anthony: The decrease is that because there was a change in security services. The Ministry went out to tender and the other set of persons who are now providing services to the Ministry have given it at a different rate.

Programme: 441 – Ministry Administration - \$155,797,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 442 – Culture - \$445,302,000

Ms. Kisson: Line item 6242 - Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say whether the Lichas Hall, in Region 10, would be part of this?

Dr. Anthony: The answer is no. The work that will be done, under this category, is really work to be done at the Burrowes School of Art, the National Dance School, the National Cultural Centre and some other places.

Mrs. Backer: I would like some clarifications through you, Sir, to the Minister. Line item - 6242, which has a figure of \$11.3 million: Are you saying, Hon. Minister, that the National Cultural Centre will be benefiting from some of this money? Could you be a bit more particular, because I see it coming up? Could you share with us what benefit is accruing to the National Cultural Centre?

Dr. Anthony: Maintenance work will be done on the plumbing and electrical systems, servicing of the theatre's chairs, repairs to the small theatre's curtain and some servicing of the glass panels.

Mrs. Backer: Could I then ask, just for completeness, how much money will be spent on the National Cultural Centre of the \$11.3 million?

Dr. Anthony: It is \$3,310,000.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: What does maintenance of other infrastructure entail?

Dr. Anthony: Basically, what is done under this category is to weed and clean the compounds. This would include the National Cultural Centre, the Walter Roth Museum, Umana Yana, the Museum of African Heritage, the National Archives, the National Museum and the Burrowes School of Art.

Mrs. Backer: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister share with this Committee of Supply which premises will benefit from this security service of \$42.7 million?

Dr. Anthony: Again these are some of places I just mentioned: Umana Yana, Burrowes School of Art, the National Dance School, Walter Roth Museum, the National Museum, and so forth.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6294 – Other: What does the word “Other” entail?

Dr. Anthony: This is to provide costumes for persons at the dance school. Also a stipend is being paid to some of the teachers who teach there.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarship): How many persons have benefited from training in 2010, and how many persons will be trained in 2011?

Dr. Anthony: This actually is to provide the students at the Burrowes School of Art with training materials. It is also to provide the students at the dance school with training materials and there will also be some drumming workshops.

Mr. Patterson: Would there be no scholarships for anyone under this line item - 6302?

Dr. Anthony: The scholarships generally are given by the Ministry of Public Service, so if they are cultural scholarships we will get them through that Ministry.

Programme: 442 – Culture - \$445,302,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 443 – Youth - \$413,437,000

Ms. Selman: Line item – 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: What is responsible for the increase in field materials and supplies - the allotted sum?

Dr. Anthony: Basically, a number of things are provided here - boots for the youth officers, raincoats. The Ministry has also been expanding its agriculture drive at the Kuru Kuru Training College and at the New Opportunity Corps (NOC), so this is where the materials are being source from.

Ms. Selman: I guess that is what is responsible for the increase. What has occasioned the increase from \$6,468,000 to \$10,000,000 with respect to Maintenance Buildings, line item 6242?

Dr. Anthony: What the Ministry has been doing here is some works on the Madewini Camp site. Some painting will be done there and about \$1,067,000 will be spent on that job. At the Kuru Kuru Training College the Ministry will be doing some roof work and guttering, spending about \$4.5 million; at the Sophia Training School about \$6 million will be spent; at NOC, \$7 million, Vryman's Erven Training Centre, \$1.1 million.

Ms. Kissoon: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: Could the Hon. Minister say what is the reason for the two hundred plus per cent increase?

Dr. Anthony: As you would recall, the Kuru Kuru Training College was not on the National Grid. It has now been put on the National Grid and those electricity charges have to be paid.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6281 – Security Services: There is the movement, or the dramatic move, from \$12 million to \$17 million, what is responsible for the increased security services?

Dr. Anthony: Well, basically, it is the provision of security services and it moved from \$21,783,000 in 2010 to \$26,976,000. For the President's Youth Award of Guyana (PYRG) building, about \$4.2 million will be spent; for Kuru Kuru Training Centre (KKTC), about \$8 million will be spent; the National Dance School, \$10 million; Sophia Training Centre, \$3 million; at the Vryman's Erven Centre, \$1.7 million will be spent. These are the numbers for the various locations.

Ms. Selman: Line item 6116 - Contracted Employees: Does it include youth and sport training officers?

Dr. Anthony: Yes, there are a number of Youth Officers on contract.

