

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT
[Volume 7]**

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

21st Sitting

2 p.m.

Monday, 17th December, 1973

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

(Absent)

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Dr. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development and Agriculture

Senior Ministers (7)

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Works and Communications

*The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice

(Absent)

***Non-elected Minister**

* The Hon. H. Greene,
Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

* The Hon. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

*The Hon. F.E. Hope,
Minister of Finance

*Dr the Hon. K.F.S. King,
Minister of Economic Development

*The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,
Minister of Housing

Ministers (6)

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley
Minister of Information and Culture

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House

*The Hon. Moss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education

*Dr. the Hon. O.M.R. Harper,
Minister of Health

*The Hon. G.A. King,
Minister of Trade

Ministers of State (9)

The Hon. M.Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional (East Berbice/Corentyne)

***Non-elected Ministers**

The Hon. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

The Hon. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister

The Hon. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)

*The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of State for Home Affairs

*The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State – Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro) **(Absent)**

*The Hon. A. Salim,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/West Coast Berbice)

*The Hon. F.U.A. Carmichael,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (8)

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Housing

Mr. C.E. Wright, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Works and Communications

Miss. M.M. Ackman,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister,
and Government Chief Whip

Mr. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary, (Agriculture)
Ministry of National Development and Agriculture

Mr. K.B. Bancroft,
Parliamentary Secretary (Hinterland),
Ministry of National Development and Agriculture

***Non-elected Ministers**

Mr. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Mr. J.P. Chowritmootoo,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education.

Mr. R.H.O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Other Members (18)

Mr. J.N. Aaron

Mrs. L.M. Branco

Mr. M. Corrica

Mr. E.H.A. Fowler

Miss. J. Gill

Mr. W. Hussain

Miss. S. Jaiserrisingh

Mr. K.M.E. Jonas

Mr. M.Nissar

Dr. L.E. Ramsahoye

(Absent – on leave)

Mr. J.G. Ramson

Mrs. P.A. Rayman

Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

(Absent – on leave)

Mr. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.,

Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.

Mr. H.A. Taylor

Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman

Mrs. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, Deputy Speaker

Mrs. E. DaSilva

Officers

Clerk of the National Assembly – F.A. Narain, A.A.

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M.B. Henry, AMBIM

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PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. Stoby for today's Sitting.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bills were introduced and read the First time:

- (1) Hand-in-Hand Fire Insurance Company (Amendment) Bill, 1973.
[Mr. Fowler]
- (2) Demerara Mutual Life Assurance Society (Amendment) Bill 1973.
[Mrs. Willems]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1974

Assembly resumed consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure for the Financial year 1974, totalling \$337,303,105.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Page 29.

HEAD 7 – PUBLIC AND POLICE SERVICE COMMISSIONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$559,988 for Head 7, Public and Police Service Commission, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, item 6, Administrative Assistants (In-Training)/Administrative Cadets. In the 1973 Approved Estimates the sum of \$83,232 was voted. Obviously a programme was planned in respect of this training. It was an \$83,000 programme. In the Revised Estimates much less has been spent; instead of \$83,000 only \$25,998 was spent. We certainly do not mind underspending in the Recurrent when it is in respect of luxuries or semi-luxuries, but in respect of training of public servants and increasing the efficiency of the Public Service, one would like to see the money spent. I wonder if the hon. Minister would tell us why the programme was cut off so drastically. In the 1974 Estimates there is reflected an increase in the amount even over the 1973 Approved Estimates so that for 1974 the programme will, hopefully, be in full swing. We would like to know what happened in 1973.

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Subhead 10, National Insurance. In these Estimates we see that there have been provisions for revised salaries. One would normally expect that if there are revised salaries then the National Insurance contribution would, in effect, be increased.

With a staff of sixty-seven, the 1973 Approved Estimates provided \$7,960 for National Insurance. The salaries for the sixty-seven persons have been increased. How then is it that we are providing the sum of \$7,960 for National Insurance? Obviously, National Insurance would have gone up with the revision in salaries. Therefore, there should be an increase in that amount.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture
(Dr. Reid): Mr. Chairman, I shall deal with subhead 1, item (6), where the amount shown in the Approved Estimates had to be revised. The reason is that this sum is used for recruitment of cadets in the Police Services and training on the job. Because of the type of modification that was necessary, it was not possible to fill these places. Hence, for this year, that total sum was not suspended but it is hoped that next year, with the adjustment in salaries, these posts as cadets in the service will become more attractive and it will be possible to recruit many more persons next year.

National Insurance, even as I understand it, is fixed at a certain level and, hence, notwithstanding the changes in the emoluments, these fixed fees remain as fixed.

Head 7, Public and Police Service Commission - \$559,988 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 9 – OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

Question proposed that the sum of \$513,314 for Head 9, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I shall now deal with page 33, subhead 8 – Government Entertainment. This sum has been going up year after year and it has now reached the very significant figure of \$50,000. Again, I refer to the hon. Minister's statement in the Budget Speech where he said very emphatically that we would be required to tighten our belts. And again I say that the Government should set the example. I should like to alert the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that instead of tightening our belts here in respect of Government entertainment, this sum is at the still significant figure of \$50,000.

Subhead 13 – Remuneration of Ministerial Private Secretaries. Not only does this item appear here, but it also appears in other parts of these Estimates. You will remember, Mr. Chairman, that when we were dealing with the head Parliament Office the hon. Minister, Mr. Ramsaroop, did say that the Private Secretaries had been transferred from the Office of the Prime Minister. The Provision appeared under the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs and a bulk amount is appearing here. The approved estimate in 1973 was \$30,000, the 1973 revised estimate was \$52,280 and the 1974 estimate is \$75,468. We have been given no details at all about these Ministerial Private Secretaries. How many Ministerial Private Secretaries are there? Where do they function? In the Office of the Prime Minister? Are they all attached to the Prime Minister? What salary scale are they on? How are they paid? What are their rates of pay? We have no details at all. All we have is a bulk amount and nothing to indicate where they operate, what salary scales they are on and how they are recruited. We should like some answers to those questions.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, I learnt from the last speaker that provision for the Government Entertainment under the Office of the Prime Minister is going up year by year. I wish to correct that because this year it is \$50,000 and next year it will be \$50,000. And, Mr. Chairman, if you go back further that does not stand good because it does not go up year by year. In 1971 it was \$38,000, if it went up the next year it would have to be at least, \$38,000.01. But I note that in 1972 it was \$22,000. So that statement is not quite correct. I just want to draw it to your attention.

The Office of Prime Minister has to deal with all sorts of entertainments, some very compulsory, when visitors in the standing of Prime Minister come to this country, and if the Government is to function we must have sufficient funds available so that these persons can be properly accommodated and entertained. The Head of Government in this country must not be very niggardly with visitors from countries which he himself, from time to time, might have to

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visit. To my mind, the total sum of \$50,000, with all the additional activities that must be undertaken if this country is to develop, is, in all circumstances, reasonable.

The remuneration for the Ministerial Private Secretaries is necessary because the Prime Minister must be allowed a sufficient number of Private Secretaries to keep up with his various activities. Sometimes, I think that even this number is not enough because some of these Secretaries are so hard-pressed that they complain very quietly. Because of the various activities of the Prime Minister on meet-the-people tours and visits in and out of the country, he needs people with him who can keep notes and prepare reports of all these events so that there can be a follow-up. Since there was an increase in pay and their salaries are comparable to the same persons who do the same type of work, there must be this additional sum.

Head 9, Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - \$513,314 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

2.20 p.m.

HEAD 10 – PRIME MINISTER

GUYANA DEFENCE FORCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$13,598,366 for Head 10, Prime Minister, Guyana Defence Force, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 34. There is one small correction to Head 10. The amount opposite “Total Personal Emoluments” in the column, “1974 Estimates” should read, “9,395,000.”

Mr. Singh: Subhead 1. It is quite clear that the cost of the Guyana Defence Force has been going up year after year at a very alarming rate, and I should like to point out, in particular, these figures. In the 1972 Estimates, the Actual Expenditure was \$4,531,032. In the 1973

Estimates, when they had made all their plans and everything else and had settled at what the army would be in 1973, they had it estimated at \$5,467,000. The 1973 Revised Estimates set that up by \$3 million to \$8,492,600, and now in 1974, it has gone up another \$1 million to \$9,395,000.

Why is it that the hard-earned Guyanese taxpayers' money is being spent on an army? What are the returns from this army? Is it really necessary to have an army of this magnitude, at this level of expenditure? Are we at war with anybody? We have settled temporarily our border problems. Why are we building up this terrific expenditure when we are calling on the Guyanese taxpayer to tighten his belt? We have the slogan, "Feed, Clothe, and House the Nation", but what are we getting back from this army? What are they doing at the present moment apart from breaking up vehicles? They seem to be very good at getting into accidents. Almost every week, army vehicles are in accidents. If one goes to the area where they have their vehicles one will see the piles of vehicles that have been that have been smashed up, and yet we spend more money on this army.

What has happened to the issues of farm produce? We are spending \$9 million and the G.D.F. has a farm on the East Bank, the men are supposed to be engaging in the Feed, Clothe and House the Nation activities, but the returns from the farm show only \$250,000. That is all. In 1972, this amount was \$150,000. It is significant that the subhead, Issues of Farm Produce, first appeared in 1972, and at that time, in 1972, the cost of the army was \$4,531,032. Now it has gone up to \$9 million and the value of the issues of farm produce has merely gone up by \$100,000. I should like to make an urgent appeal to the hon. Prime Minister to have another look at this Army that seems to be sucking the lifeblood of the Guyanese nation.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, we have some more interesting remarks on the People's Army, an army that is helping to guarantee the security not only of the people of this side of the House, but, even more so, of my hon. Friend and his large number of followers.

He mentioned something about wrecking vehicles. Probably it would be good to take an objective view of this because the only reason that he has come to this conclusion is because the army is always in the public eye and anything that happens in the army is public business, but if he were to check the incidents on our roadways objectively, I do not think my friend would come to that conclusion. We know, however, that if it were possible, the army vehicles would not be involved in accidents at all. But we are still on earth. We are not in heaven.

With regards to the issue of farm produce, the entire army is not an army of farmers. Not all of them are doing farming and it is not strange that the value of the farm produce does not move up correspondingly with the cost of the army, but it is good to see that from the farm the increase is significant, from \$58,000 to \$150,000, and then to \$250,000.

The year 1973 saw an addition to the scope of the army and, in the northwest region, for the first time, there began in the army special training for some of our young people. If the army can assist in doing this, then the army should do this, that is, trying to teach some of the young people to become farmers. This is a teaching exercise and it would take time to see the results of that exercise. Our young people are encouraged to get into the farming corps of the army, to leave the coastlands and go far into the hinterland and endeavour to establish farms and homes in those areas. This is a good sign, namely that we have this farming corps because the coastlands are overcrowded. There must be some programme to take them there, and the army is taking this programme as well.

This year, additional attention had to be paid to this activity of building roads and assisting in drainage and irrigation, and the engineering corps is there. There is also, in the army, the marine corps. So the army grows, all the while, learning to do all sorts of services which are useful in this country. The men in the army are doing all these things. What is more important, when these men are demobbed, they will have acquired a level of skills that would be useful in civilian life and this country would not be tormented with large numbers of people seeking work

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and not finding any, in some cases, because they have no skills at all. This People's Army is the training ground; and there is, and there can be, no apology for this increase of funds for the army.

It is not practical to go into any details about all that is required. I am certain the hon. Member would like to know how many men, probably how many guns, there are. Things of that kind. He has not asked those questions but I shall deal with them. We cannot expose the army to that kind of publicity of details. Finally, I think he would agree that this is a very useful army, unlike some of the armies that can only march. The People's Army is engaged in all sorts of activities, it even gives music to the country on some occasions.

Head 10, Prime Minister, Guyana Defence Force - \$13,598,366 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

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DIVISION V – PRIME MINISTER

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,120,000 for Division V, Prime Minister, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, perhaps the hon. Minister has answered my question already because it is headed "Purchased of Equipment". The sum requested is \$1,700,000. The legend says, "To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment." My question is within the limits of the security of the State. It is a significant amount of taxpayers' money and certainly Parliament should be entitled to know, within the limits of that security, what this \$1,700,000 would be used to buy. If this matter is connected with security well then one appreciates that no answer would be forthcoming.

We note, on the legend to subhead 3, that the sum of \$20,000 is requested for the purchase of one land rover and furniture. It may well not be for the G.D.F. because it is headed “Miscellaneous”. So just for the records we would like to know where this land rover will be used.

In respect of subhead 5, National Services, we will reserve our comments until the State Paper is presented to Parliament.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, as the hon. Member said – he anticipated me – I have already given him the answer. I need not repeat myself so I will allow my answer that I gave in respect of this question to stand.

As far as the other question is concerned it is quite clear where the land rover and furniture will go. From the information that is given I think it is necessary and there is nothing that I can add to that.

Division V, Prime Minister - \$3,120,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 26 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,223,767 for Head 26, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, on page 67, subhead 24 is headed “Temporary Clerical Assistance.” In the 1973 Approved Estimates the sum of \$13,000 was reflected. In the 1973 Revised Estimates nothing at all is put down. It is completely blank. So presumably no money was spent. Yet in the 1974 Estimates we are being asked to vote the sum of \$13,000 again.

I have been looking through the Estimates in respect of this particular Head and particular item and there seems to be some inconsistency in all the other Heads. A token amount alone is normally put down for Temporary Clerical Assistance. Yet in this Head, 26, a token amount is not put down. A full amount of \$13,000 is being put down when in fact nothing is reflected for 1973 at all. So there seems to be some need for an explanation. This particular Head and particular item have not followed all the other Ministries in that a token amount is not put down but a full amount. In view of the fact that nothing was put down in the Revised Estimates and therefore nothing was spent, why is it that we are still asking for this sum of \$13,000 in 1974?

Page 68, subhead 7, “Subsidy on oil”, a token amount of \$1 is being asked for. Under Revised Estimates for 1973 there is the sum of \$270,000. Perhaps this would have been a question more properly directed to the hon. Minister Dr. Reid but since it does appear here I will have to ask the question. What is the situation with subsidy on oil? We all know that there has been a severe shortage. We all pass by the Guyana Marketing Corporation and see the people waiting in long queues for oil. There are rumours that P.N.C. Regional Officers have been able to get oil and distribute it to P.N.C. party supporters in the various areas. That is wrong because these Regional Officers should not be selling oil. They are party officers. Why should they be selling oil? There were rumours of what was happening in New Amsterdam not so long ago. If the rumours are true that P.N.C. “district boys” were distributing oil to their supporters then something is radically wrong. It goes further. The allegation is that they were selling oil above the control price but giving the reason that the extra was a party contribution. If we are to let justice not only be done but seem to be done we must cut that out and let everyone have his chance. Let us give privileges on a partisan basis.

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The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, the allocation for Temporary Clerical Assistance is to ensure that when a large number of people from such a large Ministry are on leave the Ministry is in a position to recruit some people for a short period. It seems to me that in 1973 this did not happen probably because people deferred their leave. It will certainly happen in 1974.

The item subsidy on oil, is put with this Ministry because this Ministry is responsible for the Guyana Marketing Corporation where the subsidy goes. The Guyana Marketing Corporation brings in oil and a particular person has to see it in keeping with the control price so that our consumers get oil below the price paid by the Guyana Marketing Corporation for it.

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There was another point raised by my friend about where the oil is sold, I would wish him to give more detailed information.

Head 26, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, \$1,223,767, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 69 to 72.

HEAD 27 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,849,071, for Head 27, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Agriculture, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Page 70. Subhead 11, Central Agricultural Station, Mon Repos. It seems quite obvious that there should not be the first line at the bottom which is opposite the total of these subheads. This is a typographical error, otherwise we would not like to have the figure in bulk.

Having said that, may I make the remark that under subhead 11 we seem to be getting less information than we got last year. In the 1973 Estimates these amounts were itemised. For instance, (a) Maintenance of Internal Works was \$56,000, (b) Crop Section. (i) Labour \$188,000 (ii) Fertilisers, Fuel, Planting Materials etc., \$94,000; (c) Livestock Section. (i) Labour \$75,000 (ii) Feeding Stuffs, Fertilisers, \$42,000; (d) Purchase of Spares, \$15,000. I wonder whether the hon. Minister is in a position to give us that same breakdown. I do not know why it was not put down for next year. It is a significant sum of money, it is over half a million dollars.

Page 71, I shall deal with subheads 20 and 21 together, because they both deal with the Fisheries Division. Let us start with the 1973 Approved Estimates. The Approved Estimate for subhead 20 was \$23,000; the Revised Estimate went down to \$17,000 and the Estimate for 1974 has gone down even further to \$10,000. Similarly, subhead 21, Fisheries Division (Marine). The Approved Estimate was \$57,000, the Revised Estimate was \$48,000 and all that we are being asked to vote for 1974 is \$10,000. These may well be significant increases which have something to do, I suspect with shipping by the Government and a fishing company. If that is so and these aspects are now being handled by the Marine Company, I wonder if the hon. Minister would put us in the picture. Could he say why these figures are so reduced? Is it because of the fishing company that the Government has set up? Or is there an overlapping of finance?

Subhead 25, Agricultural Stations – Maintenance and Operation. The Approved Estimate for 1973 is \$170,000, the Revised Estimate lists only \$85,000 so that there is underspending there, and this is a sector in which one would not like to see underspending. Agriculture is so vital to the economy of this country that one would want to see these Agricultural Stations maintained and operated on the same level that the Government had planned. Obviously in 1973

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the Ministry planned to operate these stations at \$170,000. Why was that cut down so drastically to approximately half? One question arises: Are some of these stations not being maintained? Will the hon. Minister tell us whether all the stations are being maintained and how he has been able to do it on a much lower figure?

Subhead 36, Subvention to Cane Farming Development Corporation. Again in the 1973 Approved Estimates the sum was \$50,000, but now we are making a token provision of only \$1. We know that the \$50,000 is recurring as far back as these Estimates go: 1972, \$50,000; 1973, \$50,000. There must be some reason why we are making a token provision for \$1.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, with regard to the Fisheries Division the hon. Member has given part of the answer already, but the Ministry is still concerned with the smaller fishermen especially those who have been organised in Fishermen Co-operatives.

