

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

(VOLUME 5)

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

45th Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, 28th December, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

SPEAKER

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

Members of the Government

People's National Congress

Elected Members

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

Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of Communications

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Finance

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Health

(Absent – on leave)

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)

The Hon. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Trade

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Local Government

The Hon. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Co-operatives and Community Development

Appointed Ministers

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Attorney-General and Minister of State

The Hon. H. Greene,
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

(Absent)

The Hon. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Mines and Forests

(Absent)

The Hon. E.B. McDavid,
Minister of Information and Culture

(Absent)

The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,
Minister of Education

Parliament Secretaries

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, J.P.
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. A. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

Other Members

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Miss N.M. Ackman, Government Whip
Mr. K. Bancroft
Mr. N.J. Bissember
Mr. J. Budhoo, J.P.,
Mr. L.I. Chan-A-Sue
Mr. E.F. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Mr. R.J. Jordan
Mr. S.M. Saffee
Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman
Mr. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.
Mrs. L.E. Willems

(Absent – on leave)

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr. C.B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition
Mr. Ram karran
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.
Mr. D.C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip
Mr. M.Y. Lall, J.P.
Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P.
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco

(Absent)

Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bhola Persaud
Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
Mr. L.A. Durant
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent – on leave)
(Absent)

United Force

Mrs. E. DaSilva
Mr. M.F. Singh
Mr. J.A. Sutton

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks

OFFICERS

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

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

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

(Mr. Speaker *in the Chair.*)

Prayers

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1972**

Assembly resolved itself into Committee of Supply to consider the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1972, totaling \$197,846,560.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

HEAD 42 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**PRIMARY, MULTI-LATERAL AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

The Chairman: When the Adjournment was taken the Hon. Member, Mr. Vincent Teekah was speaking on page 117, sub-head 1, item (1) to (8). Will the Hon. Member please continue.

Mr. Teekah: Prior to the commencement of the sitting this afternoon, it was agreed in the Speaker's Office that I would not speak any longer on this subhead but the Hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally and the Hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud would speak on subhead 6. Subsequent to that discussion the Hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud agreed that I should take up that subhead and he has declined. With your permission, sir, I shall speak on that subhead.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Teekah: I wish to speak on (b) of subhead 6, Hindu and Muslim Organisations – Teaching of Languages.

First of all, I think that it would be of interest to persons if these oriental languages were to be taught throughout the length and breadth of Guyana. Apart from that, I am informed that in the case of the teaching of the Hindi language, money is normally given to the Maha Sabha and this organization is expected to pay out sums to the various schools that are teaching the Hindi language.

According to the information which is reaching members on this side of the House, unless a school is affiliated to the Maha Sabha it cannot receive this grant for the teaching of Hindi.

I would therefore suggest to the Hon. Minister that the Maha Sabha, as an organization, ought to receive part of the grant for the teaching of Hindi, a specific portion should be given to it, but other sums should be paid to other organizations or schools which are teaching Hindi, because the Maha Sabha is not the only organization that is teaching Hindi or that has schools which teach Hindi. There are several other organizations and schools which teach Hindi.

I am told that for this year, 1971, many of the schools are not in receipt of the sum which they used to be paid in the past and others, which are giving yeoman service in this field, that is, the teaching of Hindi, have not had any grant from the Maha Sabha. I should like the Hon. Minister to investigate these complaints and, if necessary, take steps to prevent them recurring in the future.

Finally, I want to urge strongly that this grant ought to be increased because if oriental languages are to be taught more money should be given. The Hon. Minister might want to consider the teaching of oriental languages and Swahili as part of the curriculum in primary and secondary schools. If it is necessary that Guyana should have these languages taught, because we do teach foreign languages such as Latin, French and Spanish in our schools, then an investigation should be carried out since money is granted here for the teaching of these

languages. Probably we should consider absorbing this in the curriculum of the primary and secondary schools.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, subhead 1, item 1, Head Teachers. If we look in the Establishment we will see that the Establishment in 1972 is 419, the Establishment in 1971 as listed is 425 head teachers, so that 1972 there are six head teachers less than in 1971. Will the Hon. Minister please tell us what this reflects or represents? Why is it that we are having six head teachers less in 1972 than in 1971. If one takes this on the presumption that a head teacher is attached to a school then it would appear that there are six less schools. Is this presumption correct?