Ms. Selman: Which Regions are those contracted employees for?

Dr. Anthony: Youth Officers are in Regions 6,5,4,3,2,8,9,10,1 - all the Regions.

Programme: 443 -Youth- \$413,437,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 444 - Sports - \$217,219,000

Ms. Kissoon: Line item 6255 - Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: Could the Hon. Minister state whether any maintenance work will be done at the Burnham Basketball Court and the McKenzie Basketball Court?

Dr. Anthony: For the provision made here, there is no allocation for that, but I am sure that the Ministry can work with the basketball community to do something.

Ms. Kissoon: So, will the Ministry do that?

Dr. Anthony: Yes, sure. In fact, I know the court at the McKenzie Sport Club, a budgeted sum was already allocated last year and a contractor identified and works should have started.

Mrs. David-Blair: Under the same line item, can the Minister say, or name, which courts will this money be spent and say if any of them is in Region 7, more so Bartica?

Dr. Anthony: This line item actually deals the work which is normal being done at the National Stadium, and that sum is really voted for works at the National Stadium. This year an increase would have been seen because the Ministry has also catered, in the budget, for works that it will be doing in and around the aquatic centre and at the racket centre. These are buildings which are directly under the purview of the Ministry which it has to be maintained.

Mrs. David-Blair: So can the Minister say under which heading will we see maintenance and infrastructure works for the many courts and playgrounds in the different Regions, especially in the Hinterlands.

Dr. Anthony: Well, I guess in this particular section I would not be able to answer your question, but when it comes to another part of the budget, I will give you that answer.

Mr. Patterson: Line item 6321 - Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations: Could the Minister say if all the organisations which are beneficiaries of these subsidies have submitted their audited accounts? If not, could the Minister name the agencies that would not have submitted their audited accounts?

Dr. Anthony: This vote is strictly for the National Sports Commission. I want to tell you that for all the years, its statements have been submitted to the Auditor General for an audit, up to 2010. So the Ministry is awaiting that audit.

Mr. Elliot: Mr. Patterson asked the first question. I will now ask the second question. Line item 6281 - Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee of Supply what caused this rise of about \$5 million in this line item?

Dr. Anthony: Again, this provision is basically for the National Stadium. An additional sum is now included to take care of the aquatic centre at Turkeyne and also the racket centre.

Programme: 444- Sports - \$217,219,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditures

Programme: 441-Ministry Administration- \$5,900,000

Mr. M. Williams: Mr. Chairman, my question has to do with Project 4501800 - National Sports Commission, may I ask that now, or do we wait until it flows?

Mr. Chairman: Until what?

Mr. M. Williams: It is on page 422, but I see no one on his or her feet. That is why I am asking.

Mr. Chairman: Well, let us deal with Programme 441- Ministry Administration.

Mr. M. Williams: Very well, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Ministry Administration goes over to Programme 442 - Programme 441 and a bit on Programme 442. Is it that bit on Programme 442 you want to ask about?

Mr. M. Williams: Yes please, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Well, you can go ahead.

Mr. M. Williams: With respect to the provision described at profile page 155, would the Hon Minister be kind enough to tell us how much of the sum budgeted is specifically for the athletic track? That is project 4501800 - National Sports Commission, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Programme 422 deals with the National Stadium and the National Sports Commission. I do not know if that comes under Sports, the Minister may be able to guide us, because in my schedule 421 and 422 are the pages designated for Sports, so I do not know if the items on page 422 deal with Sports, in which case you may wish to wait until we get to Sports. Can you enlighten us, Hon. Member? Or are you in the dark as I am?

Dr. Anthony: I think programme 441 deals with the Ministry Administration, programme 422 deals with Culture.

Mr. Chairman: Programme 422 has two items only.

Dr. Anthony: Yes.

Mr. M. Williams: With great respect, Sir, the only reason I asked was because no one was on his or her feet. I am prepared to wait, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Well, let us leave that for the Sports item.

Programme: 441- Ministry Administration - \$5,900,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 442- Culture- \$44,500,000

Programme: 442- Culture- \$44,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 443- Youth - \$26,000,000

Ms. Selman: Can the Hon. Minister provide a breakdown of the budgeted amount at project 1800100 - Youth?

Dr. Anthony: I am trying to locate the sums here. Can I get that information to you, because I have it here somewhere, but I cannot seem to find that breakdown?