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The Officers are also responsible for carrying out experiments in inland fishing especially the establishment of fishing ponds and testing what kinds of fish will do well.

Subhead 25, Agricultural Station Maintenance and Operation. In 1973 the Approved Estimates to maintain these stations was \$170,000 and in some of the areas more was done than anticipated. Sometimes in some areas you cannot get all the bits and pieces of small equipment that you need. This year, we are hoping that we will be able to service them better and do a thorough clean up. The subvention to the Cane Farming Development Corporation has been \$50,000 a year. That contract is now completed and a new contract is being negotiated. Until that is completed the Government will not be in a position to say what will be its subvention when the contract is agreed upon.

Head 27, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Agriculture - \$3,849,071 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

LANDS

Question proposed that the sum of \$936,620 for Head 28, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Lands, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I am seeking a bit of information here. Subhead 1 item 12, Photogrammetrist. I looked in the dictionary and could not find the word. Perhaps, the hon. Minister would tell us, first, how vital this post is to the Ministry because in looking at the provision we see that the 1973 Approved Estimates provided \$4,656. Nothing was put in the Revised Estimates for 1973. Presumably the post has not been filled, and if the post has not been filled it may well be that nobody is doing the job, unless somebody is acting in some other department in the Ministry. A greater sum of \$6,384 is now being sought in the 1974 Estimates. If this post is vacant, how does it affect the department? We always like the benefit of the adumbration by the hon. Minister.

Let us go on now to subhead 1, item (14), which deals with Surveyors and Surveyors Apprentices – A9. The sum that was in the Approved Estimates for 1973 was \$132,892, the revised sum of \$111,804 was less and now it goes way up in 1974 to \$169,980. What we would like to know is what is the position as regards Surveyors. Are these thirty-five posts filled? If they are not filled, how many vacancies are there? We recollect very distinctly that in this honourable House it was said that this is a very technical field and an area in which the Government had been experiencing a lot of difficulty in filling vacancies and we have heard in

this House that criticisms have been made, and justifiably so, for things are not being done because of the shortages of Surveyors.

For example, the recommendation of the Amerindian Lands Commission report have not been implemented and the reasons given are that there are not enough Surveyors. Therefore, the Amerindians cannot get their land. They were promised their land by no less a person than the hon. Prime Minister himself and year after year we have been asking about this. One of the excuses given is that there are not enough Surveyors to survey the lands so that these people can get their land but, nevertheless, the hon. Minister has given the assurance that they will get their land. If that is so the question must be asked: what is the position as regards Land Surveyors? Have we got enough now? Are these posts filled? What are we doing with training programmes so that we can make some advance in this very vital field?

Subhead 9, Revenue Protection. A very small sum of \$400 is being asked for here and one wonders what can be done with \$400. Could the hon. Minister tell us how is this \$400 being used for Revenue Protection?

Subhead 15, National Insurance. The hon. Minister did make a point when I question why the provision for National Insurance had not been increased. In the 1973 Approved Estimates the sum was \$20,000 and the Estimates for 1974 has the same \$20,000. The hon. Minister did say that there is no need to increase because the N.I.S. contributions are fixed. Well, there is a staff of ninety-seven and that staff is made up not only of people in the higher bracket but also people like stores operators, drivers, etc., and if the hon. Minister looks in the Estimates he will see that N.I.S. contributions have gone up to \$5,300 for the Ministry of Education. Almost all the other items have gone up. I shall make the same point about the telephone bills. I have noticed that the estimate for telephones remains the same so I shall be looking very carefully to see how soon the Government will be bringing supplementary provisions in order to correct these mistakes.

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3 p.m.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, item (12), Photogrammetrist, that is a post in the Ministry. Somebody is in training. We hope to be able to recruit that person in 1974. The details of his activities I would not claim to know.

The question of surveyors. This is always a burning question in the Ministry. We never had sufficient and, at the moment, there are some eight vacancies. What we have done in recent times, especially this year. Is to employ private surveyors to do some of the work and it is because of this change in our activity that we are hoping to be able to do some more work in the Amerindian areas, the areas about which the hon. Member is very concerned. We too are concerned about it and until we can get our own surveyors trained, we will have to employ private surveyors to do the work. Work is still going on in the Upper Mazaruni and it is well for us to know how painstaking and tedious it is.

In the Rupununi, the surveyors cannot work all the year around, for one thing, because it is difficult to get certain types of workers to work in certain areas. We are hoping to recruit skilled workers who normally live in those areas instead of employing persons and having to take them out of Georgetown. We have learned to stay as much as possible with the type of worker who is prepared to stay in those far-off areas and to place less reliance on other persons who might have a choice of other jobs.

Work is being done in this area so we will have an additional number of surveyor apprentices.

This small sum for revenue protection is really to ensure that the division will have the facilities that will give them a lead on certain things that happen. If a man is assigned to identify some irregularity, he is given a small allowance and with that he has to take care of his travelling and food. They work on a different basis in some of these areas.

My friend mentioned item (18) but he did not speak on it. That is all.

Mr. M.F. Singh: with your permission, Mr. Chairman, I did miss subhead 1, item (18), Land Investigator. I wonder if the hon. Minister would bear with me and tell me something about it. The post is vacant. What is this goodly gentleman supposed to do? No sum is put in the column for the 1973 Revised Estimate. There is the sum of \$2,436 for 1974. Not a very big amount. This is a \$200 per month gentleman and we wonder what he does for this money.

Dr. Reid: it was not possible to recruit the type of person, the man whom we wanted to do investigations in the areas. We had wanted somebody who was specially charged with this task, to move around and check especially where lands were not properly used and that kind of thing. It is hoped this year it may be possible to brief some person for this work. In the meantime, this work is done by the Lands Division to facilitate some of the far-off areas but we are hoping to fill that post.

Head 28, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture – Lands - \$936,620 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 29 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

INTERIOR DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$606,810 for Head 29, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Interior Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Page 74, subhead 1, item (17), Station Allowances. The Approve Estimates for 1873 had \$24,000 as the sum provided. The Revised Estimates sent that figure up to \$40,000, and in the 1974 Estimates, it has been dropped again. The sum being requested is \$24,000. The question that arise is this, if \$40,000 was required for 1973 and there has been no

reduction in the staff – because the staff establishment is still listed at 100 – how then are we saying that \$24,000 would be enough for 1974 when we utilised \$40,000 in 1973? This is in need of some explanation. How do we get \$24,000 for 1974 and no reduction in staff?

We go over to the next page, page 75, subhead 3, Miscellaneous. There seems to be a need for very serious explanation because the 1973 Approved Estimates provided the sum of \$3,500 for Miscellaneous. That sum was revised in 1973 to \$15,500. The sum being asked for now for 1974 has gone back to \$3,500. On what did we spend \$15,500 in 1973 for Miscellaneous, and if there is some particular reason why this high amount had to be spent then, presumably, that reason has disappeared and the sum has gone back to \$3,500. Would the hon. Minister please tell us what that reason was?

Subhead 12, Amerindian Residence and Hostels – Wages of Caretakers, Maintenance. In the Approved Estimates for 1973, the sum of \$12,000 was provided. Obviously, this sum was considered insufficient because the 1973 Revised Estimates raised that sum from \$12,000 to \$18,425. Now in the 1974 Estimates, the Government is asking for \$12,000 only. If it cost \$18,425 to maintain these Amerindian residences, then why the reduction in the amount being asked for in 1974? These Amerindians suffer enough. They live a life of privation and suffering, and, surely, the Government should at least maintain their residences at the same level, but if the Government was spending \$18,425 in 1973, then are we reducing the level by spending only \$12,000? Will there be a reduction in services offered?

The one that is in New Amsterdam, Stanleytown Amerindian Hostel, is in a very bad state at the present moment, from information received, and we wonder whether the hon. Minister would like to say what will be done to raise the standard in that hostel. Obviously, the standard will not be raised if we are voting less rather than more money.

17.12.73
3.10 p.m.

National Assembly

3.10 – 3.20 p.m.

In respect of subhead 17 I wish merely *en passant* to say that under National Insurance the 1973 Approved Estimates did provide \$32,000. The 1973 Revised Estimates raised the amount to \$38,000, \$6,000 more, yet all we are asking for in 1974 is the original \$32,000. I cannot reconcile it; perhaps the hon. Minister can.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, we begin with station allowances when in 1973 \$40,000 was spent. In 1973 we did some additional things to what we had estimated. One of those additional things in those hinterland areas was the attempt to grow white potatoes. We had to station other people in the area and consequently this sum moved up somewhat. We are hoping to keep it at \$24,000 this year as allowed by the Ministry of Finance.

In the “Miscellaneous” item the same thing happened. This is a very unusual item because all sorts of things in the Amerindian areas will fall here. We sometimes do work to help on the health side. Chartering a plane to bring out somebody not involved with our own Ministry’s work. Since the Ministry of National Development and agriculture, Interior Development, is interested in the health of those people, in severe emergency cases it is the Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Interior Development, that takes on the responsibility to do that type of work.

It would be unfair to put this item under the routine “transport and travelling” because it is not for the Ministry as such but it is an overall expenditure. For this year we have had several occasions when we have had to do that type of work.

In 1973 some improvement had to be made on some of these hostels and because of that the sum went up. We are hoping to do the maintenance but the one at Stanleytown needs

complete rehabilitation. There is no point trying to do little bits and pieces of improvement. The plans have already been drawn up. We are hoping out of capital expenditure to build a new hostel there.

As my friend would see, National Insurance for us is staying at \$32,000. If he would look under “1972” he would see there was a lower sum than that. It is my belief that, because of the slow movement of National Insurance when it started, part of the \$38,000 had to go back to clear some of the 1972 expenditure and bring it up to date. We are now on the smooth run when we will be able to spend this amount unless we have a substantial increase in the number of people in the Ministry.

Head 29, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Interior Development, \$606,810 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 30 – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE LAND DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,356,453 for Head 30, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Land Development, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, in respect of subhead 10, “Wauna Land Development Scheme”, we note that there was a provision of \$45,000 in the 1973 Approved Estimates. That sum was revised from \$45,000 to \$107,850. It has more than doubled. And then the sum being asked for in 1974 is \$48,150. We see a sharp drop again to the level of what was asked for in 1973.

The same reflection is there with National Insurance, the very next item. The sum of \$5,000 was provided for National Insurance in the 1973 Approved Estimates. The Revised Estimates provided \$23,000 and in the 1974 Estimates we are asking merely for \$7,500. The question arises: If for 1973 we required \$107,850, how can \$48,150 be enough for 1974? Unless there has been some retrenchment of workers, as seems to be suggested by the National Insurance figures. Because instead of \$23,000 for National Insurance we want merely \$7,500. If there has been retrenchment where has this retrenchment been? What scaling-down of the programme has there been as a result of this reduction in the number of workers.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, in respect of the question on Wauna Land Development Scheme, because of the new things that happened at Wauna in 1973 some additional work had to go on because this is an area where we have been not only building roads but establishing the Farm Corps. The Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Land Development, had to be involved in some of that exercise, for instance, land clearing and so on.

Some of that work is now completed and we are hoping to go back to a normal run in that area. Hence, this difference with the provision going back, as it were, to what was estimated in 1973. Because of the additional things that we had to do to accommodate this now group of workers at Wauna this had to be done.

National Insurance is very interesting. I am certain my friend believed that he had scored quite a point. I will advise him to look under “1972” and he will see blank. You will see under “1972” sums have been paid for National Insurance in some of the Ministries.

17.12.73

National Assembly

3.10 – 3.20 p.m.

We know when National Insurance started there was need to have additional people do some of the detailed work. With such a large Ministry it was not possible to take hold of all the various Divisions and we had to go Division by Division.

The Land Development Division was not taken up in 1972. Hence when we organised it, some of the \$23,000 had to be used to make up for the year 1973.

For the year 1972 you will see quite some difference. They have cleared the backlog. We are satisfied now that it will go right with \$7,500. In the other areas you will see that sum remains once you get it going properly. This is not quite sure yet because we have never had a good year's run with it but we are certain that by the time we come again with land development it will keep in line with the other Divisions.

Head 30, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, Land Development - \$1,356,453 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.20 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 77.

DIVISION XIII – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$29,914,000 for Division XIII, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, subhead 30, Soesdyke/Linden Highway. The sum of money being asked for this project for 1974 is nearly \$1 million. I am sure the hon. Minister would welcome the opportunity to tell us exactly what is going on there, what is happening, what

kind of project it is, details of the project, indeed, a progress report on that particular project. I am sure he will enjoy telling us about it.

Subhead 14, North West Region. It is not a simple matter as that because we have been voting money for some time. Presumably this includes the Matthews Ridge area, and we can see that very significant sums have been spent on this project over the years. Looking back at these Estimates, in 1972, \$2,465,908 was spent; the 1973 Approved Estimates provided \$3 million; the Revised Estimates showed \$3 million, and now, for 1974, the sum of \$1,500,000 is being asked for. We know that, after the African Maganese Company moved out of the Matthews Ridge area, there was the question of settling the people there. This was as far back as 1968.

At that time we were told that co-operatives would be established in the area, that the Government would encourage co-operatives in the area and that it had great potential; and huge sums of money were voted in those years to start people off. The fact of the matter is that those co-operatives failed. Later on we heard that instead of having co-operatives we were having state farms; and recently we have been hearing that these state farms have been doing very well indeed. For all this money spent, I obviously what to know what the returns were.

Therefore, I turn to page 9 of these Estimates to see under Land Development Schemes what revenues these areas were yielding, unless it is somewhere else. It may well be; I am no expert. It is certainly not on page 9, Land Development Schemes; no revenue is listed from this North West Region. It is one area where the greatest amount of money has been spent in recent years. What are the returns? Are there any returns? Amazon-Charity, \$28,000 for 1973; Black Bush \$1,500,000; Anna Regina \$250,000. But there is nothing else, except for the item "Other", which I presume means "not specified". I would have thought that those were the little land settlement areas. There is \$130,000 under the Item Other. For this kind of money what are we getting, apart from the state farms? If the state farms are producing what is happening to the produce.

We go on to subhead 16, Machinery and Equipment, and the sum being asked for is \$2,400,000 and the legend states: “To provide transport equipment for extension offices and miscellaneous.” For this kind of money, will the hon. Minister please give us some details? We would question not getting details for a couple of thousands but for \$2 million we must get some details.

Subhead 17, Guyana Marketing Corporation. The sum of \$800,000 is provided here to go to the Guyana Marketing Corporation. We have already passed a subsidy earlier on the Guyana Marketing Corporation. If we go back to page 68 there was an item, subhead 6, Subsidy to Guyana Marketing Corporation, \$½ million. [Dr. King: “That is current.”] this is another sum of \$800,000 asked for under the Capital Estimates and there is no legend to explain what this is or. Will the hon. Minister tell us what this \$800,000 Capital, Guyana Marketing Corporation, is for?

We move to subhead 41, Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Scheme. I am always very interested to see this project reflected in the Estimates. The sum of \$1,100,000 is being asked for here, and the legend under Subhead 41 states: “To provide for the construction of storm drainage and provision of emergency materials.” I know at least one Minister, Minister Steve Narine, I do not see him here today – who is also very interested in this project. He was the former Chief Hydraulics Officer of the Ministry. He will be very happy to see this amount. Would the hon. Minister tell us if this is a start of the MMA Project which will interconnect the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Rivers and provide the real intensive work to take it on? Revised Estimates for 1973 was \$½ million. I should like to know exactly how far this work has gone. What is the production as regards the completion of this Scheme?

Subhead 42, Purchase and Installation of Pumps. We have heard a lot of the “Agriculture Ministry of Pumps” and we have had a lot of publicity about the installation of these pumps to relieve the periodic flooding that seems to persist in Guyana. It is all well and good to say that there was exceptional rainfall and to blame flooding and the weather but it is about time that something be done. We wonder whether any of these pumps is on order? Have any of them been

installed as yet? Presumably, they are in order. If they have not been installed when are they going to be installed?

3.30 p.m.

And if the Minister does have the information, it would be very enlightening to know how many pumps will be bought with this money and in what areas they will be installed because there are some areas that are very critical and we would like to know whether priority is being given to the critical areas.

Subhead 46, Emergency Works Flood Relief. Under this Head, Mr. Chairman, I would like to bring to the attention of the hon. Minister a situation which exists in the Supply/Mahaica area. Residents in that area have been complaining that for years now they are being constantly flooded in the Supply/Mahaica area. They claim that the koker of the Shanks canal, which is drawing water from the conservancy canal, is always open and, because the Shanks canal is low in spots, the overflow is pouring into the cultivation of the Supply backdam so that the water from the cultivation areas is always running into the Township. This is what the residents are saying and they should know because they are there. They are contending that this is so and I would like the Minister to look at it. The residents say that the flooding can be prevented but the dams and the sluices separating the Township from the cultivation lots have broken down and as a result of that flooding occurs.

I have a list of not less than twenty-two people whose holdings have been flooded this year. They have lost things such as boulanger trees, pepper trees, callaloo, 184 roots of bora and cucumber trees. This may be boring to the Members of Parliament but to these people it is bread and butter. They have also lost 30 young chickens, 12 laying fowls and 10 ducklings. These people need some consideration.

I have not had a chance to vitally look into this matter but I certainly would request the hon. Minister to look into it, to give it some consideration and to see if their complaints are justified. Something should be done to remedy the situation as early as possible.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, I will deal firstly with Soesdyke/Linden. This is a relatively new project in that the Highway has not long been established and people have been moving in to build new homes and to establish new communities, and so a lot of work has to be done to clear virgin forest. We are establishing four large settlement projects and the infrastructural work has to be done, such as internal roads and so forth and so we continue to spend large sums in this area.

It is interesting to know that some four hundred families have already moved into these areas and production is beginning to have its impact because I think this area has already taken over the lead in the production of pineapples. As a matter of fact, we are discovering new things. Years ago we said the white sands were not good for anything and that crops could not be cultivated there. Citrus is also being established in this area as well as pear. We have got help, through technical assistance, from Israel and there is a person here who is helping to direct the production of fruit crops; he is working in this Soesdyke/Linden area. This is a relatively new area and work has to go on here for some time before we can get economic returns.