Mr. M.Y. Ally: Mr. Chairman, subhead 6, item (b) the sum of \$4,250 is being provided for Hindu and Muslim Organisations for the teaching of languages. Of this amount only \$700 is located to the Muslim Organisation and this amount is for 110 schools. This is an impracticable figure per year. The two major religions in Guyana are recognized because as a consequence of good will the Government has granted national holidays to these two religious bodies. The Hindus have the Deepavali and Phagwah, and the Muslims have Eid-Ul-Azha and Yaou-mum Nabi. Apart from this the Prime Minister had promised to offer a chair at the University of Guyana for the teaching of Arabic. I would ask the Government to include it in the curriculum if it cannot find it possible to allocate more funds even by a supplementary vote whereby Urdu and Arabic can be taught at these schools.

The Minister of Education (Miss Baird): Mr. Chairman, with respect to the Hon. Member Mr. Teekah's comments on the dismissal of a number of interim teachers during the first term of the present academic year, I should like to inform the Hon. Gentleman that during September places have to be found for qualified teachers who have completed the two-year course at the Government Training College. Some interim teachers were replaced by qualified teachers. In other cases, the situation is. We must bear in mind that new roles have been defined for local authorities. It is intended to decentralize education, therefore, responsibility for

education will be given gradually to local authorities. This led us to consider the extent to which local authorities could usefully function on the Teachers Service Commission. What I am trying to say is that two of the circumstances I mentioned (1) the establishment of local authorities and the recommendation for unifying the Service made by the Collins Commission, both circumstances led us to consider the kind of Commission that we will structure, and the composition of the Commission. We are now in consultation with the Ministry of Local Government and this will determine the composition of the Teachers Service Commission. As soon as these things are straightened out we will be in a position to name the members of the Commission.

*Head 42, Ministry of Education, Primary, Multi-Lateral and Secondary Schools,
\$15,208,896, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates*

2.40 p.m.

HEAD 43 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION CENTRES

*Question proposed that the sum of \$735,235 for Head 43, Ministry of Education,
Practical Instruction Centres, stand part of the Estimates.*

The Chairman: Will Hon. Members please indicate.

Mr. Teekah: Mr. Chairman, a little while ago in the Speaker's Office, it was agreed between yourself and members of the Opposition that we would not have debates on these Heads.

The Chairman: Certainly, Hon. Member Mr. Teekah, there are other Members who comprise the Opposition.

The Teekah: I am talking of the P.P.P. Opposition and we shall debate Divisions XXI and XXII.

The Chairman: Certainly, Hon. Member Mr. Teekah, other members of the Opposition, Mr. Cheeks, have a right to speak.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I think we might have been invited into the Speaker's Office. Subhead 1, items (2) and (8), Teachers-in-Charge: We note that in the 1971 Approved Estimates, the sum of \$80,082 was provide, yet in the same year the figure has been revised from \$80,082 to \$17,720 approximately only 20 percent of what was originally provided. In the 1972 Estimates, there is an increase of 2 in the establishment and the figure has gone up to \$87,082. What I want to ask is how we can possibly have anything like realistic estimates if we have only 20 percent of the provision being revised to be spent. There must be something radically wrong. What is going to be the position for next year? We are asking for \$87,082. Will the Revised Estimates be again approximately 20 percent? Why is it that this revised figure is so very low? The same applied to item (8).

The sum provided in the 1971 Approved Estimates was \$99,800 but in the Revised Estimates it has gone down \$32,512. In the 1972 Estimates it is \$107,800. Again we ask the question, will the Revised Estimates for 1972 bring that figure down to 20, 30, 40 percent? If we have such wide variations, these estimates would be meaningless.

In both cases, the errors are typographical. Subhead 1, item (2), Teachers-in-Charge, the figures for 1971 should read \$79,720 and not \$17,720, and item (8), Teachers-in-Charge, should be \$67,512 and not \$32,512.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I wonder in that case whether the totals are correct. I would have to add them up. Are the totals based on the figures quoted by the Minister or on the figures that are reflected here? Perhaps the totals should be altered

Miss Baird: This will need consultation with the Treasury. I am not in a position to answer that.

Mr. M.F. Singh: My colleague says the totals are correct on the basis of what is listed in the estimate and not on the basis of what the Minister says. This is a serious matter. If the Hon. Minister is correct and these additions are based on what is listed here, the Minister is asking for the wrong amount. It is a reflection on the total Budget.

Head 43, Ministry of Education, Practical Instruction Centres - \$735,235 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 43 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

GOVERNMENT TRAINING COLLEGE PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMME

Question proposed that the sum \$217,445 for Head 44, Ministry of Education, Government Training College, Pre-Service Teacher Training Programme, stand part of these Estimates

Mr. Cheeks: Will Hon. Minister state whether the proposal, which I understand was under consideration, that the whole pre-service establishment should form the nucleus for the Institute of Education at the University of Guyana, is still under consideration or if it has been abandoned?

Miss Baird: As far as I am informed, there is no Institute of Education at the University of Guyana and there is no plan to link the Government Training College, if the Hon. Member is referring to the Pre-service training, which is the primary training college. It is not envisaged to have this linked with the University of Guyana.