Ms. Kisson: The same project, under Youth, could the Hon. Minister state whether the sport gears will be distributed to clubs, individuals or schools? Could he give us an idea?

Dr. Anthony: Actually, under the youth programme, those gears are the gears which the Ministry would normally purchase for the Kuru Kuru Training College and the NOC. Under Sports there is an allocation there which can be given to clubs.

Programme: 443 - Youth - \$26,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 444 – Sports - \$747,000,000

Mr. M. Williams: Project 4501800 : Could the Hon. Minister say of the projected sum, how much is allocated for the athletic track?

Dr. Anthony: As is already known the Ministry has allocated to phase one \$124 million. phase two, the Ministry estimated to spend about \$477 million and there is a breakdown here of that sum. For the completion of the swimming pool, there is another \$12 million. Upgrading of community ground...

Mr. M. Williams: I asked a specific question.

Dr. Anthony: I am giving you the breakdown of sum.

Mr. M. Williams: I have an interest in one particular thing. I am just confirming, Sir. Is the Minister saying that of the \$730 million budgeted here, \$477 million is for the athletic track? Am I getting that clearly?

Dr. Anthony: In this year's budget, yes. And I just want to emphasise this, because in previous years persons tend to misconstrue these information. The athletics track is going to be done in three phases. The first phase has been started. This budget provides for the second phase and there is an allocation sometime in the future for a third phase.

Mr. M. Williams: In that case then could the Hon. Minister say what is the total projected cost for this facility? Of the sum expended last year, \$124 million, and the projected sum of \$477 million this year, is there included in any of those two provisions any sum of money for the acquisition of the land on which this facility is being constructed? If so, what is the value of that purchase?

Dr. Anthony: I think I recall that question last year.

Mr. M. Williams: I do not recall it.

7.28 p.m.

Dr. Anthony: At Leonora, the Ministry was able to acquire 52 acres of land: 23.8 acres are currently the site that we will be developing for the track, 22.4 acres would be for future development and 5.8 acres have been given to the Ministry of Education for the construction of the Leonora Secondary School. That takes care of that piece of land that is there. We did not acquire it at any cost. Government has allocated that land for the development of the facility.

In terms of the cost of the facility, for phase one, as I said, the Ministry has given out a contract for \$124,960,227. That phase started already. It is due for completion sometime in June. The second phase, which is what we are talking about here, which is allocated in this year's budget, is approximately \$477 million. Then there is a third phase which is estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$79 million.

Mr. M. Williams: I just wish to clarify that last year the location was Uitvlugt and this year the location is Leonora, hence the repeat of the question. That, notwithstanding, could the Hon. Minister say, since we had a rap on phase one and a projection of phase two, when he anticipates this particular project to come to conclusion so that it can be used by our athletes?

Dr. Anthony: I just want to say, for the records too, because last year when an assumption was made about the site, Members of the Opposition drew their own conclusion as to where the site would have been. If you go back to the Hansard, you would find that I did not say anything about any site. In fact, we had a study that was looking at nine different sites. I just want to put that on record. That is the first thing.

The second thing is that, as I said, the first phase would be completed in June this year. The second phase which we are embarking on, we estimate that from the time we give a contract out that it will take another eighteen months and that would include the actual laying of the track and setting up stands and other amenities on the site.[**An Hon. Member:** Where will this take place?] This will be at Leonora.

Mr. M. Williams: Is the Hon. Minister saying that there is no estimated time of completion of the entire facility? That is my question. It has nothing to do with any part of the project. I am speaking of the project in its totality. Is there not a definitive date by which we can project that we will get this project completed so that it can be meaningfully used by our athletes as opposed to finishing it up to a certain stage and then start the process of utilisation?

Dr. Anthony: I could assure you that with the second phase people will be able to use the facility. The third phase will entail adding additional spectator stands and other amenities but, on the completion of the second phase, it will be a functional facility and can be used to host events. All that will be done in other phases is to add other spectator stands and other capacities.

Mr. M. Williams: Thank you Minister. Mr. Chairman, we will complete it very soon when we take over.

Ms. Kisson: Same project: Could the Hon. Minister say how much of this money is allocated for school grounds, playing fields in the schools, which schools and how much for each school? This is not catered for in Education Delivery and the Hon. Minister, Mr. Baksh, said to me that it is under Sports.