The North West Region is always of interest. This now spreads beyond Matthews Ridge, Arakaka and Port Kaituma. This sum is for the whole of the North West region. Years ago we used to talk about the North West District and at one time, we used to put down from Matthews Ridge to Kaituma Complex. This is another point I want to make clear for the entire North West Region but much emphasis is laid on Matthews Ridge, Arakaka and Kaituma and it is being compared with settlements like Black Bush Polder and Cane Grove. I note that my friend knew for certain that this is a new area that has been taken over to turn into an agricultural complex

since the Manganese Company removed from the area. I would like to remind him, at the same time, that Black Bush Polder was established in 1960 at a cost of \$15.5 million in those days, and if you compare that with today's money you can probably say some \$30 million. If you add up all the sums spent for Matthews Ridge/Kaituma Complex, it is about a fraction of that and large areas of land have been brought under cultivation.

It is not true to say that we have no co-operative organisation there. We have co-operative organisations there but in a new area like this where we are dealing with people who spent most of their lives doing mining, there are difficulties and problems one would have to face. People would run away from the North West and trot back to Georgetown but this Government in its wisdom saw to it that something was done to keep people there. We did not use co-operative organisations alone; we have tried other methods of cultivation and we have what we call the "State Community Farms". These are beginning to show some good results. If we had run away from this area we would not have discovered that we have one of the best areas in this country for the production of livestock. I wish my friend would spend some of his leave at Matthews Ridge. We would provide facilities for him as 'Leader of the Opposition' as we have done in the past for Leaders of the Opposition. He would breathe some unpolluted air, which I think would be good for him, he would see in this area livestock better than any he has ever seen in his life. He could even challenge those he has seen from overseas.

The company at one time said that nothing could grow in this area, and when it came to animals it even demonstrated to us that animals cannot be reared because it carried some into the area and after a few months the animals were more bones than meat. The company pointed out to us that we encouraged it to try and it failed. But go now to Arakaka and you will see the grasslands that have been established there and you will see what is going on in this new area. As the Prime Minister says, this will probably be the future capital of Guyana. So when we compare this small sum spent on these vast areas with sums spent on areas like Cane Grove and Black Bush Polder, I think my friend ought to give this Government some credit.

17.12.73

National Assembly

3.40 – 3.50 p.m.

(Dr. Reid contd.)

3.40 p.m.

The hon. Member talks, first, about the machinery and equipment. Well, it is to provide transport equipment for extension offices and miscellaneous. There is a long list of things that we need there. Most of these are agricultural equipment, bulldozers, tractors, rotovators, and things of that kind. This is money well spent, I think. Sometimes equipment takes a long time to come, so we cannot move as fast as we would wish. At one time we can get in six months, sometimes in one year, and sometime eighteen months.

Then we can to the Guyana Marketing Corporation. I think the hon. Member will agree that we need to expand this Corporation. Now when we go to the Corporation, we find that is cannot take off what is being produced. All efforts are being made to expand it and to develop a new site at Farm. We have already arranged for this new site at Farm. We need to get the site developed. We need to get the machinery and equipment in, so that we can establish some of the facilities that a good marketing corporation would need in this country at this time with this thrust towards the development of agriculture.

It is hoped that we will put down an up-to-date cannery. I think this equipment is already ordered. It did not come in this year, we are hoping that it will arrive in the first quarter of next year. Then the milk plant has to be taken care of, so that we can have a better milk plant. For that, \$44,000; and for the cannery, about \$90,000. We do not want to neglect the Lombard Street premises. Even though we are going to move to Farm, there is work that can be done at Lombard Street. It is so crowded there now that it is difficult to do anything properly. That is one of the drawbacks. In the operations of the Corporation. We have to improve the Lombard Street premises for the sum of some \$68,000.

With modern technology and modern food processing, we need some better vehicles and we will have insulated trucks and a weighbridge. The New Amsterdam branch is to be

rehabilitated so that we can really do the marketing side of as we should have, because it is sometimes difficult to know exactly what the volume of production will be in this country. We go out and encourage farmers, even when we estimate the production, it is difficult to come to an estimate that is near correct. Nobody can tell that John Jones – because he is inspired – will plant five acres that he never cultivated before. We have been caught up with this type of activity when we have so much being produced. Right now, tons of cassavas are being harvested and it is difficult sometimes to get.

My good friend has said he cannot get any plantains. There are cheap on the market now and I would advise him to make some good arrange whereby he can get plantains. Mr. Speaker, since they are members of the Opposition, I think I can give them a little advice that would be to their credit, even though it would be against me. If they should go into the farming areas and make some arrangement with the farmers to the effect that they will take over all that they produce, this would be a great assistance in this exercise. I am certain that at the next election they will have credit for that. They can do that. I know their ex-leader was very anxious to get into the farming community. I think they should take up from where he left off and they will be of some assistance to the farmers.

We realise that my friend has discovered that the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Scheme has started and work is going on. We did not spend all the money we had hoped to spend this year, because the pumps that we ordered did not arrive. We are hoping to get them next year. There should be about seven pumps and they will come in progressively until we have got the full number. Some of the things we will need to purchase are steel sheet piling. We have to do the foundations and there will be a paving at Golden Grove, and at Somerset and Berks, where some of the first pumps will go, and then we will begin to have better drainage and irrigation.

It seems that my friend is very familiar with a certain part of Cane Grove, even though he said he has been informed of the suffering of some of the famers in these areas. When there are certain developments with heavy floods, farmers suffer, not only at Cane Grove, Supply,

Mahaica, but wherever they are. With the sudden and heavy downpour of rain, farmers suffer in most parts of this country and that is why we are trying to rehabilitate the entire drainage and irrigation system on the coastlands.

We on our side are always in the field, and I am certain my colleague, Minister Kasim, is well aware of all these areas. We have meetings with farmers, we have sent the Parliamentary Secretary to some of these areas to see exactly what is happening. Every possible assistance is being given to our farmers. That is one reason that, notwithstanding the serious weather circumstances in this country, Guyana can still claim that it is producing food and feeding itself. There is no mercy food unit around this country and there is no call on other countries to supply us with food. One must recognise the massive amount of work that has gone into this exercise of supplying food for a small country like this, with less than one million people, in the circumstances where the whole world is crying out that there is not enough food. Guyana has food, and if our distribution system has been better, we would have done even better.

In time, we will have to have bottoms to ship our produce overseas. We have markets in the Caribbean for plantains and things like that but since we do not have any bottoms of our own, we have difficulty in transportation. When that marketing corporation is expanded, we will have the necessary facilities.

Emergency works and flood relief. I think I have spoken on that. This is a new Head that came in when we had the serious floods. We still keep this head because we go into the farmers' areas to ensure that some of the little jobs are done so that drainage could be improved for the time being. This Government is demonstrating in the farming community its interest and commitment to the farmers of Guyana.

Division XIII, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture - \$29,914,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

17.12.73

National Assembly

3.50 – 4 p.m.

3.50 p.m.

DIVISION XIV – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

IBRD/IDA PROJECTS – FIRST SEA DEFENCE LOAN

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,565,000 for Division XIV, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, IBRD/IDA Projects, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I am just giving the hon. Minister an opportunity to tell us how he proposes spending this \$922,000 on “On ranch investment.” We know that the World Bank and several other lending institutions have been very interested in cattle development in this country. I certainly would like to like know what has been done within recent times and generally to have a progress report on the situation.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, it is difficult at the time of Estimates to give a detailed progress report but this Livestock Development Project is now proceeding apace and it is being done in co-operation with the World Bank, the local financiers in this country, private banks, the Co-operative Bank, the insurance companies and so forth.

We are establishing properly organised ranches in Guyana for the first time. In times past we reared cattle in any manner. It was a job that was done when we had spare time and no proper management was ever instituted.

We are establishing these new ranches in places like Paruima, Aishalton, Abary, the Berbice River and a few other places and even including Matthews Ridge. In the Lethem area there will also be a ranch. At Mara there will be a breeding ranch. In all these places development is taking place.

The kind of investment that is done on the land is clearing the land, fencing the land, putting water supply and the necessary drainage and irrigation on the land. There are facilities for managers and staff as well as cultivation of these areas so that we can establish good pastures. There is also training of ranch-hands so that we can have proper work done.

Included in all this is importation of some of the livestock. We have taken care not to proceed to import all the animals we need but to grade up our local animals. So it is expected while this project is being organised and being developed that there may be less animals for the market because the young female cows that are still good for breeding are now being bought by the Company so that we can have a stock to begin with. If you go now to the Agricultural Site you will see them holding some of the animals that have been bought at the abattoir. This work is going on apace.

It is a very interesting job. We have had to seek assistance from abroad as far as management is concerned. As I said, this is the first time we are trying to establish this kind of organised ranching and to persuade the people to give up their animals into a co-operative. Some people are very attached to their cows but we are making fair progress in this exercise.

From the World Bank we have been able to recruit an expert in livestock development. He is still with us. In another 3 or 4 years we still see returns from this project. This is not a project in which one could ever see returns in 1 or 2 years. It is a more long-termed project but it is necessary that we begin and we have begun.

Division XIV, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, IBRD/IDA Projects - \$1,565,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XVI – MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURE

IBRD/IDA PROJECTS, SECOND SEA DEFENCE PROJECT

Question proposed that the sum of \$4 million for Division XVI, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture, IBRD/IDA Projects, Second Sea Defence Project, stand part of the Estimates.

17.12.73

National Assembly

3.50 – 4 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, in respect of subhead 1, “Civil Works” \$2 million is requested, “To provide for the construction of Georgetown Sea Wall, slipway and outfall channels.” This work is, in fact, in progress. I merely want to ask: At one time the Hydraulics Division of the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics had proposed to build a porous breakwater at the front of Georgetown about a mile out from the Georgetown foreshore. The plans were all drawn up. The reasoning at one time was that this would result in a stillwater area between the breakwater and the Seawall and there would be a deposit of the mud held in suspension. There would be accretion and ultimately a reclamation of land. It is a very ambitious programme and certainly on paper it sounded very good indeed. I wonder whether the Government has shelved that proposal or whether we may still see that happen one of these days.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of State for Agriculture.

The Minister of State for Agriculture (Mr.Kasim): Mr. Chairman, from the information I have received from the Engineer the N.E.D.E.C.O. Report did not recommend it.

Division XVI, Ministry of National Development and Agriculture IBRD/IDA Projects, Second Sea Defence Project - \$4 million – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On resumption

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Page 81.

HEAD 31 – MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$470,594, for Head 31, Ministry of Regional Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I merely want to reiterate some general remarks I have made on this whole question of Regional Ministers. We on this side of the House think that this expenditure is absolutely unnecessary. All it is doing is increasing the bureaucracy.

We settled for Proportional Representation. Our elections are held under the system of Proportional Representation and now we seem to be going back to the constituency system. As I said before, I am certain that Guyanese would benefit much more if the regions were represented by non-partisan civil servants who carry out much more efficiently all that is necessary to be carried out. You do not need to have these high-salaried people, these Regional State residences and all the other extravagancies. We can see already that it is nearly half a million dollars and we have not got the Minister's salaries, their personal preferences and all the rest that has to go with a ministerial position. This is an entirely unnecessary expenditure being imposed on the Guyanese people. Our District Commissioners would have been able to carry out a much more efficient job.

The Minister of State – Regional (East Berbice/Corentyne) (Mr. Clarke): Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member who just spoke did not ask any questions under this Head. He however questioned the whole concept of Regional Minister. It seems as though he has something against Ministers. I should like to suggest that the administration of the various regions will fall to public officers and that the Minister in the region is going to be the motivation, the project chaser. He is going to ensure that the Government's Development Programme within the region is carried out. That is his first task.

In addition, he is going to be a sort of Government representative within the region, and the people in the region will have the chance to meet and speak with a central Government

representative without having to come to Georgetown to the centre, thereby increasing contact with central Government in the region; they are going to be able to feel that they are properly serviced and secured.

I cannot understand the hon. Member's objections. I am really at a loss to discover how the question of Proportional Representation is introduced and I should really like the hon. Member to be much more thoughtful than he has been this afternoon.

Head 31, Ministry of Regional Development, \$470,594, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 82.

DIVISION XVII – MINISTRY OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$516,640 for Division XVII, Ministry of Regional Development stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, this page before me now bears out what I have said. Let us look at it. Subheads 1, 2, 3, and 4 over half a million dollars, \$516,640, for what? There are supposed to be six Regional Ministers. All these areas in the past have had their Land Rovers, their communication equipment; they have had all these things necessary to keep them in touch with the Central Government. Now even if they did not have enough what are we setting up? Let us look at the first legend: "To provide for the purchase of 14 Land Rovers." Land Transport \$182,000.

The next provision is \$172,400 for subhead 2, Water Transport. What is it for? "To provide for the purchase of five cabin cruisers, 13 motor boats and the construction of boat-houses", in addition to all the boats and all the other cruisers in the area.

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Subhead 3, Communication Equipment, \$104,000 – for what? “To provide for the purchase of 32 radio sets.” At the present moment we have communication equipment where we are in touch with these areas, but we still have to buy 32 radio sets for these six areas.

Subhead 4, Purchase of Equipment, provides \$58,240, and the legend states: “To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment.” I suppose that is the various things you have to put in the fancy regional officers of the various Ministers. Eighteen vessels for 6 Regional Ministers. This seems like a real picnic that we are setting up. Even the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs will be entitled to visit these areas as he told us on the last occasion. I suppose the other Ministers would want to visit the areas too. Are we setting up holiday resorts for these Ministers? The Government is telling us that there are no great complaints throughout the country, that the people are satisfied, that they are making progress. If there are no great complaints, why then are we setting up this bureaucracy? These are regular holiday camps we are setting for the Regional Ministers. If we are calling on the poor man to tighten his belt, again I repeat, let the Government start by examining its own expenditure.

4.40 p.m.

Mr. Clarke: Mr. Chairman, again we have not been dealt with fairly by the hon. Member on the other side. But, clearly, the hon. Member appreciates the need for the Regional Ministers to have certain facilities if they are to do their work properly. Let me agree with the hon. Member that it would be a waste of expenditure if, in setting up these Regional Ministers and equipping the Regional Ministers in the various regions, Government did not take account of existing facilities within the regions. Clearly, Government had to take account of what equipment and what facilities were in the regions and, having taken that into account, Government is satisfied that there is need for the provision of this additional equipment and facility which is being asked for by way of this capital estimate. Government is very anxious to and at all times we keep looking for areas of saving.

In going about the setting up of the regional administration, Government did not go looking for a number of new people to be recruited into the Public Service. What the Government did was to take account of the existing personnel within the Service and use existing personnel so far as that was possible. Therefore, Government is always looking for areas of saving and the hon. Member is less than honest in this House when he attempts to make us believe that Government will go on a wasteful provision of money so as to have certain Ministers living in luxury. None of the Regional Ministers want to live in luxury.

I would like to let the hon. Member know that he is as free as anyone else to visit the Regional Ministers and if at any time he can come to visit the Regional Ministers, we are going to be happy to take him on a tour with us so that he can visit the areas and meet the farmers in the various areas where development is taking place.

The hon. Member spoke earlier about the development of the cattle industry and he did not seem to know where the development is taking place. If he comes to East Berbice I will take him, by way of the Cabin cruiser and by way of the land rover, and show him where this development is taking place so that he would no longer live in a dream land.

Division XVII, Ministry of Regional Development - \$516,640 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 12 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC CORPORATIONS

The Chairman: Page 38. There is one correction on this page. Head 12, subhead 1 item (1), Total Personal Emoluments, under 1971 Actual should read \$10,320.

Question proposed that the sum of \$17,530 for Head 12, Ministry of Public Corporations, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 12, Ministry of Public Corporations - \$17,530 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 89 and 90.

HEAD 33 – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,723,867 for Head 33, Ministry of Economic Development, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, on page 89, subhead 1, item (20), Economic Adviser, the sum of \$15,000 is listed as the estimate for 1974. The Government has been changing Economic Advisers in the past to such an extent that one wonders whether it does, in fact, have an Economic Adviser at the moment. Is there a full-time Economic Adviser in the employment of the Government? Is he a full-time Civil Servant? Is someone acting in the post? What is the position? We ask this because the Government's economic policy leaves much to be desired or maybe it could be that the Government is not taking the advice of its Economic Adviser if it does have one. If the Government is not taking the advice then perhaps we should scrap the post and we could save \$15,000 by not having such a person. We would like to know what the position is.

I know at one time that the Economic Adviser was a gentleman who has since disappeared from the scene. I understand he did come back here for a brief moment but we should like to know a little more because this is the man who, presumably, has to advise the Government on the Development Plan, and we should like to know a little more about that.

Page 90, subhead 10, Subsidy Guyana Development Corporation. Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$370,000 is being asked for as a subsidy to the Guyana Development Corporation. We are looking for ways and means of economising and this here seems to be bureaucracy with such an

elaborately staffed Ministry of Economic Development. Surely, there should be no need to continue the Guyana Development Corporation. What is the justification for continuing this Guyana Development Corporation? Can we not do away with it and have its functions absorbed by the Ministry of Economic Development and let it come directly under the Minister and within the ambit of the Ministry of Economic Development so that the Minister can have direct control over it so that he can have all the expertise pooled in one Ministry and have all the work looked at on an overall basis? Undress there is some special or particular reason why there should be separate organisations –and I think it is at present housed very luxuriously in the Bank of Guyana Building – I recommend for the consideration of the hon. Minister the scrapping of the Guyana Development Corporation and the taking on of all the functions by the Ministry of Economic Development.

4.50 p.m.

Mrs. DaSilva: It is only a small point but we are trying to save money in every direction. I wish to ask a question under subhead 9, Contribution to U.N.I.C.E.F. Two years ago, I made a suggestion in this House that we ban imported Christmas cards and encourage the production of local ones and I am happy that one of the United Force has been accepted and has become a reality, but I did say at that time not to ban the importation of U.N.I.C.E.F. cards, for it is a very worthwhile organisation.