Mr. Checks: Is the Hon. Minister saying there is no plan and there never was such a plan?

Miss Baird: I am not aware of that plan.

2.50 p.m.

Head 44, Ministry of Education, Government Training College, Pre-Service Teacher Training Programme - \$217,445 – agreed to and Ordered to stand part of the Estimates

HEAD 45 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

TECHNICAL INSTITUTE GEORGETOWN

Question proposed that the sum \$514,964 for Head 45, Ministry of Education, Technical Institute, Georgetown, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 1, item (14), Part-time Teaching Staff. I wish to make a short observation in connection with this item. We all know that the Technical Institute relies a great deal on part-time teaching staff. In 1969 and in 1970, approximately \$80,000 was expended; in 1971, \$60,000 was provided in the approved Estimates but that was revised to \$70,861 and yet all that is being asked for in the 1972 Estimates is \$60,000.

Is this being very realistic in the light of the expenditure from 1969 onwards? The expenditure seems to be levelling out at around \$80,000. If we are to have realistic estimates one would have thought that perhaps a figure of about \$80,000 would be more realistic.

Will the Hon. Minister say whether this reduction in the figure from the actual expenditure in 1969 and 1970 to \$60,000 is due to an increase in the permanent staff at the Technical Institute? What is the reason for the decrease in the provision for Part-time Teaching Staff?

Miss Baird: The reduction in the sum provided is due to the fact that we are filling vacancies with permanent staff and therefore there is less need for part-time staff.

Head 45, Ministry of Education, Technical Institute Georgetown - \$514,964 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 46 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

CARNEGIE SCHOOL OF HOME ECONOMICS

Question proposed that the sum of \$119,326 for Head 46, Ministry of Education, Carnegie School of Home Economic, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 46, Ministry of Education, Carnegie School of Home Economics - \$119,326, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 47 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

QUEEN'S COLLEGE

Question proposed that the sum of \$331,116 for Head 47, Ministry of Education, Queen's College, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: I wish to ask a general question on this Head. One notices from reports in the newspapers that the building for the premier school in this country is being used for all sorts of purposes, all of them connected with one political party. One wonders what the policy in respect of this building is. What is the policy in respect of making the Queen's College building available to organizations, groups and bodies?

I have had conversations with members of the staff and they have complained bitterly about the way in which this school building is being used and the condition in which it is left after use.

I should like the Minister to say who controls the letting out or giving out of this school and on what basis it is given out. Is it that anybody can get it? Does the Minister not think that there should be stricter control over the giving out of this school in view of the vast number of complaints with respect to the lending out of this school?

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry controls the use of the building. As far as I know, the building is used by several organizations and institutions, including schools.

Head 4, Ministry of Education, Queen's College - \$331,116, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

HEAD 48 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

BISHOPS' HIGH SCHOOL

Question proposed that the sum of \$264,308 for Head 48, Ministry of Education, Bishops' High School, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 48, Ministry of Education, Bishops' High School - \$264,308, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

**HEAD 49 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
ANNA REGINA SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Question proposed that the sum of \$121,819 for Head 49, Ministry of Education, Anna Regina Secondary School, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Cheeks: Subhead 1 (14), Laboratory Attendant. Will the Hon. Minister tell us what is the present position at the Anna Regina Secondary School in so far as the Laboratory Attendant is concerned? I understand there was a highly trained officer there with little or no equipment and he found himself having little or nothing to do.

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Education is not aware of such a situation.

Head 49, Ministry of Education, Anna Regina Secondary School - \$121,819, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

3.00 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 125.

HEAD 50 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

BERBICE HIGH SCHOOL

Question proposed that the sum of \$197,898 for Head 50, Ministry of Education, Berbice High School, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 50, Ministry of Education, Berbice High School, \$197,898, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 126.

HEAD 51 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, NEW AMSTERDAM

Question proposed that the sum of \$195,796 for Head 51, Ministry of Education, Technical Institute, New Amsterdam, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 51, Ministry of Education, Technical Institute, New Amsterdam, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 127

DIVISION XXI - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,722,600 for Division XXI, Ministry of Education stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: There are a few corrections I would wish Hon. Members to observe. They appear in the legend:

Substitute the figures 11, 12, 14 and 15 for 10, 11, 13 and 14 respectively.

Mr. Teekah: Subheads 1 and 17.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Teekah.