Dr. Anthony: I was taught to always give way to a lady, so I have given way to her. I could tell the Hon. Member that in the allocation we have here, \$200 million was set aside to assist or enhance various grounds across the country. This will include schools or community grounds. Although we did a survey of all the grounds in all the Regions, and there is that database, what we will be looking for is for communities to request what ground they want to be done and the Ministry will be able to allocate to help. We have been saying that publicly and I say it here now. Each one of you representing your various constituencies tell them and let them apply to the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, to the National Sports Commission, and it will look at the request to assist with community grounds.

Ms. Kisson: A Follow up. In our Region, there are some schools, Hon. Minister. Could the schools also make requests for assistance for grounds for the students?

Dr. Anthony: Let the schools apply. Again, in our National Sports Plan, the pillars of that plan are community sports and school sports so we will be very happy if schools could apply.

Mrs. David-Blair: Can the Minister supply me with the information of the person who visited Bartica, when they visited and what their observations were on the grounds that they inspected, be it a school ground or community ground? *[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Order please, Hon. Members. Let us proceed.

Dr. Anthony: While it is not under the project, I can tell the Member that I will provide that information.

Mrs. David-Blair: Thank you.

Ms. Kissoon: Same project 4501800: Could the Hon. Minister say – I had asked the question before – in terms of sports gears, who will benefit in terms of clubs and the Regions?

Dr. Anthony: Again, approximately \$15 million was allocated for the purchase of sports gears and, from time to time, various clubs and associations would approach the Ministry and it will give sports gears to them. We do not have a preconceived list right now, but every year the Ministry buys sports gears and distributes them.

Ms. Kissoon: Again, Hon. Minister, can schools apply also?

Dr. Anthony: Again, if schools are desirous...the Ministry has been doing that. It has been helping schools. In fact, just last year, through a partnership that it has with the Table Tennis Association, it has given out a number of table tennis sets. Again, we are willing to help schools.

Ms. Selman: The same project: When will the swimming pool be completed and open to be used by the public?

Dr. Anthony: In a few months, the Ministry should officially open the pool.

Mr. Patterson: The same line item: \$12 million capital work for the Olympic-size pool. Could the Minister say what exactly will be done with the \$12 million? In addition, can he say with this additional \$12 million what is the total project cost, inclusive of consultancy fees for this item?

Dr. Anthony: Basically, there are some fees to pay such as consultancy fees – the people who would be supervising – so, I think, with the \$12 million the Ministry will be able to take care of all of those expenses. The total cost will now be – maybe you can do the math - \$455 million (the last sum) plus a supplementary of \$75 million to do the landscaping, and plus the \$12 million.

Mr. Patterson: Same project: “Rehabilitation of Roofs of Cliff Anderson Sports Hall and the National Gymnasium.” This is for the roof. What about the floor for the Cliff Anderson Sports Hall? As you know, Mr. Chairman, an international hockey tournament was cancelled in December because the recently renovated floor of the Cliff Anderson Sports Hall was

insufficient and inadequate, and of such a poor quality, it was unable to be used. Could the Minister say if any work has been done to rectify that now?

Dr. Anthony: I am not aware that an international hockey tournament was cancelled here. In fact, we have been in discussion with the Hockey Association for us to set up a synthetic turf for hockey. Those discussions are ongoing and in another couple of weeks, the regional head will be here for us to proceed with those discussions. I am not aware – and I have a very close relationship with the Hockey Association – that such a tournament was cancelled. That is one.

Secondly, it might have been cancelled for other reasons. It cannot be the floor because last year a substantial sum of money was spent to rehabilitate the floor, and the people who used the floor, and continue to use it, have not given us any complaints as yet. I was there up to last Saturday when there was a school basketball tournament and nobody complained. There is \$15 million which that will be allocated to help to fix the roof of the Cliff Anderson Sports Hall.

Mr. Patterson: I can say – taking a term from Mr. Aubrey Norton – without fear of successful contradiction, that that was the reason for the cancellation of the indoor international hockey tournament. I say that for the record and it is in public domain. I am surprised that the Minister is not aware of that. That was my point. The floor is uneven. It was badly done and I find it disappointing that the Minister will try to use cheap politics over a situation like this. It is in the public domain and I am very disappointed in the Minister for saying he does not know about it.