I should like to ask the hon. Minister, it may not be possible now for him to tell me without having given due notice in the form of a Question, how much money is being saved by persons not being allowed to import Christmas cards from overseas. He may not be able to give that figure now at short notice, but I was wondering if he would tell me if consideration is not being given to diverting that saving of the contributions to U.N.I.C.E.F. so that the amount we actually put into the fund would go down, and that the money \$3,000, \$2,000, or whatever it is would go to some other Head, for example, the old-age pensions, or to people receiving social assistance.

The Minister of Economic Development (Dr. King): I am sorry I was not here when this Head was begun, but I understand that the first question concerned the Economic Adviser. Who was the Economic Adviser? Who is the Economic Adviser? What does he do?

The Chairman: In addition to that, the hon. Member asked if Government is accepting the Economic Adviser's policy, because there have been such frequent changes.

Dr. King: Changes in What? Policy?

The Chairman: Policies and Economic Advisers. Policies and the persons who advise them in the economic division.

Dr. King: Well, the Economic Adviser is Mr. Winston King. This is a new post which had never existed in the Service before. The Economic Adviser concerns himself with analysing technical assistance as it is given by donor countries throughout the world, and trying to ascertain if there are discernible patterns of assistance. Having looked at these patterns, he is then able to advise on the best areas for technical assistance, and on the best terms that are possible. He has sometimes been described as a roving ambassador, because, having indentified the areas which give us the best terms for technical assistance, he travels and arranges loans and agreements and that sort of thing. We have not changed our Economic Adviser in this sense. This is the first time that we have ever had an Economic Adviser who specifically concerns himself with this aspect of development.

The second question that the hon. Member asked was: why was it that a subsidy was given to the Guyana Development Corporation? He suggested that the Guyana Development Corporation should be disbanded and incorporated into the Ministry of Economic Development. A decision has been made – it has been made for some time and I think it has been published in the newspapers – that the Guyana Development Corporation will be disbanded. In fact, the Guyana Development Corporation will be disbanded by the 31st December, 1973.

Like the hon. Member opposite us, we in this Government are concerned with saving, with reducing expenditure. We realise with the establishment of the Guyana State Corporation, with the establishment of the Agricultural Development Bank, with the establishment of the Mortgage Finance Bank, that the Guyana Credit Corporation and the Guyana Development Corporation are, to some extent, duplicating the operations of Guystac and these two new banks. We have therefore decided to dissolve the Guyana Credit Corporation, dissolve the Guyana Development Corporation, and establish in their stead a new Corporation called the Small Industries Development Corporation.

Sir, the trend in Government, you will probably have perceived, is to greater specialisation, so that instead of having one organisation dealing with a multiplicity of various types of activities, we have the agricultural bank dealing with agricultural credit, the housing bank dealing with housing credit. The new Corporation, the Small Industries Development Corporation, will deal with the development of small industries both for the private and the co-operative sectors. Guystac will take over some of the functions of the G.D.C. as will the new Corporation. I am afraid that once again we have anticipated the hon. Member's wishes and have done the thing that he would have liked us to do, even before he thought of it.

The third question, this time from the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, concerned U.N.I.C.E.F. If I remember her question correctly, she wanted to know how much money was being saved by the banning of Christmas cards. I am afraid this is a question properly for the Minister of Trade, and not being omniscient, I really cannot answer it. She did make a suggestion that some of the money being saved should be given to some charitable organisation. This is obviously something we will consider. It has certain merits. It has certain disadvantages in terms of anticipated expenditure but it is still worth considering. I am afraid I cannot answer her substantive question because I am not the substantive Minister.

Head 33, Ministry of Economic Development - \$1,723,867 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: We continue on page 90, \$22,374,600, Division XIX, Ministry of Economic Development.

DIVISION XIX – MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Question proposed that the sum of \$22,374,600 for Division XIX, Ministry of Economic Development, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 3, UNDP Projects. The sum of \$1,491,000 is being asked for and the legend states: “To provide for studies related to transport planning. UNDP Grant.” I wonder whether the hon. Minister would elaborate on these two words, “transport planning.” I ask this because I recollect quite distinctly that we already have a highway needs study report by a United Nations team. In fact, one of the United Nations experts turned out not to be an expert – the hon. Minister knows that very well – and we promptly packed him back to where he came from. We did utilise thereafter the United Nations economist, and, with the very able assistance of the Guyanese experts in the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics, as it was at the time, the study was completed. It was a very exhaustive document, a thick book.

If it is in any way related – it says “transport” here, and immediately I thought of that report – perhaps the hon. Minister will say if he is aware whether there will be any overlapping. As far as I know, nothing has been done about that report. It cost at least \$½ million, and we wonder whether there is not some duplication here. It was a United Nations Report.

5 p.m.

In respect of subhead 8, “Publication of Development Plan”, why do we want \$25,000 to publish this Development Plan? A second Development Plan 1972-1976 is nicely put together here. This is 1973 and this Plan has been roneoed. It has been circulated for some time now and one wonders why it is that \$25,000 is now necessary for publishing more of it. What are we

going to do with the copies? Why should these roneo copies cost so much unless it is that we propose printing them now.

In respect of subhead 10, Tourist Development, we have in front of us the Amazon and the Orinoco. We do not have lovely blue waters, but the Guyana Government says that we can develop tourism. The sum of \$1,200,000 is proposed in the Estimates for tourist development. Certainly I have heard said that we can develop a type of safari tourist trade here. I certainly would like to know more about it. The legend says, "To provide for the development of holiday resorts Foreign loan anticipated." Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us where is it proposed to have these holiday resorts for \$1,200,000. This "Foreign loan" that is anticipated, whom are we getting it from? I do not think it will come from the Chinese. They are giving us something else from what I see here. Perhaps the hon. Minister would tell us which one of the lending agencies will be giving us this loan.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Economic Development.

Dr. King: The first question concerns the U.N.D.P. projects to provide for studies related to transport planning. Transport planning is a rather esoteric business and rather difficult. One has, of course, to look at the physical capabilities of the particular country, its roads, its topography, its rivers and that sort of thing. One has to relate these to the natural resources and potential of the areas through which one is going to put the roads. One has to relate these to the economic philosophies of the particular country one is planning for. So although in Guyana we have already outlined a transport plan, we need to look at this plan in much greater detail.

We have approached the United Nations Development Programme to assist us in this. They have sent a team which is at present working out of the Ministry of Economic Development. This team forms a nucleus of a transport planning unit which will eventually become a completely Guyanese organisation. At present Guyanese work side by side with the foreigners, and they contribute in no small measure to the work of the unit.

In addition to this, no overlapping it but complementing it, is a Transport Management group in the Ministry of Works and Communications. This group examine other aspects of the problem: the type of vehicles to be put on the roads, the number of vehicles to be allowed on the roads, the relationship between highway and river transportation, and that sort of thing. These two approaches, though separate, are complementary and work in fact in tandem. There is therefore no conflict at all between these two approaches to planning for the transport sector.

I should like to make another point: We will depend for much of the financing of our transport needs, and our road building needs on World Bank assistance. Indeed, it is because we asked the World Bank for assistance for road building that we were advised that it would be necessary to work out the details very clearly. Hence this U.N.D.P. project. But I wish to assure the hon. Member across the floor that there is no overlapping, that the two units are complementary and that they both serve useful purposes to the community.

The second question concerns the publication of the Development Plan. The think which the hon. Member is now holding in his right hand is the draft Development Plan for 1972-1976. He will notice this if he looks at it carefully. As the hon. Member himself said some time last week, this Plan has not been passed by this House as yet. It is the *draft* Development Plan.

Because this Government says it is a consultative democracy and because it is in fact a consultative democracy we have, after producing the Plan, gone throughout the length and breadth of Guyana and have discussed it with the people who would be responsible for its implementation. We have got some very excellent advice from people all over the country; which advice we intend to incorporate into the Plan. In fact we intend to amend the Plan before we bring it to the House so that the Plan, when it comes to this House will be a people's Plan and not merely the Government's Plan. We do need to spend a certain amount of money in printing the Plan. The estimate which we have for printing this Plan is \$25,000. The draft Plan is roneoed, but the final Plan will be printed.

The third question concerns tourist development. It really is most amazing how some people can have a big document in their hands for years, wave it about the place, refer to selected pieces of information in it and not understand the document. There is in that document a chapter devoted to tourist development. In that document are identified the areas where we intend to establish tourist resorts.

However, before I talk about tourist resorts in themselves I wish to talk about the Government's tourist development policy. This Government does not believe that tourism is the answer to all our problems. We have seen in other parts of the world how tourism disrupts and distorts the economy; how tourism leads to inflation; how tourism leads to a degree of malfunction of the mind in the sense that the local inhabitants tend to think that the American, or the British, or the German, or what have you, way of life is the best way of life; how it leads to a failure to formulate a mature philosophy of life. This Government abhors this sort of tourism. What we intend to do is to control tourism in this country.

First and foremost, the tourist resorts which we are going to establish are to be established for the benefit of Guyanese so that they themselves might be able to see, in relative comfort, the vast areas of this country and the many beauties of this country.

Tourist resorts will be established in many places: three or four in the Rupununi, one at Kaieteur, two or three on the coast, specifically one on the Corentyne coast and one on the Essequibo coast. During the plan-period we intend to establish, if my memory is correct, about 10 tourist resorts of a modest nature. However, although modest they will provide a certain degree of service to the people who want to visit them.

The hon. Member asked from where the money was coming. We have already asked the Caribbean Development Bank for assistance in this project. In fact the suggestion came from them that we should ask them. So it is reasonable to expect that they will support our request for assistance. The type of tourism which we are attempting to foster will be on which we can

contain and which, as I said, will be primarily for the Guyanese themselves. I hope that answers the hon. Member's question.

Division XIX, Ministry of Economic Development - \$22,374,600 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

5.10 p.m.

HEAD 18 – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,898,503 for Head 18, Ministry of Information and Culture stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: There are some minor corrections on pages 51 and 52. On page 51, Head 18, insert "\$44,223" as the "Carried Forward" total in the last column. On page 52 –

- (a) substitute "410,714" for "419,714" opposite "Total Personal Emoluments" in the "1973 Revised Estimates" column;
- (b) opposite subhead 21, History and Culture, substitute "105,600" for \$85,600 in the "1974 Estimates" column;

substitute "80,000" for "30,000" in the "1973" Approved Estimates" column and "72,278" for "88,278" in the "1972 Actual" column;
- (c) opposite subhead 25, Sports Training, substitute "19,600" for "15,000" in the "1974 Estimates" column;
- (d) opposite subhead 29, Staff, Technical and Development, substitute "36,000" for "60,000" in the "1974 Estimates" column;
- (e) substitute "New subhead created by Supplementary Estimates in 1973, but no longer required" for Ditto" at "b" of the Explanatory Notes.

Mr. Hope: With respect to subhead 25, Sports Training, I thought I heard you say \$19,600. It should be \$19,000.

The Chairman: Against subhead 25, Sports Training, substitute “\$19,000” for “\$15,000”. Thank you, hon. Minister.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, on page 52, I should like to speak on 6, 7, 8, 11, 18, 20, 21, and 26. I should like to deal with subheads 6, 7, 8, 11, and 20 together because they deal with aspects of publicity. I should like to ask the hon. Minister what are her plans with regard to publishing and publicising by the Ministry of Information and Culture. For example, in subhead 7, Distribution Expense, the Revised Estimates in 1973 was \$28,000. How we are being asked to vote \$19,500. In subhead 20 it was \$338,800 and now we are being asked for \$214,000. I suppose the obvious explanation was Elections so we would not go over all that again. The Minister is shaking her head so I should be glad if she would give the reason behind it. In this Ministry of Information and Culture she has the weapon, as it were, at her disposal and we have great need in Guyana for a terrific amount of education amongst our people.

I want to ask the Minister what plans her Ministry has for using the weapons at her disposal – the written word, the broadcast, the films and so on. I have here before me a clipping from the *Guyana Graphic* of 30th October, 1973; it is in connection with the Commonwealth Caribbean Health Meeting held in Trinidad when Dr. Phillip Boyd spoke. The headline has to do with a cholera warning but I am not dealing with that aspect right now. I am dealing with the paragraph which states that the problem in this area is a problem of not knowing and not being motivated. I think this is where the Ministry of Information and Culture can do so much to help the work of the Ministries of Education and of Health. I want to ask the hon. Minister what plans her Ministry has for handling this.

Subhead 18, Expenses, Film Censorship. Last year, the Ministry of Information and Culture, when we were doing Estimates, told us of the plans for the revision of the Board of

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Censors and we looked for some improvement in the films that we are getting. I am afraid we have not seen much, if any, improvement. We still have sex, crime and violence. Could the hon. Minister say what really is going on with the Board of Censors? Have any changes been made. Can the cinema owners still select the censors they know will pass anything and forget to tell the others what day the film is being shown. I should like the hon. Minister to tell this House what the Government is doing because more and more people are concerned, particularly the parents, as there are no good films for children.

Subhead 20, Publishing and Publicising: I notice that the legend states: “Revised salaries and increased activity.” Obviously if you are having revised salaries and increased activity you should have a bigger provision than you had in 1973. I do not quite follow how it is that the amount we are asked to vote is smaller. The Revised Estimates for 1973 were \$338,800 and now we are being asked to vote \$214,000.

5.20 p.m.

Subhead 21, History and Culture. This provision, at \$85,600 is still lower than in 1973 so I wonder whether the Minister can explain it. We see the debate on Estimates as an opportunity to get information as we should like to know what are the Minister’s plans in her Ministry for History and Culture. We are striving to build a nation out of six peoples and all the six races of Guyana are expected to be able to contribute to the building of this nation. I am not going to dwell again on the details about obeah. This is not the time to start obeah dissertation all over again. We are not even going to talk about those who are using it as an opportunity to make something out of nothing, but we recognise, and we have been asked to recognise, that obeah is part of the culture brought by the forefathers of those Guyanese of African descent and, in as much as this is so, we must remember that the other five races which came to Guyana also brought parts of their culture.

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Culture is like love because it has no national boundaries. It is international, it is worldwide and definitely we have got to be a cultured nation not just to keep in our own small place, in our own country, unto ourselves because cultured people are citizens of the world and our children must be exposed not only to our own Guyanese culture and the culture of our region, but to worldwide culture. We give first preference to our own but they must at the same time be exposed to other cultures or we will have young people growing up with tight little minds. It is not a question of revolution but it is a question of plain common sense. Would the hon. Minister please tell me what the plans are for doing this and tell us how she plans to go about this? This is the time, as I said, to have these matters told to us.

Subhead 26, Sports and Games. Remembering what was stated in the President's Address about the imbalance in sport and remember, too, that we have recently had 'Reds' Perreira appointed as Sports Organiser to go into sports and games, we are looking to see the progress in this area and we are looking to see everybody taking part. I remember that I said at that time that in sports, unlike other things, it is not a question of godfather and people you know. You get into cricket teams and football teams on your ability; this happens nowadays. When you go to a football match or cricket match you hear spectators shouting for Kanhai as much as you hear them shouting for Butcher. So race does not come into games as it does in other things.

I should like to suggest to the hon. Minister that we are trying at the time of the debate on Estimates to see how we can have a thousand dollars here or there and what we can do to build our country. We have in Guyana many young players who represent the country in the Caribbean and in other areas in hockey, cricket, football, tennis and all the various sports. Many of them have had opportunities through being assisted to reach the standard they have. Could they not in turn come back and give some assistance to the young people by way of coaching them? In this way, they would be giving of their experience, their benefit and their knowledge free towards helping to build our young people to build our nation.

Could the hon. Minister say if there is any such thought in her mind for her Ministry? Please let us know what is being done in this respect to get people who have knowledge in this field to help on a voluntary basis to coach the young people. If as many people as possible throw in their weight it should not take too much time or cost. I will appreciate the Minister's comments.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Information and Culture.

The Minister of Information and Culture (Miss Field-Ridley): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I must say that I welcome the questions asked by the hon. Member on the other side and what I identify as a genuine desire to understand what is happening in the Ministry in terms of the task which has been entrusted to us. First of all, she raised the question of our plans in terms of publicising, publishing, propaganda information and education. It is a little difficult to say what are our plans in great detail at a session like this but, perhaps, we ought to be aware of a basic distinction between the work of the Ministry of Information in handling general publicity for Government general information for Government, general education at some levels for Government and the specialised work for some Ministries like the Ministry of Agriculture, for example, which has in it a Public Relations Unit which handles specialist education – the education programme that would back up the work of the Field Officers, for example. The same kind of operation is done in the Ministry of Health as well for specialist education in those fields; few other Ministries have the same kind of arrangement.

I agree with the hon. Member completely that the Ministry of Information has a general task and would provide a very useful function by letting people know what is being done, what areas of help and co-operation are open to them and, generally, to keep them informed of the very many things that are happening at all levels within our country. We have tried to do this. And let me say that I have always been heartened by that Member's emphasis on the importance of propaganda. Like every other Minister I certainly think we ought to be spending much more in this area than we have in the past. But I remember, too, very clearly the howls of Opposition

Members whenever the Ministry of Information and Culture got an addition to its votes. They accuse us of Government brainwashing or whitewashing or blackwashing or something or the other, but I think that this particular Member appreciates the importance of this exercise. In a budget there is always the question of balancing priorities; whether you shall spend more in this budget on the productive sector, and perhaps not quite as much as the particular Minister would like to see on this Head.

But, even with the budgetary limits that we have, we are attempting to do two things. We are attempting to use the National Press – and I must say that we find them co-operative – to publicise information that emanates very frequently from sections of the Government about what is happening. We have found all the national Press very interested. The emphasis here is on “national” as distinct from “Party”. There is, at least, one Party publication which is definitely not co-operative. We have found all the national Press very interested and helpful in terms of letting the people know what is happening and awakening a response from them by using issues for discussion points within the radio or the newspaper.

As Minister of Information for Government I am not always in agreement with what the papers say or in agreement with the kind of emphasis they always put on particular topics, but this is a matter for the discretion of the newspaper and it is a discretion which I, for one, would not like to take away from them. But this is one area in which we do use the Press. We try in the Ministry, as far as possible, to feed them information and they, on their own initiative, find information.