Dr. Anthony: I do not know what part of the Estimates that is located, but I have to respond to that. If the Hockey Association has never brought to the attention of the Ministry that it has a tournament and is cancelling it because the facilities have been inadequate...I have no such letter from the Association. I have not met any delegation from the Association telling me that that is so. It might have been for other reasons but it cannot be for lack of venue. I can say that because I know and it has not consulted with me.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: That is the end of the matter. Are there any questions?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: You made a statement. The Minister answered. That is the end of the issue. Are there any questions?

Mr. Patterson: I was proceeding on, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Okay.

Mr. Patterson: Project 1902000 – National Stadium, “Rehabilitation of elevators” (\$17 million) at the National Stadium: Could the Minister say what necessitated us having to spend \$17 million to rehabilitate three-year old elevators? Secondly, has the Minister commissioned any sort of cost-use analysis on those elevators – because an elevator, from my knowledge, has a life-span of fifteen years? Is this going to be a continuous three-year expenditure?

Dr. Anthony: Actually, Mr. Chairman, in addition to the elevator, what will be done at the National Stadium is that works will be started to develop an academy which will include classroom space, a gym and other facilities. The \$17 million which has been allocated here will cover those expenses.

Mr. Patterson: I am referring to the legend on the project profile. It says, “The project entails rehabilitation of elevators.” Therefore, if the Minister is saying it is a broadened scope, can he tell us one, how many elevators; two, cost; three, what are other capital works? The training of persons is not capital works. What capital works will be done with this \$17 million? My original question still stands: Has the Minister done any study to justify the expenditure for rehabilitation of elevators which are only three years old?

Dr. Anthony: Again, if you would have been going to the National Stadium you will know that there are three...

Mrs. Backer: No.

Dr. Anthony: He asked how many elevators, so I am telling him how many.*[Interruption]*

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, order please. Mrs. Backer, could you allow the Minister to answer. A question was asked – a fairly reasonable question. Could you please allow the Minister to answer the question rather than shouting him down?

Dr. Anthony: Again, there are three elevators at the National Stadium. The moneys appropriated here are for the rehabilitation of those elevators. That is one. Two, I did not talk about training. I spoke about setting up a training facility which would be an academy,

meaning that the classroom space will be developed. That is capital works and that is what I am talking about. There are buildings which are located on the premises of the National Stadium, at the side, so the Ministry will be rehabilitating those so that when people from the outlying areas come for training they can stay there. What is written here, as I said when I stood just now, is that, in addition to the elevator, these are other things that the Ministry will be doing. I do not have the exact numbers here with me now and I can provide that to you.

Mr. Patterson: He still did not answer the final part of my question, Sir. Has the Ministry commissioned any studies, cost-benefit analysis, on why it is necessary to have three-year old elevators - new I assume - being renovated? The Minister has not provided the sum or the cost of the renovation but has the Minister done any study? Will this be a recurring cost? He has not responded to that.

Dr. Anthony: I do not expect that every three years elevators will have to be rehabilitated, but I want you to answer this question: Are you saying...?

Mr. Patterson: I am not the Minister.

Dr. Anthony: I want to put it on the table. That is, are you saying that we should not have elevators at the National Stadium so that people who are disabled can get to go up to those facilities? Are you saying that?

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity provided by the Hon. Minister. I am saying that the substandard works that were done is the reason why we are rehabilitating elevators now and the reason why the National Stadium has to be sandblasted. I am saying that we accepted substandard work and we are now fixing our errors. That is what I am saying. The necessity of them is not my problem.

Dr. Anthony: I would like to assure the Member that we did not receive substandard work and I told you here before that in any stadium there is about three per cent of the total sum to make the stadium, on an annual basis, goes for the maintenance of the stadium. What we are doing now is after three years and it is less than one per cent. You do not have to accept these sums as said by me. The Engineering Association, locally, has said three per cent and we are using less than one per cent so I cannot see how this is substandard work.

Mr. Patterson: Am I permitted to respond, Sir?

Mr. Chairman: No Hon. Member. These are the Estimates. You ask questions and you get answers. You made a comment and I allowed the Minister to answer the comment. I will not allow this discussion to go further. If you have questions, I am prepared to allow them.

Mr. M. Williams: Sir, I have a question on the same project. I am trying to work out the actual percentage of this expenditure on the maintenance of the elevators as a percentage of the total cost. Could the Hon. Minister tell us the actual cost of the National Stadium so we can get our numbers together?

Mr. Chairman: We are not talking about the cost of any stadium here. *[Interruption]* Hon. Members, please allow me. We are not talking about the cost of a stadium. We are talking about repairs of certain items originated from the question from Hon. Member Mr. Patterson.

Mr. M. Williams: With great respect, Sir, the Hon. Minister identified it as a factor of the cost so I am trying to get to the actual cost.

Mr. Chairman: What cost? Are you talking about the cost of the National Stadium?

Mr. M. Williams: Yes please.

Mr. Chairman: The National Stadium was built many years ago. That is an unreasonable question and I will not allow it.

Mr. M. Williams: Very well, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Are there any other questions?

Mr. Patterson: I go back to the purchase of sports gears, generators, air conditioning units and extractor fans: Can the Hon. Minister say which facilities these are for?

Dr. Anthony: These are for the Cliff Anderson Sports Hall. About \$3 million for eight extractor fans and \$2 million for a generator will be spending.

Programme: 444 – Sports - \$747,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much Hon. Members. We can now start with the Ministry of Education. Mr. Shaik Baksh and his intrepid Permanent Secretary are here to handle all the questions and queries. *[Interruption]* Hon. Members, let us please quiet down and start this final leg of our journey for today.

Agency: 41 Ministry of Education

Current Expenditure

Programme: 411 – Main Office - \$398,623,000

Ms. Ally: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister say what position this one additional contracted employee fills and the emolument that goes with that?

The Minister of Education [Mr. Baksh]: It is for one driver at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Do you want the salary of the driver?

Ms. Ally: Yes.

Mr. Baksh: The salary is \$42,000.

Ms. Ally: Line item 6222 – Field Materials and Supplies: I note a relatively substantial increase in this head. Could the Hon. Minister give some details for this expenditure?

Mr. Baksh: This is to take care of price increases. It is not anything significant.

Ms. Ally: Line item 6281 – Security Service: Could the Minister say what accounts for this increase in security services?

Mr. Baksh: There has been no increase from Budget 2010, but there were savings in 2010, so there was a revised \$2.8 million. The budgeted figure is the same. There will be better supervision of the security services overall.

Programme: 411 – Main Office - \$398,623,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 412 – National Education Policy – Implementation and Sup - \$161,131,000

Ms. Ally: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There is an increase of twelve persons. Could the Hon. Minister name the positions for those twelve persons?

Mr. Baksh: They are three Senior School Welfare Officers, five Guidance and Counselling Officers and four Senior Guidance and Counselling Officers.

Ms. Ally: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): There is an increase in the area of training. What area of training will be provided and what aspect of education policy will be the beneficiaries of these training or scholarships?

Mr. Baksh: This will cover training for Technical Vocational Educational Training (TVET) Council, in particular. The TVET Council will have to conduct a lot of training programmes during the year. This was dealt with in the budget presentations. School Health and Nutrition also, the Ministry will be holding a lot of training programmes across the country and the National Accreditation Council.

Programme: 412 – National Education Policy – Implementation and Sup - \$161,131,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 413 – Ministry Administration - \$1,493,315,000

Ms. Ally: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: Could the Hon. Minister name the two new positions for the contracted employees and the salary for each?

Mr. Baksh: These are one Civil Engineer with a salary of \$68,000 and one Expenditure Planning and Management Analyst with salary of \$94,570.

Ms. Ally: Line item 6292 – Dietary: Could the Hon. Minister give some explanation for the increase in the dietary budgeted portion?

Mr. Baksh: This is for the School Feeding Programme.

Programme: 413 – Ministry Administration - \$1,493,315,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

7.58 p.m.

Programme: 414 – Training and Development – \$1,094,057,000

Ms. Ally: Item 6117- Temporary Employees- an increase of approximately 39 temporary persons. Could the Minister explain why there is this increase?

Mr. Baksh: Temporary employees relate to binders; 15 binders at National Center for Educational Resources (NCERD) where there is a lot of production now taking place, 9 part time lecturers at Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) and 15 supervisors for the practicum of the ADE Programme.

Ms. Ally: For Item 6281 there is an increase again here. Is there going to be an increase in numbers or salary and which area will enjoy the benefit of security services?

Mr. Baksh: This represents enhanced security services for the Cyril Potter Collage of Education.

Agency: 41 Ministry of Education

Current Expenditure

Agency: 41, Programme: 414 – Training and Development – \$1,094,057,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme: 415 – Education Delivery – \$4,396,965,000

Ms. Ally: Education Delivery, Item 6281, could the Minister say whether the schools are going to benefit from 24-hour daily security?