We publish documents, booklets, pamphlets, interrupters, fax – I think it is a very useful publication and I am sure the hon. Member agrees – as a direct attempt to meet people. We use the system of Field Officers to try to get these published works out to the people of this country. As you probably know, we have a system of District Officers. The country is divided into districts. There are at least two officers stationed in every district and they serve two roles: the distribute the literature of the Ministry and they bring in a feedback on how people are looking at

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the development programme; what is their reaction to pig farming; what sort of assistance they need; how have the projects in the area progressed. We try to keep this two-way process going and we will continue with that exercise.

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In addition to this, we also attempt, not quite so much, however, to let those Guyanese and West Indian citizens overseas know about what is happening in their country, or in a part of the world in which they are vitally interested. With this in mind, we do some publications, not as many as I would like, particularly designed for the person who is outside of Guyana, and who does not have the day-to-day information from the newspapers, from the radio, that we in Guyana have.

We have also established contact with various newspapers and publications, and, from time to time, they ask us for information about how we see what is happening in Guyana. Very frequently, it does not always turn out in the way that we like, but some of them very few of them, try to understand the development process in this country; they try to understand the problems that a developing country faces, and they try to project the really unique ways in which Guyana is tackling these problems.

All of this is supported by the photographic section. Once sees the results in the press, or in our publications, and by the film unit. The film unit, until the dubbing theatre is finished, and even after that, in the area of colour, is not really equipped to produce films very quickly. As a result, we have a problem in producing newsreels in that they do not come out sufficiently close to the event to make it really a matter of great interest for people. It affects the handling of the particular material that we are dealing with.

I am sure the hon. Member has seen films on themes. This has been our thrust, on agriculture development, on housing, on various themes. We use films because we find, and I am

sure hon. Members accept this, it is a very powerful instrument of education, as a way of reaching people. Here again, we get strong reactions from the people for whom we make the films, and this influences us in the way we do other things. They tell us very clearly what they like about a film, what they do not like, and this influence the way we handle many of the themes that we are treating.

We continue this programme in 1973, but we have an additional input which is a strong emphasis on training, which will not be reflected in this vote. We find that to get our film unit very professional, we need to make an investment in training those young men who have been doing a good job, but whose training has been largely within the Ministry itself. We want to give them an opportunity for further and wider exposure.

Among our newsmen are journalists. Although we do have a keen group of young men and women, nevertheless we have not treated journalism very seriously in Guyana, and we have not made sufficient effort to provide professional training for journalists. To this end, there is reflected in the capital vote, our input for the establishment of a school of journalism at the University of Guyana. We plan to start off by training the people both within the Government sector and in the private sector because we feel that the co-operation that exists must continue so that they become professional journalists. Many of them have been doing a good job but I think they will improve if there is an input of training added to the work they are doing.

The hon. Member went on then to talk about film censorship and reminded me, quite rightly, of the plans that I had enunciated last year for changing this kind of composition of the film censorship board. Before I put those plans into execution, I thought that a good exercise for myself would be to join in the board of film censors for a period of time, to see exactly how they went about their exercise, what were the problems that they face, and how it could be improved.

After having done that exercise for about four days per week for about two weeks, one thing that came out very clearly was that I had made what, I think, was not a correct assessment

of the work involved. Mr. Chairman, I had, as you remember, suggested that we should have permanent film censors, who would be paid by the Ministry. I found, and the censors agreed with me, that after you had censored films four days a week for two weeks, you had run so stale that your critical faculty was really going to sleep as you saw a film in front of you. Therefore I have been re-looking at those proposals. At the moment I feel, and I am discussing this, that really what we should have is a group of voluntary workers or censors and a group of permanent censors, so we do not put the burden of censoring – it can be a burden – on these people. I agree with the hon. Member that we have a lot to desire in terms of the quality of filming but there are some real problems. There are also some unreal problems that are presented by the distributors.

A board of film censors is not the complete answer to getting into the country the films that we would like to have in that they perform what is essentially a very negative role. The distributor decides what films he would like to bring in, and then the film censor decides whether that film could be permitted. Guided by certain trends of thought, he decides whether that film can be permitted to be shown. Now that does not go far enough. Clearly, what we need to do is to have some agency that taps the kind of films we would like to see or, even better yet, a film industry in Guyana. I really feel very strongly that we should try to achieve this, and we have taken some steps towards doing this. I think the training that we are projecting for next year in the film unit will help towards that exercise but there is much more that needs to be done that we have started talking about.

I think, on the whole, that there is another problem that we need to face. There are some films that are done that are technically good but, to my mind, not suited to a country that is multi-racial as we are, and that is predominantly black. By “black” I mean non-white, so that you have to watch very carefully some films that, though they make good viewing, project a message that would be very undesirable within this country. There are others that have the message but are not very well done, so it is very difficult to get the mixture of the two. In addition to which, of course, these films cost much more than the cheap Wang-Yu kind of films. I suppose what is

needed here is some kind of incentive, which I have not worked out, which would encourage the distributor to bring in the sort of films that we feel ought to be shown.

There is just one final point. In censoring films or deciding what films are to be shown, we are involved in a very subjective exercise and your particular idea of the kind of film that should be shown might not accord with my own idea. Therefore, we try to find what can be a representative cross section of the people of Guyana, and we make these their censors. Let me say clearly, that I think that is a more logical way of going about it than to have our tastes dictated to, as they tend to be, by the distributor who brings in a film merely motivated by the profit idea. But there will always be controversy about the kind of film, because of the differences of opinion. I myself as Minister have been to several viewings and have left disagreeing completely with the censors, but in most cases I felt that the particular point of view on which I disagreed was one that was so subjective that I ought not to interfere with what was the unanimous view of the censors in that situation. We are still looking at that area.

In the area of history and culture, I think the hon. Member made a very good point in that one of the most important goals of this Government and ideals of this Government is to foster and preserve a sense of national unity within our country. She did mention obeah and conceded that it was part of the culture of a large group who came to Guyana, the African group.

She also drew our attention to the fact that other groups within Guyana had peculiar bits of culture that related to their own lives. Perhaps I should point out to her that the Africans within our community were the only people who had their culture and their beliefs actively discriminated against in terms of law and society. It is the only bit of culture – and remember, what we are doing is repealing an existing provision of the law, not writing new law. All that we are doing, in fact, is removing a disability that discriminated against the culture of one section of the community. When that has been achieved, then, as last, we can say that as far as the law is concerned there is some measure of equality. I think this is an important point to bear in mind.

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We are, in fact, redressing the balance of the old days to bring a situation which will foster national unity. If you despise the culture that gave birth to one group of your citizens you will never be able to operate in a system of mutual respect.

Having said that I want to go on to say that I do not see our society as one of six races. I see our society as one of Guyanese. [Applause] And the more we continue emphasising that policy the greater our chances for preserving our country will be and the greater our chances for promoting a national culture will be.

If we continue – those of us who are in favour of national unity – describing ourselves as the land of six peoples then we will have people, as we have recently seen in the national press, advocating a division of the country in terms of racial grouping, which is absolute nonsense. It is self-destructive. It will destroy ourselves and our country. Therefore, in terms of this we have planned a programme, which is reflected in the Estimates, of establishing five rural centres which will be focal points to encourage the expression of culture and performing arts within our communities.

From these centres workers will research into the culture of the area which they are serving and will build upon that rather than introducing something new into the area.

The hon. Member made a point that there was a decrease in the expenditure. That is quite right in terms of the current expenditure but if you balance the total expenditure, taking into account the capital expenditure, you will find that, in fact, that assessment is not accurate.

There are certain infrastructures that we have to put down to make a reality of what we have planned. This year we shall certainly have to make sure that those centres that I have been talking about are built.

I have already mentioned that our Institute of Creative Arts has started, in one section, dance. We have identified persons to start in other sections. We have identified persons to take charge of drama, one of literature, one of music. During this year we shall start with this. As far as possible we shall use the cultural centre, phase 1 of which will be completed this year. Perhaps in the following years we shall add on to that.

In the President's Address we did identify sports and games as an area for great emphasis. Here again if you look at the capital provisions you will find that we are making some very serious attempts to meet what is one of the greatest inhibitions towards the participation in sports which is the provisions of facilities.

During 1974 we plan to build a velodrome and a small sports complex in the south of Georgetown. We have also ear-marked money to improve facilities throughout the country and particularly in the regions.

We have provided in our Estimates to give each Sport Organiser control over a supply of equipment which he can give out to clubs on loan so that they will be able to develop and express their interest in sports.

In terms of getting people skilled in particular sports to take part at a voluntary level, let me make one point: There are some professional in our society who live by this, our cricketers for example. For these people it is essential to pay them because you are robbing the man of his livelihood. This is why we have treated our cricketers in this way. But there are many people who are giving voluntary help. I can think of hockey. I can think of football. I can think of rugby. I can think of basketball. I can think of boxing where you have people who are heroes of yesterday who are in fact training the young people, encouraging them. Recently the Hockey Association has held a series of training classes for coaches as well as players and they used their own players, gave them additional help. They have planned a programme which has started, to

develop hockey within the areas. There are many people, perhaps we do not talk about them enough who do give voluntary help in sport. Were it not for this I doubt whether sport in this country would have been as vital as it is now. I think I have covered all the questions the hon. Member asked. [Applause]

Head 18, Ministry of Information and Culture - \$1,898,503 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XI – MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,850,000 for Division XI, Ministry of Information and Culture, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: There are a few questions I should like to ask on page 53, subheads 5, 8 and 11. Some of my questions have already been incorporated into the answers the hon. Minister gave under the previous Head. There are a few points I should like to clarify and one comment also I should like to make.

The hon. Minister said that we must all think of ourselves as Guyanese and not the six races that make up Guyana. I could not agree with her more. Definitely all of us are Guyanese. We always have to remember this first and foremost but we cannot lose sight of the fact that generations back our forefathers came from Africa, India, Madeira, China and where have you to make up our six races. With them they brought the cultures and customs of their countries. That is why in our beautiful Guyana we have so much to gain from us all contributing from the cultures of our six ethnic groups which make up our one Guyanese group. Do not let us waste time fighting race against race but let us work together to build our Guyanese nation making use of all that we can contribute towards it.

I have a specific question under subhead 5, “Development of Sport”, the area which does so much to weld us together. The hon. Minister spoke about provision for a sports hall and a cycled velodrome, and for the development of the grounds. I was wondering if there is any comment the hon. Minister would care to make on what is termed “the National Sports Stadium.” I do not hear much about it now-a-days. The question is: will this form part? This cannot form part according to what the hon. Minister said because the hon. Minister has selected a special arena where this will go. What are the plans for the National Sports Stadium? The legend against subhead 8, Government Archives, the National Trust, reads: “To provide for the construction of Archival building, the appointment of officers and employees of the National Trust and the preservation of sites identified as a national monuments.” I wonder if the time has come for the hon. Minister to make a statement and clearly identify where these national monuments are. We had lots of guesses in the newspapers very soon after the Bill was passed by the House. Some of them are probably right because they are all buildings of national historical interest and beauty but it was never formally ratified or declared as such by the hon. Minister. I was wondering if the time has not come for her to make a statement now as to which monuments will be identified as national monuments. Maybe she will not be able to give all. She might be able to give some or she might not be able to give any at this moment but I look forward to hearing what she has to say.

Subhead 11, deals with the School of Journalism to be established at the University of Guyana. I have no fault to find with this. I agree with the hon. Minister that we must have our journalists properly trained. There is one question I should like to ask her. In our Guyana today we are struggling for survival – nobody denies this. We are not classified as an L.D.C. but our standard is just a bit above that of an L.D.C. We just make it as it were. Does the hon. Minister not think it is time we establish our priorities? Whilst I have nothing against a school of journalism being formed at the University of Guyana does she not think there ought to be a sort of an order as to which should come before which and should we not consider a school of medicine taking precedence over a school of journalism? I should like comments from the hon. Minister please.

5.50 p.m.

Miss Field-Ridley: Mr. Chairman, first of all, I will answer the question asked by the hon. Member about plans for the Sports Stadium. This has not been included in this development plan that we are working to and which guides the kind of selections we have made for the coming year, because it is my view that even before we put up a Stadium we must establish facilities throughout the country which will establish at what is now commonly called the grassroot level an interest and expertise in sport. I think that should have priority to a national stadium and this is why we are doing it in that order. It is not that we have shelved our hope for having a National Stadium but in that this Plan I feel, as Minister of Sport, and my advisers have recommended, that it is much more important to use our resources to establish facilities in very many areas so that there is a general wide development of sport.

On the question of national monuments, I should not like to identify national monuments because at the moment the National Trust is preparing a list and I would not want to prejudice their recommendations at all. They are hoping to complete this by the end of this year.

On the question of priorities and the School of Journalism, I do not pre-empt the Minister of Health or the Minister of Education but I suspect you will find that to establish a School of Medicine will cost nothing in the vicinity of \$50,000. The hon. Member herself has remarked on the fact that we are spending a little less on publicising and publishing compared with last year. Now, because we have established priorities, as she says, there is limit to how much a Ministry like mine can get. **[Interruption by Mrs. DaSilva.]**

Whether we have Elections or not, the hon. Member herself conceded that it is vitally important to publish – I think that was the word she used – and publicise what is happening in the country. Perhaps, because we are not journalists, we do not have the respect for that profession that we ought to have. If she wants that done then we must have the tools to do it, and the people who are expected to do it must be equipped to do it. I could not perform the functions

of a journalist and, with respect, I should like to suggest that the hon. Member on the other side could not. Like any other professional, he must be trained if one is to expect him to do the things that the hon. Member herself has been asking him to do. To me it seems that she contradicts herself when she says that my Ministry of Information ought to do much more in publicising what is happening in the country, education about health projects, education about agricultural projects and at the same time says that a School of Journalism is not one of priority. We have fitted this in terms of the kind of money that can be spent. I should like to suggest that perhaps she does not understand well enough the importance of training in journalism; perhaps she does not regard the journalist as a professional which he is and must be.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the hon. Minister for her explanation. I do appreciate journalists being professional people and I do appreciate the need for having people who can do the work of publishing and putting together the publications that the Ministry needs. But I merely said to the hon. Minister that we have to establish our priorities. Certainly I still will not change my views that it is more important for us in Guyana to establish a Faculty of Medicine at the University of Guyana than it is to establish a School of Journalism. This is of vital importance.

I am not comparing the cost at the moment, that is a different matter. We are not talking about how much you can get for \$50,000 worth. I am discussing the need and which ought to come first. You cannot get away from that. There are people competent enough in the Ministry of Information to deal with publications; they have been doing this.

Incidentally, I am not sure if the hon. Minister understood me when I laid stress, but let us get away a little from the propaganda of what the Government is doing in Guyana. Although it is necessary for people to know what is being done in the country, let us get the education that is needed across to our people. I quoted from what was said at the Caribbean Health Ministers' Conference held in Trinidad. What is needed is for our people to be informed on sanitation, on the right types of food to eat. **[Mr. Green:** "That is propaganda."] That is not propaganda, that is

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5.50 – 6 p.m.

for the building of the nation and in it you incorporate what are the goals of the nation; it is education we need, a vast education programme. When we come to deal with the Ministry of Education I am sure I am going to get a lot of support from the Minister because we need a lot of people in so many fields, – in health, in nutrition, in even helping the hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security with his N.I.S. We need that type of information and we need it going out by way of circulars, by way of publications and films when we can get around to them I understand the problems and difficulties with that. But within her Ministry I still say there are people competent and capable of handling that and let us get on with establishing our priorities putting first things first. I still maintain that we need a School of Medicine before a School of Journalism.

Miss Field-Ridley: Very briefly, Mr. Chairman. We cannot have what the hon. Member described as education unless we have the people to do it. Secondly, propaganda is not a bad word. It does not imply, as the hon. Member seems to think, that we are producing doctors or biased information. Propaganda is very simply a news function, an information function, an education function. What the hon. Member has been talking about is propaganda.

Division XI, Ministry of Information and Culture, \$1,850,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Pages 54 and 55.

HEAD 19 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$691,394 for Head 19, Ministry of Home Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

6 p.m.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, page 55. I should like to make a short comment on subhead 5 – Telephone. If we look at that item the 1973 Approved Estimate was \$220,000, the 1973 Revised Estimate was \$720,000 and it is not in respect of arrears for telephone rents for 1972 account. The legend says “Increased use of telephone by Police Departments.” So the total amount of \$720,000 is for 1973 accounts alone.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh, I do not wish to interrupt you, but I think that there was a Supplementary paper showing an increase of \$500,000 for the use of telephones by the Police. Here the projected estimate for 1974 is \$350,000. It would be less than the \$720,000 but it is greater than the Approved Estimate.

Mr. Singh: Yes, sir, we will wait and see. I was going to suggest that this figure being asked for in 1974 is not realistic and the Minister need more than that. I am warning the Minister that we should wait and see how soon supplementaries will be asked for.

Subhead 9 – Expenses – Elections Commission. The sum being asked for here for 1974 is \$7,500. The Revised Estimate for 1973 when there was an election – in fact, a “selection”, - was \$7,000 so that without any “selection” or election in 1974, except that perhaps there will be Local Government Elections, the amount being asked for is \$7,500 which is more than in 1973. In view of what has happened in the past and in view of all that we know, this seems to be an absolute waste of money. I think the taxpayers are entitled to a better deal. It is an insult to the Guyanese taxpayers after having “selected”, to ask for more money under this head in 1974 than in 1973. Are we having another election in 1974? Certainly not general elections, because the Government has got its two-thirds majority. I would normally have moved for the deletion of this item but I am realistic, I recognise the realities of the situation over there, but it would be a waste of time considering the attitude of the Government. I am merely saying that this is a waste of public money.

Subhead 13 – Republic Day Celebrations. We are talking about the small man making sacrifices and here we are once again asking for money for fun and fetes. Let us look at the pattern. The actual amount spent in 1971 was \$19,990; in 1972 it was \$15,000. The Approved and Revised Estimates for 1973 all shown as \$20,000 each. In 1974 we are putting on an additional \$5,000. Why are we doing this? The people of Guyana want bread, they do not want circuses. If we are talking about economising and making sacrifices, then it is really unfair to the Guyanese taxpayers to add another \$5,000 for this subhead, Republic Day Celebrations.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister, Mr. Mingo.

The Minister of State for Home Affairs (Mr. Mingo): Mr. Chairman, I think the last time when we came to Parliament for Supplementary Estimates, subhead 5 was dealt with. As regards subhead 9, Expenses – Elections Commission, I wish to draw to the hon. Member's attention that the increase was necessary because the cost of printing has gone up. The increase is also necessary for the payment of wages as a result of the salaries revision which took place last year. This explains exactly why we ask for more money here.

In the case of the Republic Day Celebrations, there have also been some increases in expenditure. We hope to be able to have next year's celebrations on a grander scale. We are also trying to re-organise our finances so as to ensure that we will at least get something from our Celebrations. It means, therefore, that the increase here is necessary for the higher cost of advertisements, lighting cost and more things of this sort. So we need more money to make the Celebrations as grand as possible. This is a National Celebration where everybody in Guyana is expected to take part. The people in the regions have been encouraged to take part and everybody joins in the celebration. It is not a question of providing money for the 'big boys' as the hon. Member would like to call it. This is a case where everybody, right down to grass-root level, will participate. A National Day is an important day for any country and we in Guyana are not going to allow people to deter us from projecting the importance of our National Day.

Head 19, Ministry of Home Affairs - \$691,394 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 20 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

POLICE

Question proposed that the sum of \$14,366,518 for Head 20, Ministry of Home Affairs – Police, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, page 57, subhead 20, Prevention and Detection of Crime. During the application for supplementary provisions, I did speak on this subhead and I have no intention of reiterating what I said about the fact that so many crimes are still unsolved. But I merely should like to ask the hon. Minister whether he had looked into the complaint I made on the last occasion that traffic policemen were involved on busy Saturday mornings on the public highways stopping hire-cars and selling the *New Nation*. I hope a stop has been put to that practice. It is wrong for policemen to be indulging in that kind of party activity. I will say no more because I have a certain amount of respect for the integrity and the dedication of the hon. Minister and I hope he has put a stop to that.

I will now deal with subhead 23, Passports. These figures are very revealing. If we note, in 1971 the actual amount spent was \$596, in 1972 the sum was \$14,255; in 1973 the Approved Estimate was \$10,000 but the Revised Estimate stated \$15,000 and now in the 1974 Estimates it is \$25,000 and the legend says “Increase in demand locally and at foreign Missions.”

6.10 p.m.

Why is it that there is this increase in demand? This is a clear indication of the dissatisfaction which is at the present moment operating in the minds of the Guyanese people. Almost everyone wants a passport so that if he gets the opportunity, he can clear out of this country.

The thinking seems to be that people are much happier to be second or third-class citizens in another country where they can be happy and enjoy peace of mind, even in spite of the climate being cold; they can go out and not suffer from choke and rob, the shortages of foodstuffs, the long line outside the Guyana Marketing Corporation for a little bit of cooking oil, fainting there in the lines as they have done on so many occasions. This is in fact a definite indication to the Government to rethink its policies because the Guyanese people are dissatisfied and they are dissatisfied in a very big way.

Subhead 34, Road Traffic Education. The sum of \$14,000 was provided in 1973 and the same amount is sought for 1974. This is not a significant figure in view of the fact that there are so many accidents at the present moment. It is a small amount of money when we think in terms of \$25,000 for fetes, for celebrations, and entertainment. We are spending a mere \$14,000 for road traffic education. We are embarked on a programme of economy, and it may well be said we are economising here. We should economise on many of the other items of entertainment and send up figures like these so that we can at least try to bring down astronomical rate of accidents and the resulting deaths in the country at the present time.

Concurrently with this, I should like to say that more can be done to solicit the assistance of voluntary organisations in the country. I know, for example, the present Commissioner of Police, Mr. Henry Fraser, as a member of the Lions Club of Central Demerara, is doing a tremendous job in this field. He should be complimented for it. I know that as head of that Committee, as a programme whereby all along the East Bank there are competitions, there are rivalries, so as to liven up traffic education among our young people, and I should like to commend that kind of scheme to the Police Department as a whole.

All the people who are involved in road traffic education, if the Government does not provide them with the money, if the Government is providing only \$14,000, then please will they solicit the help of voluntary organisations in trying to bring down this high accident rate, and save our human resources, in terms of manpower, that are wasted by this high death rate.

Going over to page 58, subhead 39, Control of Explosives, the Approved Estimates provided \$31,000. The Revised Estimates show \$36,586, and the 1974 Estimates show \$39,586, a greater figure. The legend states: "Part provision transferred to subhead 1." If we look at page 56 and we look at subhead 1, item (24), the legend for item (24) states: "Previously provided for under Other Charges – 'Special Constabulary' and 'Control of Explosive'", so that where the staff was previously provided for under Control of Explosives, it is now included in this subhead, Special Constabulary, on page 56, where they were asking for \$412,000.

If the staff is there, and it was previously provided for under the item, Control of Explosive, then one would expect this sum to be less because the amount previously asked for, for example, for 1973, included provision for staff, which is now under item (24) on page 56. Therefore, why is it that the amount being asked for for 1974 is in fact more, when part of this expenditure has been transferred to another subhead? The provision is now \$39,586 instead of \$36,586, which did, in fact, include this staff.

Mrs. DaSilva: Just three small questions subheads 23, 34, and 35. Subheads 23 deals with Passports. I am not going into the details: my hon. Leader and Colleague dealt with the subject. I want to ask the hon. Minister what happens to the \$10 which a person pays in order to secure a passport. The person pays \$10 in stamps. Does this not offset the cost of the passport to the Ministry? Does the Ministry have to pay for the passport?

Subhead 34, Road Traffic Education. This is the kind of thing I was talking about a little while ago to the hon. Minister of Information and Culture. I am sorry she has gone. Maybe the

hon. Minister, Mr. Hamilton Green, will pass the message, or maybe someone else would. This is the kind of thing that I wanted the Ministry of Information and Culture to do. Here we have the great need for road traffic education and the Ministry could do so much to help.

Subhead 35, Maintenance of Traffic Lights and Road Signs. I am not going into details about road signs but there is one thing I should like to draw to the attention of the Minister and Members of this honourable House, the way that the road signs, particularly in the country areas along the East Coast, along the East Bank, have been defaced during the pre-election period, with posters, particularly People's National Congress posters, covering up the instructions on the use of the road.

Sometimes one does not know what the signs area about. if one could read the signs, maybe one would know how to turn the corner the right way instead of the wrong way, instead of reading P.N.C. propaganda posters. I would suggest to the hon. Members, through the hon. Minister of Home Affairs, that as a good turn to the nation, - because we have had enough road accidents – the hon. Minister and the rest of his colleagues in this House get together their enormous overwhelming majority of people, who gave them the July 16th election results, and these people, as a great gesture to the nation, have one evening's operation, cleaning up the road signs. They all can go out together *en masse* with scrubbing brushes and cloths, and water and soap and Vim, and clan and take off those posters so that we can see the road signs and maybe keep our accidents down. This should be a great service to the nation and could be done on a self-help and voluntary basis.

6.20 p.m.

If they have to scrub so much that the signs cannot be read, then the same ones who painted the roads with their paintbrushes and so on could put back the signs to guide the people. This is just a general topic for the hon. Minister.

During the debate on Financial Paper 5/1973 when I brought up the question of the breathalysers I again urged the hon. Minister to bring in the test and he did reply and say that no thought was being given to institute breathalyser tests. I still maintain that many of our deaths and our accidents – apart from those caused by people who are just road-hogs and careless drivers who have no courtesy whatsoever on the road – are caused by drivers who have been driving when drunk.

If we could think and see our way to institute breathalysers – I know it would upset a lot of our friends across the way because it shows up very easily, but their wives could always drive for them. Get the breathalysers into Guyana and we would then be able to keep our accident rate down. Could the hon. Minister comment if he has had any change of heart?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of State for Home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, on subhead 20, “Prevention and Detection of Crime”, the hon. Member reminded me that he had reported and I thought he would have been able to tell today that he has discovered. I am a little disappointed he still wants me to tell him what the situation is. I thought he might have been able to tell me what he has discovered.

On the question of passports, it is true that more people are asking for passports. More people are travelling to and from Guyana. More Guyanese resident in Guyana and resident out of Guyana are seeking to have Guyana passports so that they can travel to and from Guyana. The fact that so many more people are travelling might be a direct reflection on the progress of the People’s National Congress Government in that the standard of living of people has increased to such an extent that more of them can travel. **[Applause]**

On the question of whether the \$10 which one pays for a passport can cover the cost. It is really set by international agreement. At least we do not subsidise it in Guyana.

On the question of road traffic education, we recognise that one of the serious problems we have to face in Guyana is the whole question of what happens on our roads. At the moment every effort is being made to see what can be done.

The new Commissioner of Police has been speaking to people. He has been speaking, for instance, to insurance companies.

There is a young Guyanese engineer who has been analysing the situation; who has done surveys and who is working with the police department to see what can really be done to improve the whole situation on our roads. We are using other methods too.

The hon. Member questioned the amount which has been provided here. We are using other methods, for instance, the question of discipline. We are also involving voluntary organisations. In the Capital Estimates we also have provision for buying equipment which assist. We would see to get more radar equipment.

On the question of the breathalysers test which was mentioned by the hon. Member, I have done some investigation. I discovered that there was an American gentleman who came here to sell the idea of using breathalysers a few years and the administration has accepted the idea of using breathalysers but there are some difficulties. In the first place it is a very expensive operation and in the second place there would be need for legislation.

We are looking at the whole question of legislation to help to improve traffic and traffic education in the country. It is a big question which we must go perhaps rather cautiously about, but do not let us think that nothing is being done to assist the situation that is existing in the country at the moment.

On the question of control of explosives, the hon. Member was questioning the amount provided here. There is a difficulty. The person who used to look after the control of explosives went into retirement and we used most of this money to train three new persons whom we expect to fill these posts. So this would take rather more than we expected.

Head 20, Ministry of Home Affairs, Police - \$14,366,518 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Members we will soon take the suspension of the Sitting but I propose to finish Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Service Ministry, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources and Ministry of Trade tonight in addition to the two Bills. Municipal District Council (Amendment) Bill 1973 and Guyana Timber Export Board (Amendment) Bill 1973.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 6.30 p.m.

On resumption

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, when the suspension was taken we had just complete Head 20, Police. Pages 59 and 60.

HEAD 21 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

PRISONS

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,689,407 for Head 21 Ministry of Home Affairs, Prisons, stand part of the Estimates.

8 p.m.

Mr. Singh: Mr. Chairman, subheads 4, 14, and 15. They will all be taken together. Subhead 4, Dietary. The sum being asked for 1974 is \$230,000. Subhead 14, Bakery. The sum being asked for 1974 is \$100,000. Subhead 15, Farms \$25,500 and if we look at the bottom of the page at subhead 101, there is a deduction of \$175,000 for Issues of Bread. What about a deduction for farms?

If we take the total Dietary, \$230,000; Bakery \$100,000; and Farms, \$25,500 we get a total of \$355,500. Of course that does not include the salaries of the Master Baker and others which are shown on the previous pages. The only deduction from this \$355,500 is \$175,000 in respect of Issues of Bread. These prisoners owe a debt to society. They must be made to feed themselves. If in respect of food alone the sum of \$355,500 is being asked for, as I said, plus the salaries of Master Baker etc. and the only deduction is \$175,000, that is a difference of \$180,500. Why cannot these prisoners at least feed themselves? They owe it to the nation to pay their debt to society in some way rather than being a burden to taxpayers. Perhaps the hon. Minister can tell us, first of all, why there is no deduction in respect of issues of farm produce. If you have deductions for bread, what about deductions for farm produce? What is being done to accelerate the feeding programme by the prisoners so that they can feed themselves?

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, just a general comment and a question on the Head of Prisons. I should like to remind the hon. Minister of the statement made in the President's Address. I should just like to quote a paragraph:

“Our society has tended in the past to treat ex-prisoners as social outcasts. They are potentially useful and productive citizens and their training retraining and rehabilitation will be another of the objectives of the scheme. Guyana cannot afford to let any of its human resources go to waste, rack and ruin, creating social problems and disfiguring our society.”

A few minutes ago my colleague spoke about prisoners owing a debt to society. When they have served their time and they have left the prison they have paid their debt to society and they deserve a new start in life. In view of the President's Statement about the rehabilitation of prisoners, in view of the need for every available source of man-power to help build the nation, can the hon. Minister say what positive plans will this form of rehabilitation take to help these people start a new life again?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of State for Home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, I shall deal with the question of Dietary, Farms and Bakery. This will also answer the question on Farms that on Bakery. It costs about \$1.35 per day to feed each prisoner. With a prison population of, say, a little over 1,000 prisoners, at \$1.35 per day for 365 days it will cost about \$529,706.25 to feed the prison population in Guyana each year.

You will notice that the sum of \$230,000 is provided for farms. On the question of bakery, provision is there for \$100,000 and you will notice from the item, Issues of Bread, that \$175,000 is collected, so there is a profit of \$75,000.

On the question of Dietary, I said earlier that it should cost \$529,706.25 to feed the Prison population. Provision is here for \$240,000; which means, therefore, that the prisoners feed themselves to the tune of nearly \$300,000. They are not self-sufficient in food but we are reaching the stage where we shall be self-sufficient at some time. The prisoners contribute about \$279,706, while the State provides \$240,000 which means that they go a far way towards being self-supporting. We expect that with our new agricultural programme we will be able to bridge this gap and soon be self-supporting in food at the prisons.

Head 21, Ministry of Home Affairs, Prisons, \$1,689,407, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 61.

HEAD 22 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,346,560 for Head 22, Ministry of Home Affairs, Fire Protection Services, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, items (3) and (4). First of all, I wish to make some general remarks. This is a very vital and indeed a very sensitive Department. The ruling Party had cause to reply on these services not too long ago. But one remembers in the past there had been personality clashes and grave dissatisfaction among the staff in the Fire Protection Services. Perhaps the Minister would like to tell us whether he is satisfied that these areas of disagreement are now removed. My information is that there are still some areas of dissatisfaction and all is still not well in the Fire Department.

8.10 p.m.

If I am to be allowed to deal specifically with item (3), Divisional Fire Officers, the figures are revealing and need some explanation. In the 1973 Approved Estimates the sum of \$14,688 was voted. In spite of revised salaries and all the rest, the Revised Estimates for 1973 is significantly lower than the Approved Estimates in that only \$7,920 was asked for as against the \$14,688 which was shown in the Approved Estimates.

But let us go forward now to the 1974 Estimates. The figure is realistically higher. It is \$17,352. Are these posts filled? It certainly seems as though the money was not entirely used this year. It seems to suggest that the posts have not been filled or that Officers from the lower ranks

have been acting. What are the vacancies? There are supposed to be three Divisional Fire Officers. If there were three and they were confirmed in their posts, they could not all add up to only \$7,920.

The same thing goes for subhead 1 item (4), Station Officers. The 1973 Approved Estimate was \$19,046 and the Revised Estimates of \$12,720 for that year is significantly lower, but the amount asked for in 1974 is \$22,440. So that the amount being asked for in 1974 does reflect the total emoluments for these officers on their particular salary scale. The 1973 Revised Estimate leads us to believe that these posts are not filled. If they are not filled what is being done to fill them and what is being done to, perhaps, streamline this department and remove the causes of dissatisfaction and frustration which we know existed in the past and which we suspect exist to a much lesser extent at the moment?

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mrs. DaSilva.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask the Minister one question. I do not know whether he forgot to answer my question on Prisons, on what is being done for the rehabilitation of Prisoners. It is gone now but maybe he can work that in. There may have been a genuine mistake, because he forgot to answer the question.

We are dealing with the Fire Protection Services. Our city is one that is very susceptible to fires being largely a wooden city and as my hon. Colleague said a few minutes ago, the ruling Party and the people who live in the area had a great need and are grateful for the work of the Fire Protection Services in their recent disastrous fire. I was wondering if any thought has been given in this department to make it a compulsory bye-law for people to have small fire extinguishers in their homes, especially in areas where there are tenement ranges and where there are many families living in one building or flats for instance, in the Laing Avenue area where there are many families occupying apartments. Has any thought been given to the need for

making it a compulsory bye-law that these heavily populated buildings, in particular tenement buildings – and it is also desirable in private homes – should have fire extinguishers?

This bye-law may be necessary, too, in the South Ruimveldt area where it will be difficult to get into the area due to the narrowness of the streets, by the time the fire tenders reverse in and out to get down those narrow streets a lot of damage could be done. Would the Minister please enlighten us?

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of State.

Mr. Mingo: I will deal with the question raised by the hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh, on subhead 1, items (3) and (4). The posts which he referred to were filled just a month or so ago and the reason why the provision for 1974 is so much higher than the provision for 1973 is because that there were persons acting in the positions and they were paid under subhead 1 item (14). The provision there for last year was much greater than that for 1974 which means that these posts have now been filled. Therefore we ask for an increased provision for 1974.

On the question the relationship between Officers in the Fire Service, I wish to say that the Fire Service under its present leadership is, perhaps one of the most progressive services which come under the Ministry of Home Affairs. I should like publicly to commend the new Fire Chief for the way he has been able to have his men rally around him.

In answer to the question and the point raised by Mrs. DaSilva, whether we have bye-laws which compel people to provide fire extinguishers in their homes; at the moment this is not so, but persons are encouraged as much as possible by the Fire Protection Services to provide these fire extinguishers in their homes. Efforts are being made to see, perhaps, if we can provide legislation to help in this whole question. We are thinking about it and later, perhaps, we can do something about having bye-laws established so that we can compel people to have these things in their homes.

Head 22, Ministry of Home Affairs, Fire Protection Services - \$1,346,560 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 23 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
REGISTRATION AND ELECTIONS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$645,822 for Head 23, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registration and Elections, stand part of the Estimates.

8.20 p.m.

Mr. Singh: I suppose we could spend days talking on this Head. I do not propose to do that tonight. Subhead 4, National Registration. One would have thought that after the general selection this year we would not have been needing any significant amount of money for this particular subhead next year. Nevertheless, even though in the 1973 Approved Estimates all that was envisaged was \$297,740 – and, of course, after the date of elections was announced, some time during the year, that sum of money was raised to \$615,740 – the sum being asked for this year is \$318,581. Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us what will be done with this money that is being sought for National Registration.