Mr. Baksh: Some schools will benefit from 24-hour security service. I cannot name the schools at this point in time if that is the next question, Hon. Member.

Ms. Ally: As a follow-up, may I request that the Minister give the names of those schools since he does not have them here?

Mr. Baksh: This will be done.

Agency: 41 Ministry of Education

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 415 – Education Delivery – \$4,396,965,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 411 – Main Office – \$18,200,000

Ms. Ally: For item 2604300, the profile at page 141 gives two sweeping statements, so I wish to ask some specifics. My question is in three parts:-

1. What quantum is allocated for the institution in Region 3 and the one in Region 5?
2. What portion of this money is allocated for the purchase of tools and equipment for schools as well as the PICs (Practical Instruction Centers)?

3. Name the schools and PICs that will benefit.

Mr. Baksh: For Leonora some will be \$183 million and for Mahaicony it will be the same, \$183,825,000. That will cover for the civil works alone. This will be for the tooling and equipping of the two institutes there. Training will also take place. There will be \$415 million for the procurement of equipment and to tools for two new institutes and we will have a sum of \$40 million for the purchase of equipment for Guyana Technical Institute (GTI), Guyana Industrial Training Centre (GITC) and New Amsterdam Technical Institute (NATI); retooling of these three institutes, provision will be made for that also.

Ms. Ally: For item 4502200, EFA/FTI, Improvement of School Facilities. The profile on page 143 says at one of its explanations: "Provision for child-friendly classrooms".

1. What quantity is set aside for that?

2. What can we expect as support for this project in order to have improved education delivery?

Mr. Baksh: For child-friendly schools, the sum of \$20 million is provided for here and overall the EFA/FTI provides for child-friendly school environment, sanitation systems, teachers' houses, text books, also for the Remote Areas Incentive (RAI) and programme for teachers in primary schools in the hinterland which seeks to attract teachers to go there, enjoying a better remuneration package. It also covers the School Feeding Programme which ensures greater attendance. The back study has shown that attendance has been improving in the hinterland schools where the School Feeding Programmes are provided with better nutrition. All of these should be able to enhance the quality of education in those schools. A sum is provided for the multi-grade schools to provide better resource materials to enhance multi-grade teaching in those schools.

Mr. M. Williams: Mr. Chairman, I have only one question. That is with respect to line item 1206200. Mr. Minister, I see that you have finally heard the call for the Hague Library Rehabilitation. Could you say how soon the children of that community will be able to enjoy not just a better physical environment, but also benefit from availability of wider and more recent publications within that library facility and, at the same time, how soon will the Salem Facility be completed?

Mr. Baksh: This provision here is for Mocha, Hague, Salem, Buxton, among others and work should start as early as possible. We want to do the design of the facility, expand it to rehabilitate and to procure some up-to-date books. More emphasis this year will be on the rural libraries across the country.

Mr. M. Williams: Sir, is there any estimated time of completion for the two projects that I am interested in?

Mr. Baksh: Well I will urge the National Library, as they are semi-independent having their own boards. I will encourage them to ensure that this is expedited.

Ms. Sampson: Mr. Chairman, item 4502700- Teacher Education Project- could the Minister indicate to this House what amount goes to CPCE and what amount goes to the University of Guyana (UG)?

Mr. Baksh: I am afraid we do not have it broken down but it provides for both institutions. I do not have the component for UG's cost. I will have to go into the fine figures of the Budget to extract that.

Programme: 411 – Main Office – \$18,200,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Agency: 41 Ministry of Education

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 412 – National Education Policy – \$2,000,000

Programme: 412 – National Education Policy – \$2,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Agency: 41 Ministry of Education

Programme: 413 – Ministry Administration – \$4,500,000

Agency: 41, Programme: 413 – Ministry Administration – \$4,500,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Agency: 41 Ministry of Education

Programme: 414 – Training and Development – \$27,000,000

Programme: 414 – Training and Development – \$27,000,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Agency: 41 Ministry of Education

Programme: 415 – Education Delivery – \$2,661,511,000

Programme: 415 – Education Delivery – \$2,661,511,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

[Assembly resumed Budget Debate]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members that brings us to the end of our programme for today.

Prime Minister (Ag.) [Mr. Clement Rohee]: Mr. Speaker, may I ask that the Hon. House stand adjourned until tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much. The House shall stand adjourned until tomorrow 2.00 p.m.

National Assembly Adjourned Accordingly at 8:09 p.m.