I certainly would be very happy to know that all the eighteen year olds, who were left out of the registration this year, will now be registered, so the hon. Minister will tell us if this a genuine attempt to have everyone, friend, foe, P.P.P., P.N.C., U.F., Liberator, P.D.M., the whole lot, registered. They are entitled to be registered. Let us have all the parties and all the groups registered. Let us not have partisan officers doing the registration this time. Let us choose the officers without partisan politics in mind. Let us have the non-partisan people. Do not pick persons nominated by the hon. Minister, Mr. Hamilton Green, because they are sure to be partisan.

The Government should allow its civil servants to do a proper job. We do have good civil servants. In this same department we have good people, but the Government does not even allow them to carry out their duties. The problem is the interference. If they are allowed to carry out their duties properly, we would have fair and efficient officers able to carry out any operation. Let us not put an indictment against the civil servants.

National Elections, subhead 5. The sum being requested is \$10,000. It is a small sum compared with \$417,318. The question is: what is this \$10,000 going to be used for? Obviously, we will not have the National Elections next year. We do not have the constituency system.

If we go on to the next item, subhead 6, Local Authority Elections. We know that under the act elections have been postponed indefinitely, but under the present legislation, elections would normally be held – if the ruling party feels that it should have a selection – at the end of next year. Certainly a sum of \$5,000 will not be sufficient for Local Authority Elections. It could be that this is merely a token amount put down and the hon. Minister and his Cabinet colleagues do not want to tell us whether or not there will be Local Authority elections next year. The law is clear. After the term of office, the elections have to be held between October and December. We would normally expect them to be held at the end of next year. It is not that the holding of Local Authority Elections should be a big secret like the National Elections. If we are to have elections next year, \$5,000 is not enough and we are not being realistic in the estimates. The hon. Minister must tell us how these sums of money will be spent.

I wonder whether the hon. Minister would tell us whether the people who have lost their ID cards can now get them. Shortly before the last elections, we know that the office had suspended the issuing of ID cards to replace lost ID cards. Can the general public now go to the Registration and Elections Office and get ID cards to replace their lost ID cards, after, of course, having gone through the usual formalities?

Mr. Mingo: With reference to subhead 4, National Registration, every year we usually have voluntary registration, and during 1974, we hope that we will have a sort of voluntary registration. We open the voters' list and we have people going to register. This is on a voluntary basis. Money will also be needed next year for registration overseas. We hope from the 1st January, 1974, to have registration done overseas and so this provision is made for this and also for the opening of the list at home. This is for overseas registration and for voluntary registration at home.

Subheads 5 and 6, National Elections and Local Authority Elections. There is always the question of paying staff. The staff has always to be paid, so that the provision there would be to pay staff.

There is always the possibility of having these elections. The hon. Member spoke of the possibility of local government elections and provision must be made for them. There is the question of paying staff and a provision for possible elections, if the occasion arises to have elections next year.

On the question of ID cards: I am surprised that the hon. Member did not know that people are always going to the registration centre for ID cards. I visited there and found hundreds of people waiting for ID cards. This was after the last elections. If the hon. Member himself has lost his, he can go and get it, or he can encourage his supporters to go and get theirs.

Mrs. DaSilva: I wonder if I can ask the hon. Minister a supplementary question. It is about the opening of the registration list that he spoke about. Would the hon. Minister say how they propose to do this? I know from personal experience, and from other people, that it is a terrible waste of time, especially for people who live in the country. One arrives there usually between 4 and 6 in the afternoon to find there is nobody there to do the registration. Could the

hon. Minister say if they will do it over a period of time, say days in the week, or set places, or how?

Mr. Mingo: it is a little early to ask such a question. We have not worked out the details yet, but I wish to stress that this has nothing to do with elections. It is a voluntary registration, details of which are not worked out yet. When they are worked out, the hon. Member will certainly hear.

Head 23, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registration and Elections - \$64,822 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

8.30 P.M.

HEAD 24 MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, PROBATION AND WELFARE SERVICES

The Chairman: There is a correction on page 64, the legend to subhead 3 should read, “Previous provision inadequate.”

Question proposed that the sum of \$544,910 for Head 24, Ministry of Home Affairs, Probation and Welfare Service, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, page 64, subheads 10, 11 and 18, I can take them all together. Again it is an observation that these three subheads; Bakery, Arable Farm and Maintenance of Stock Farm – account for respectively, \$14,000, \$1,850 and \$10,000 yet the only deduction is \$14,500 for Issues of Bread. So we spent \$14,000 on the bakery plus, of course, the

salary of the bakers, etc. the issues of bread amounted to \$14,500. It means that the return from this bakery is less than \$500 when you take out the cost of the salary of the bakers, too etc. One wonders about this particularly when you add to that the sum spent on arable farm and the sum spent on the maintenance of the stock farm. I wonder whether the hon. Minister would like to tell us whether he thinks that in the foreseeable future there would be a greater return from this bakery than a sum less than \$500 because these are things that we would like to see showing very significant improvement and indeed profit.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of State for Home Affairs.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can take the question on the bakery and the farm together. The system employed here is that they sell bread to themselves and also to the hospital. What they sell to themselves is not really reflected here. What is reflected here is issues of bread really sold to the hospital. So I do not think it is correct to say that they only got a return of \$500 from bread.

Head 24, Ministry of Home Affairs, Probation and Welfare Service - \$544,910 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 25 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS, REGISTRATION, IMMIGRATION, BIRTHS, ETC

Question proposed that the sum of \$149,624 for Head 25, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registration, Immigration, Births, etc., stand part of the Estimates

Head 25, Ministry of Home Affairs, Registration, Immigration, Births, Etc., \$149,624 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XII – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

The Chairman: On page 66 there is a small correction. The legend to subhead 8 should read, “To provide for the purchase of a stallion.”

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,663,200 for Division XII, Ministry of Home Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: This is just a question of details if the hon. Minister is in a position to give them, always providing, of course, that due regard is paid to the security angle. We know that the Estimates cannot give all details and wherever possible we are here to ask questions in order to get details.

On subhead 1, Prison Improvement, the sum of \$127,100 is being asked for. We know from passing lot 12, Camp Street, Georgetown – I have never been in there – that it does appear to be in serious need of repairs and one wonders whether this sum is for that prison alone. Maybe some work is proposed in respect of Sibley Hall. With the proposal to put Sibley Hall in use again, perhaps some work is envisaged there also. I should like to be comfortable if I go there. Si I should like the hon. Minister to tell us what are these prison improvements that are envisaged. It may give us an insight as to what we can expect in the future.

In respect of subhead 5, Stations, \$635,500 is quite a significant amount of money being asked for for stations in 1974. The legend says, “To provide for the construction of 5 new stations and reconstruction of 9 stations.”

We know that a lot of stations are in need of repair and reconstruction but it would be interesting to know where the five new stations are going to be situated. It may well be in areas which need new stations at the present moment. I can think particularly of the new housing area where there is need. There is a mobile station in the Ruimveldt area and some of us who listen to Action Line have heard the complaints of people being annoyed in the areas and that sort of thing. So it would be enlightening to know where these new stations are to be sited.

In respect of subhead 6, Equipment – Land, Air and Water Transport - \$1 million is a large sum of money being sought for land, air and water transport equipment. Perhaps the hon. Minister, if he can, would tell us exactly what this \$1 million will be utilised for. The legend says, “To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment”. It is a lot of money and it follows a pattern of fairly significant sums of money being asked for in previous years.

In respect of the purchase of horses, that has been corrected. It is for the purchase of a “Stallion” not a “station”.

In respect of subhead 9, Other Building, the sum being asked for is \$85,400. The legend says, “To provide for the construction of other buildings.” It would be interesting to know what are these other buildings because there is the provision of \$326,000 already for the construction of police quarters. This must be buildings other than police quarters and also other than police stations because there is a subhead for police stations. What are these buildings other than police quarters and police stations?

In respect of subhead 10, Motor Transport and Marine Workshop, the sum asked for is \$99,300. Again, according to the legend, “To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment.” I certainly do hope it is not for the purchase of more cars. I do give the police credit. I do not think they break their cars at the same rate as the G.D.F. I think the police are a little

more careful than the G.D.F. in that respect but I have noticed a significant amount of cars not in working order piled up for the police force and we wonder what this miscellaneous equipment is.

In respect of the Fire Services I would never grudge expenditure under Fire Services. I am merely asking. I am not questioning the amount of \$751,700 for subhead 13 which is for Equipment. I am not saying that the amount is too small or otherwise but merely wanting to know a little bit more about the legend which says, "To provide for the purchase of miscellaneous equipment."

We have been rehabilitating the Fire Services within recent times. We have had purchase of fire tenders etc. it would be interesting to know how this amount of \$751,700 is going to be spent in respect of miscellaneous equipment.

8.40 p.m.

Subhead 16, Miscellaneous, Purchase of equipment. This vote is \$603,200 and that is under the general heading Miscellaneous. So here again is an item which merely talks about miscellaneous equipment. If it is a State secret or security matter we have to accept whatever the Minister says. But, within the confines of this, we would like to know how this amount will be utilised.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, the hon. Member seems to want me to open the book and give him all the details we have. I shall try to help as much as possible. Under Prison Improvement, I should like to let him know that we intend to work on emergency lighting plants at Timehri and New Amsterdam, to purchase sewing machines for Georgetown; to purchase a hydraulic jack to do the kitchen and equipment at Mazaruni; to do a young offenders dormitory at Timehri; to put in additional sanitary facilities at New Amsterdam; to build staff quarters, four at Mazaruni, and the rest at Timehri; to do officers' quarters at Timehri; and to buy VHF Walkie-

Talkie sets; to buy equipment and tools for the workshop at Sibley Hall and to buy a bread-slicing and wrapping machine for Georgetown. That is under the first head.

Subhead 5, Stations. We intend to erect new police stations at Wismar, La Grange, Sans Souci, Wakenaan, Mahaicony, Kaiteur Top, Lethem and Vigilance. The vote is also for extension of Vreed-en-Hoop Station and barrack room and repairs to Brickdam barrack room and extension of the property room at Brickdam.

Subhead 6, Equipment – Land, Air and Water Transport. Perhaps I shall come to that later. The hon. Member asked about subhead 9, Other Buildings. The construction we wish to do – a catwalk, mooring pier facility and new workshop accommodation at G.A.C. Ramp, two boathouses at Charity and Adventure, boathouse at Parika, repairs to boathouse in Berbice River (New Amsterdam), boathouse to be built at Kamarang, Port Kaituma and so on.

With respect to the Fire Services, we intend to purchase seven ambulances and also an airport-type ambulance, land rover, fire appliances, marine transmitting radio set for fireboat “Forbes B”, an air compressor, an emergency lighting plant to be installed at Wismar, a small air compressor for Georgetown, compressed air breathing apparatus, to purchase fire helmets, wet loggings and things of that kind.

Subhead 16, Miscellaneous, Purchase of Equipment. This is mostly for the Police Department and it will include such equipment as radio, Marconi Test Instrument, communication equipment, C.I.D. equipment. We also have items like a telephone switchboard for Georgetown. We have to buy crash barriers and things of that sort.

I had promised to come back to subhead 6, Land, Air and Water Transport. Under this subhead we intend to buy items like patrol, patrol vans, land rovers, lorries, crash trucks, revolving lights, two buses and motor-cycles.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether the hon. Minister has alerted his mind to the necessity, the real need to have a proper full-scale police station established in the new housing area, the South Ruimveldt area, where so many houses have been put up within recent times. That area has a small outpost at the present moment. I am sure that the policemen serving in that outpost would welcome a proper well-established police station. It must be very uncomfortable for them to operate in that area. I wonder if the hon. Minister is paying any attention, seeing the movement of population in that area, see the drift away from the centre and the establishment of so many houses round and about that area, and the fact that there is only this small Police Outpost. I think there is a crying need for a police station and indeed regular police patrols in that area.

While I am on my feet, perhaps I can recommend another area, the Unity area on the East Coast, Demerara. It is a very bad area. It is far from the regularly established police stations. I understand that there may well be an Outpost there, but there is need for a police station to be put there. A properly established police station is needed certainly in the South Ruimveldt area and the surrounding areas.

8.50 p.m.

Mr. Mingo: Mr. Chairman, there are plans to build a Police Station in Lodge. I think this Station can very well serve the area the hon. Member is speaking about.

Division XII, Ministry of Home Affairs - \$3,663,200 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 13 – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$519,684 for Head 13, Public Service Ministry, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, page 41. I should like to ask a short question on subhead 6, Restructuring of the Public Service. The sum of \$30,000 was asked for and approved in the Estimates for 1973. The sum of \$42,860 was the revised sum and the same sum of \$30,000, as we approved in 1973, is now being asked for in 1974. Now that the job evaluation exercise is finished and civil servants have received their long-awaited increases – except, perhaps, that there is sitting at the moment an Appeal and Review Committee to consider some anomalies – is this sum really necessary? One would have thought that it might well have been needed before the job evaluation. Bearing in mind that the 1972 actual sum was only \$13,120, perhaps the Minister would tell us what this \$30,000 will be used for in 1974.

Dr. Reid: Mr. Chairman, even though one phase of the work is finished, we still have more work to do there. We have the actuarial study which is a very expensive study to deal with things like Contributory Pension Schemes and things of that nature as well as the Appeals Tribunal and I think my friend over there, learned as he is, will realise that when you come to think of things like Appeals Tribunal and so on an exercise of this kind can be very costly because nobody knows how long some of these things will take. This work is still going on.

Head 13, Public Service Ministry - \$519,684 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION VIII – PUBLIC SERVICE MINISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,143,000 for Division VIII, Public Service Ministry, stand part of the Estimates.

Division VIII, Public Service Ministry - \$1,143,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

17.12.73

National Assembly

8.50 – 9 p.m.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, I have been informed that there has been a consensus that we proceed to do the two Bills and then we will revert to the other two Heads, that is, the Heading Ministry of Trade and Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources to complete tonight's work.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: I think we are going to start with the Guyana Timber Export Board (Amendment) Bill, 1973.

PUBLIC BUSINESS
BILLS – SECOND READING

GUYANA TIMBER EXPORT BOARD (AMENDMENT) BILL 1973

A Bill intituled:

“An act to amend the Guyana Timber Export Board Act 1973.”

[The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources]

The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Mr. Jack): Mr. Speaker, I move that the Timber Export Board (Amendment) Bill be read a Second time.

When the Timber Export Board Bill was passed, it was stated in Section 1 that the Act would come into force “on a date that the Minister may order for its coming into force.” In fact, a Notice was published in the Official Gazette instead of an Order and this Amendment Bill seeks to regularise the establishment of the Guyana Timber Export by inserting the word “notice” in place of the word “order”. This is a simple Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

17.12.73

National Assembly

8.50 – 9 p.m.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without Amendment, read the Third time and passed.

9 p.m.

MUNICIPAL AND DISTRICT COUNCILS (AMENDMENT) BILL

A Bill intituled:

An Act to Amend the Municipal and District Council Act 1969 and other laws.
[**The Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation**]

The Speaker: We shall be proceeding to deal with the Municipal and District Councils (Amendment) Bill 1973, but before we go on, there are one or two typographical errors on page 3 of the Bill. In the sub-paragraph dealing with the definition of “Town”, there is a capital “T”; a common “t” should be substituted. Similarly, in the sub-paragraph dealing with “Town Council”, a common “t” and a common “c” should be substituted; and in the word immediately following this is, “means”, there has been a transportation of a letter.

On page 9, clause 21, in the first line, “Section 326” should be substituted for “Section 324”. Later on, there will be two minor Amendments, one to clause 1, by the addition of the words, “(No. 2)”, immediately after the word “(Amendment)”, and one to clause 25, by the addition of a full sub-paragraph (4).

Hon. Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation.

Hon. Minister of Co-operative and National Mobilisation (Mr. Green): Your Honour, I beg to move that the Municipal and District Councils (Amendment) Bill 1973 be read a Second time. This is a Bill which provides for a number of amendments aimed at correcting certain flaws in the Municipal and District Councils Act. At the time when it was being updated, a number of errors were discovered and we now seek by this Bill to amend the Principal Ordinance.

The noticeable features of the amendments are, to make provision for the return to the members of the Town Constabulary the powers of arrest which were enjoyed by them; in fact, it was never intended to be the case that the powers of arrest should have been removed; the extension of areas to new areas, including Greater Georgetown and New Amsterdam; the removal of the mandatory standard of service in the rating area.

There are a number of other Amendments which I do not think I need to deal with at this introductory stage, since they are all clear, and I propose that we proceed with this Bill immediately.

Mr. Speaker: We have no alternative but to proceed with it immediately.

Question proposed.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, this is obviously a tidying-up operation and one could have no objection to that tidying-up operation. The Bill was passed and it became the Municipal and District Councils Act, flaws were discovered, and opportunity was taken to regularise most of them in order to allow the removal of difficulties in a certain manner. Now, the whole thing is being straightened out by being brought to this honourable House. We have no quarrels with this but the typographical mistakes did worry me for a time. What I should like to say can be said in some brief remarks.

It is quite clear from the pronouncements of P.N.C. Ministers, Minister Mingo and Minister Salim, that the P.N.C. Government is not satisfied with the performance of P.N.C. councillors. In fact, I say there is great dissatisfaction with regard to the conduct and performance of the P.N.C. Councils. It seems that the cut and thrust that formerly existed in these forums having been eroded by the P.N.C. Government, the members have lapsed into disinterest and have become lackadaisical. As a result, there have been serious reprimands by Minister Mingo and Minister Salim.

In any forum where there is cut and thrust, the members have to know what they are doing but these councils, they are all P.N.C. councils, they have nobody to fight against them, and they have nothing to tell anybody, so they fight among themselves. Who suffers in the end? The unfortunate part is that everybody in the local authority suffers as a result. The Chairman of the Association of Local Authorities, Mr. Hulbert McGowan, has been very caustic in his remarks about councillors. I think that the P.N.C. Government should persuade its colleagues to take note of this state of affairs.

9.10 p.m.

The last Local Government Elections were boycotted by the Opposition parties which objected to the short time given and the fact that the procedure for the conduct of the Local Government Elections had not undergone any change. Now that the member of the P.N.C. have had this unfortunate experience I would implore them to sit up and take notice of the state of affairs and realise that they do not need a constructive Opposition in order to keep their own people on their toes to bring improvement and betterment in the areas.

The Speaker: Hon. Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation.

Mr. Green (Replying): Mr. Speaker, I share my hon. Friend's profound regret that the Opposition did not participate in the last Local Government Elections which this Government

has held. Local Government Election as one of the institutions of democracy in Guyana is important. I hope it will not be the last opportunity and I hope that when the opportunity is again given wiser counsel will prevail and perhaps at the local level we will see proof of what the hon. Member referred to, namely, their keeping on their toes.

I do not disagree with the hon. Member. It is part of the exercise of the local authorities. The councils have their problems. Many of the councils are young and new. I do not think it is fair, Mr. Speaker, to say that all the councils are no good. Some of the councils have performed quite admirably. They have had difficulties at Local Government Elections. In fact some of the things we seek to amend, like this Bill, will give them the ability to perform in a much more effective manner.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Clause 1.

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, I wish to move an amendment by insertion of the words “(No. 2)” immediately after the word “(Amendment).”

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 2, as corrected before the second Reading, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

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9.10– 9.20 p.m.

Clause 3 to 24 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

9.20 p.m.

Clause 25

Mr. Green: Mr. Chairman, I wish to move an Amendment to Clause 25, namely. That the following be added as subsection (4):

“Nothing in subsection (2) or (3) shall affect any proceedings in relation to the liability for the payment of rates or the recovery thereof, determined before the enactment of this Act.”

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 25, as amended, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 26, agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Schedule agreed to, and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Assembly resumed

Bill reported with Amendments, as amended, considered, read the Third time and passed.

ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE, 1974

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Pages 83 to 87.

HEAD 32 – MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,321,573 for Head 32, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: We are always worried about the proper accounting and the proper staffing of the accounts section of a Ministry. On page 83, subhead 1, items (6) and (7), the posts of Chief Accountant and Accountant, seem to carry significantly lower amounts than were reflected in the 1973 Revised Estimates. For example, the Revised Estimate has the Chief Accountant salary as \$8,112 and the 1974 provision being asked for is only \$6,672. Similarly for the post of Accountant the Revised Estimate for 1973 was \$12,450 whereas the estimate for 1974 is \$6,000. Can the hon. Minister tell us what is the reason for the difference between the 1973 figures and the figures projected for 1974? Are the posts vacant? Are they filled? What is the position?

9.30 p.m.

If we turn now to page 84 I should like to deal with items under subhead 1: items (38) to (46). They fall under the Geological Surveys and Mines Department. I happen to know that this department has always suffered from a shortage of expert qualified staff and we should like to know; in view of the shortages in this Ministry in this particular field, what vacancies there are in this department of Geological Surveys and Mines and what are the prospects of filling these posts. We do appreciate that the posts are specialist posts and that there would be difficulties in filling them. We do appreciate, also that some of the necessary preliminary works for the development programme would depend on this particular department.

For example, at random, looking at subhead 1 item (42), there are four posts of Senior Geologist. If we look at the figures, the sum of \$33,600 was approved in the 1973 Estimates, but the revised amount in 1973 was only \$28,280. This leads one to believe that there are vacancies

and that is why the amount was so small in the 1973 Revised Estimates. Is the Minister satisfied with the staffing in this department? How many vacancies are there and what is the effect that these vacancies may have on the programme and acceleration of development in the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources? Indeed, it is the development of the country generally, because this department will normally have much to do with many other Ministries also.

Please turn to page 87, subhead 15, Silviculture. I think we should like to give the hon. Minister an opportunity to tell us a little bit more of the Government's Silviculture programme. We note under this subhead that the sum of \$70,629 is being sought in the 1974 Estimates. The 1973 Approved and Revised Estimates were only \$11,000 each and the legend says "Increased acreage brought under pine cultivation." It does not say "to be bought under pine cultivation," so presumably the acreage has been brought under pine cultivation and this money is required now because increased acreage has been bought under pine cultivation. I wonder whether the legend should read "to be brought under pine cultivation." Maybe there is a logical explanation that the acreage which has been brought under pine cultivation should now require the significant sum of \$70,629 instead of \$11,000 as proposed.

In addition to that, I seem to recollect that the Government was having some difficulty in respect of the pine cultivation. I think there were the same initial setbacks in this programme. It certainly would be very comforting to know that the initial difficulties will now be overcome and the project become successful and that we can look forward to a lot of revenue and jobs being developed as a result of this programme. As I said, I did know that there were some initial problems and that the first set of pine had not been successful according to the information I had received. So could the Minister tell us what is the present position?

Subhead 21, Labour at Headquarters. There is not, for some reason enough explanation here. In the 1973 Estimates the sum of \$58,000 was approved. There is nothing reflected as being spent under Revised Estimates. We are now asking for the sum of \$62,060 for 1974, which is more than required in 1973. The query is that nothing is in the 1973 Revised Estimates so that

presumably nothing was spent. Yet the sum of \$58,000 was provided in 1973 and the provision being sought in 1974 is \$62,060. Could the hon. Minister enlighten us and tell us what this is all about? Why is it that we did not spend in 1973 but will spend in 1974? That is all on those pages, sir.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources.

Mr. Jack: Mr. Chairman, I shall deal with the question of the Accountant. My learned friend came very close to answering his own question, and his surmise is correct. There is, in fact, a person acting in the position and there is not a Chief Accountant appointment as yet. That is responsible for the reflection of this amount in column 1.

With regard to the Geological Surveys and Mines Department, I am happy to say that there is no shortage of Geologists. We have been pursuing a policy of giving Scholarships for Geologists and Mining Engineers. We had intensified that policy. Members will remember that we held Press Conferences on this subject last year. We put advertisements in the newspapers and we also caused advertised for students to apply for Scholarships in Geology, Mining Engineering and Forestry. These advertisements were posted up at the various high schools including Queen's College, Central High School, St. Stanislaus and Bishop's High School. We did not discriminate against women.

As a result of this, we had a large intake of students and to date we have more Geologists than we have posts for them. This will be regularised because, with the intensification of our Geological Survey programme and our Mining activity, I am quite confident that we will have use for all Geologists that we bring back. I may mention that we have instituted a scheme whereby would-be Geologists, Foresters and Mining Engineering are required to spend one year with the department before they take up their scholarship. The purpose of this is to let them have an opportunity of finding out whether they are capable of standing the rigours of the type of profession which they are about to embark upon and also to allow the department to assess

whether these people have the abilities and type of dispositions and constitutions which would fit them for the role which they would have to play later on. So far, I am happy to say that the scheme has been working well.

With regard to Silviculture, we have been carrying out a rather extensive programme this year and last year. We have planted one thousand acres on the Linden/Soesdyke Road about a few miles from the first tool gate. It is a fact that some of the very earlier attempts at pine growing were not crowned with complete success, but I am very happy to say that quite recently – as recently as last week – an expert, very knowledgeable in pine, paid a visit to our plantation and was extremely enthused by what he saw there. It seems that we have turned the corner and that, for the future, it is just going to be a matter of putting various acreages under cultivation.

9.40 p.m.

We have already cleared 1,000 acres and planted. I invite the hon. Member, when he is going to Linden again, to turn off the main road and go there and spend a few hours looking in admiration at what we have been doing.

One last thing I should like to mention and that is the amount sought for Labour at Headquarters. There does appear to be an omission in the column under Revised Estimates. I am told that this is a typographical error, which will have to have straightened out. We must be grateful to the hon. Member for having brought this to our attention.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, I would still like to have some information. My hon. and learned Friend has confirmed that the pine trees have been planted. They are, in fact, growing. If they are planted and they are growing, why is it that we require \$70,000 instead of \$11,000 for this project? There must be something else that we are doing with that \$70,000, because \$11,000 was what was required previously and, if they are planted already, why \$70,000.

Mr. Jack: I am instructed that this is for tending operations. We have something in the region of 160 people employed. At this particular time, when the trees are young, it is very important that they get proper attention.

Head 32, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources - \$2,321,573 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 88.

DIVISION XVIII – MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,312,300 for Division XVIII, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 11, Upper Mazaruni Hydro Electric Project, and subhead 12, UN/Guyana Hydropower Inventory. These are the two subheads dealing with hydropower. Subhead 11 has a legend, “To provide for the establishment of a Hydro-power facility in the Upper Mazaruni River.” Against subhead 12, it says: “See note below” with two asterisks. The note below says: “To provide for heavy duty equipment in connection with the closing of the dam” and that is exactly what the legend to subhead 13 says. There seems to be some mistake there, in that the proper legend, with two asterisks, to subhead 12 is not there. Perhaps the hon. Minister would supply me with what the proper legend is.

In addition to that, I should like to ask this. The legend to subhead 11 says: “To provide for the establishment of Hydro-power facility in the Upper Mazaruni River.” The sum asked for is \$832,700 which is a lot of money. The next one is subhead 12, UN/Guyana Hydropower Inventory. That one is in the sum of \$1,321,000. That has specific finance of \$869,000. That is the one without a satisfactory legend.

It would appear there are two projects going and I wonder whether the hon. Minister would elaborate on this. A little bird whispered to me that there are two projects: one is financed by the World Bank and the United Nations and there is another one with Eastern Bloc assistance. I think the assistance is given by Yugoslavia. There is a Yugoslav hydro-power study going on and there is a United Nation-World Bank hydro-power study going on. My information may not be correct. I am seeking clarification of it but it does appear there are two concurrent studies in the hydro-power field at the present moment.

Mr. Jack: If we look at subhead 11 first, this is the Upper Mazaruni Hydro Electric Project. My hon. Friend is quite correct. This is a project which we are pursuing in conjunction with the Yugoslavs. There is a firm of Yugoslav engineers, the firm of Energo Projekt, which is doing a feasibility study of a site in the Upper Mazaruni River, where it is expected that a hydro-electric station can be built with an installed capacity of some 2,250 megawatts. This would be an extremely large station as far as capacity goes, when one compares it with the Aswan dam which, if my information is correct, has an installed capacity of 2,100 megawatts. We are expecting to have this hydro-electric station completed in 1978. To have this done we will have to move full-steam ahead. Therefore, we have provided local funds initially while we are seeking other means for external financing for the other phases of this project.

The second item, which is subhead 12, is a UN/Guyana Hydropower Inventory. This is an inventory of our entire hydro-power potential. There is, in fact, an error as my hon. Friend has pointed out; it should read, "To provide for carrying out surveys for hydro-power development in about twenty to thirty sites."

Then, subhead 13, the closing of Tumatumari Dam, the double asterisks, "To provide for heavy duty equipment in connection with the closing of the dam", should really relate to subhead 13.

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9.40– 9.50 p.m.

Division XVIII, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources - \$4,312,300 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

9.50 p.m.

HEAD 69 – MINISTRY OF TRADE

Question proposed that the sum of \$388,853 for Head 69, Ministry of Trade, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: hon. Member Mr. Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, we talked in the past about the Ministry of Trade. We have made criticisms. In all fairness to the present Minister of Trade, I think we must give him a period within which we can see how he performs before making pronouncements.

Dealing with the Estimates proper, on subhead 9, Exhibitions and Fairs, we cannot help noticing that a significant amount of money is being asked for under this subhead. The 1973 Approved Estimates was \$5,000. The Revised Estimates was \$10,000 and now the sum of \$25,000 is being sought for 1974. The legend says, “To provide for Guyana’s participation in the Leipzig Fair, Germany.” Here we are providing for the spending of the taxpayers hard-earned money on a fair and the question arises: What benefits, if any, would this bring to the Guyanese housewives? The Guyanese housewives have been suffering for a long time from the heavy yoke of the spirally cost of living.

It is all well and good for Economists and the like to say that in Guyana prices are lower as compared with the other West Indian territories. Prices may be lower in Guyana but look at the wages we receive in Guyana. Wages are much lower. This whole business of spending

money on fairs while the Guyanese housewives suffer in respect of essential items is something that needs to be looked at again.

What is the Ministry really doing to help reduce the cost of living? It is not a fact that, because of the mismanagement and the bungling in the External Trade Bureau, shortages were created and as a result of this we had hoarding and prices were, in fact, increased resulting in all the problems we have had recently and indeed the problems we still have with us? Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to give us a nice little lecture on this whole business of spending money on Food Fairs rather than bringing down the cost of living.

In respect of subhead 16, Expenses Price Control Board, there again the sum approved in 1973 was \$1,200. The revised amount is \$3,363 and the estimate for 1974 is \$15,234. Obviously the Ministry has come to the conclusion that it needs to put into operation a drastic system of price control. Is this really the answer?

There is a certain school of thought which says that price control has never succeeded in bringing down prices. What you should have is a free competitive enterprise, where, by a system of competing, the prices will adjust themselves to a lower level in any case and perhaps this should commend itself for the consideration of the hon. Minister.

Why do people hoard? They hoard as a result of short supply. Why do people blackmarket? They blackmarket as a result of short supply. If there is a system whereby essential foodstuffs are available then perhaps we would have no need for price control and there will be no hoarding or blackmarketing.

It is well known that during the 1939-1945 war, in spite of all the price control, blackmarketing was at its rampant best. So there is the other side to the coin in respect of price control.

The Chairman: Hon. Minister of Trade.

The Minister of Trade (Mr. King): Mr. Chairman, I thought for a moment when the hon. Member of the Opposition began to speak that he was indeed going to say that the sum provided under subhead 9 for Exhibition and Fairs was, in fact, inadequate.

For too long this country has traded and depended upon sources of supply from countries which operate under the free enterprise economy. It must be known to the hon. Member that under the system of a free enterprise economy the consumer benefits during times of abundance but in times of scarcity developing countries and poor nations find themselves in a calamitous situation. It is for this reason, sir, that I should like to inform the hon. Member that it is the intention of Government to extend its activities towards obtaining supplies from sources other than the traditional sources.

We have come to recognise that in the free enterprise economy there is a manipulation of prices and I can support this. For example, there was a Conference in Rome in mid-November when Food and Agricultural Organisations of the United Nations met. One hundred and thirty nations considered the whole situation when there was widespread notification of serious food crop shortages. At that Convention there was a proposal to have a world stockpile of food. This proposal was bitterly opposed for one reason and that reason, Mr. Chairman, was that the farmers of those countries would receive prices adversely affected as compared with prices under the free enterprise system.

Mr. Chairman, we have no quarrel with that. We recognise that farmers must have a fair return for their labour and efforts but, of course, we can no longer be the victims of a situation where the law of supply and demand will hold us to ransom.

The sum of money which is projected here is intended to allow us to turn our eyes to socialist countries.

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9.50– 10 p.m.

It is not without significance that we have a Mission from the G.D.R. which will be holding discussions in this country early this week. I trust that my friend will recognise that the Government is making a progressive move in trying to seek alternative sources of supplies.

I should also like to say that this \$25,000 is not necessarily to be spent at the Leifzig Fair only but it is intended to seek out sources of supplies which would be beneficial to this country.

Surely, the hon. Member has seen the value of certain Trade Missions to other eastern countries. I am sure that he has witnessed the low prices of bicycles which have come in from China as compared with those that have come from previous sources.

10 p.m.

Surely he has recognised that there are certain building materials which will aid this Government in its building and housing programme. I trust that he will see the wisdom in providing this sum of money which will tend to expand our horizon and thus enable us to obtain the best possible benefit in attending Fairs which could achieve such an objective.

I turn now to subhead 16, Expenses Price Control Board. I want to emphasise immediately that while the competitive system is perhaps recognised and accepted in the Western World the hon. Member will be the first to know that this is open to abuse, in the absence of legal restraint which, in fact, is provided even in such advanced countries as the United States. I reiterate, that this system flourishes in times of abundance but in times of scarcity it could be a serious detriment to any country.

Let me say also for the benefit of the hon. Member, but I am sure that he knows, that Guyana is not unique in having a food shortage and the things which he has just spoken about. I should like to quote from a statement made by Congressman Lester Wolff. I believe that he

admires the United States very greatly and we have no quarrel with this, indeed we do also. But let me quote what Lester Wolff said on 10th October, 1973:

“The American consumer travels down a primrose path on his way to the supermarket. Not only does the average shopper pay the highest food prices since the Korean War, he faces the greatest shortages of staple food products ever experienced in the Peacetime America.”

Let me state further that he also said:

“The consumer continues to struggle daily to feed his family in the face of shortages of meat, poultry, grain and dairy products.”

Mr. Chairman, I have no intention to burden this honourable House with many such quotations, but I can indeed quote also from the *Times*. What do we find?

“Record harvest but prices won't fall.”

This Government cannot abandon its responsibility to the citizens of this country. Let me say once again for the benefit of the hon. Member of the Opposition, the External Trade Bureau is here to stay. Let me say that the fund sought under price control is intended to intensify our efforts to bring to justice the rapacious merchants who continue at the expense of the poorer class to exploit their earnings at high prices.

During 1973, sixty-nine convictions were brought by the Control Board. But what do we find? They were aimed at the poorer chaps in the market, the poor stall-holder. This Government intends to extend its control to bring into its orbit the bigger firms as well as the small firms who seek to discriminate against the housewives and to use such areas of influence that they possess.

I trust that the hon. Member will certainly support the two sums which he has spoken about. I know that he has supported all that we have done in this area. I should like to remind

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10 - 10.10 p.m.

him that while the free enterprise system is absolutely necessary, at a time when the fuel crisis will perhaps alter the entire course of supplies to developing countries, that we must ensure that the bread-basket of the small housewife in 1974 be satisfied and at the lowest possible price.

Head 69, Ministry of Trade, \$388,853, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Assembly resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members perhaps this is a convenient time to take the Adjournment. But I wish to state that tomorrow we propose doing the Ministry of Works and Communication, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and possibly the Ministry of Housing. In addition to that, we will also do the Confirmation of the Purchase Tax (Motorcars) (Amendment) (No. 3) Order, 1973, (No. 151), Confirmation of Consumption Tax (Amendment) (No. 3) Order, 1973 (No. 152) as well as the Confirmation of Customs (Export Duties) Order, 1973 (No. 153).

Hon. Leader of the House.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop):
Your Honour, permit me to move the Adjournment of this hon. House to tomorrow, Tuesday, 18th December, 1973 at 2 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 10.10 p.m.