Mr. Teekah: On subhead 1, only the paltry sum of \$439,000 is being voted for the construction of Primary, Multi-Lateral and Secondary Schools. I am aware too, sir, that under Division XXII you have multi-lateral schools coming up. This is by far too small. The Government is not serious in tackling the problem of the construction of new schools in the country and the problems of overcrowding in the schools of Guyana. I would have thought that the Government would have been realistic when it addressed its mind to this question of the building of new schools because certainly it should be aware. It ought to be aware of the statistics which show that of the number of young people of primary school age which is 206,000 only 163,000 are in the primary schools of Guyana and the 206,000 represents children between the ages of five and fifteen. The Ministry of Education statistics show that only 87.2 per cent of the children are in fact in schools.

The Hon. Minister might argue that there are private primary schools or preparatory schools which take care of the number of children who are not in school. But this is an extremely small number of student population between the ages of five and fourteen. Therefore approximately 40,000 children cannot find places in the primary schools of Guyana today. Certainly the Hon. Minister is not aware of this. It is a fact that there are many schools where children have been trying for a long time to get on the roll and have not been successful. I have tabled a Question to the Hon. Minister a few months ago; she is not yet capable of answering the Question.

The Chairman: I think that is unfair.

Mr. Teekah: I am sorry sir, she has not yet been able to answer the Question about the Tain Government School where there are some 200 children on the waiting list of that school and

they have not been able to get on the roll. The Hon. Minister has not been able to answer the Question, and the Government is not providing the answer here by showing that new schools will be built to accommodate the large number of students who really would like to get primary education. This is only dealing with primary. Because this year the vote states multi-lateral secondary. I am aware that multi-lateral also comes under another head, but take primary and secondary alone; for primary alone you need about 40,000 places. Then one must consider the fact that in the existing primary schools there is need now for money to repair them. Many of them are in a state of despair. And the serious overcrowding which exists even though those children who have been able to get on the roll, the accommodation is far too inadequate, they are packed like sardines. One would expect the Government to do something serious to grapple with the problem in a more profound way by diverting much of its funds to the construction of new schools.

I should like to ask the Hon. Minister if the Ministry has any plan or any programme yet drawn up to solve the problem of overcrowding in the primary schools of Guyana. Has the Ministry been thinking about this problem? The Hon. Minister said during the general debate that by 1975 or 1976, I do not remember exactly the year, that Government would be able to find 190,000 places for children of primary school age. Speaking about it just like that is all right; I can say the same thing too that tomorrow the PPP would be in the Government. But speaking of something like that is not making the thing come true, you must have a realistic programme which will be able to win you your objectives. Where is the programme to find the places for the children who now need them in the primary schools of Guyana? Where is the programme to stop overcrowding which is taking place? Where is the programme to accommodate our rising school population of 3 per cent per annum? How will she solve these problems affecting the young people of Guyana?

Next on subhead 17, University of Guyana: I wish to ask the Hon. Minister if she is not aware that any modern University does have a hostel and what are we doing about a hostel for the University of Guyana. Some time ago when the late Governor General Sir David Rose was alive, he launched a fund for \$1 million to establish a hostel at the University of Guyana. Since Sir David Rose died, very little has been heard about the hostel at the University of Guyana.

I wonder whether the Government and particularly the Hon. Minister are aware that there is much hardship which the students have to face, especially those students from the country areas, in order to attend the University and to ask how early could we expect the University of Guyana to have a hostel to accommodate especially those students from the country areas. The University's Board of Governors cannot provide a hostel if it does not have the funds. It is Government's job to suggest to the Parliament such funds and although the sum of \$500,000 is voted according to the legend, to provide for continued development of the campus, I would like to know whether this is specifically for the hostel and how early the University of Guyana contemplates having a hostel.

Miss Baird: I would like to repeat that children are both in private and State schools and it is not true to say that only 72.8 per cent of our children are in schools because it means that the Hon. Member Mr. Teekah is not taking any cognizance of the children in private schools.

With respect to school buildings, I should like to repeat there is a programme and in our provision we are putting up new buildings and extensions, and we are completing unfinished buildings. I will not go into the names of the schools but I should like to refer to some areas which are getting schools, Skeldon, Mibicuri, Vryheid's Lust, Karamat, Annandale, and we are looking into the building of five teachers' houses in the interior areas.

With respect to the building of a hostel for the University of Guyana, as the Hon. Member himself mentioned, there is an appeal fund and this appeal fund is still going on. The University

has problems of teaching space and we are going to put up buildings for the Faculty of Education. The work is in phases and the next phase is to provide accommodation for the Faculty of Education and the hostel will fall in place.

Mr. Teekah: I should like to take cognizance of the fact that there are students in private schools. Could the Hon. Minister tell the House how many children are in private primary schools in the country?

Miss Baird: I would prefer the Hon. Member to put this in the form of a Question.

Division XXI, Ministry of Education - \$1,722,600 –agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XXII - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

IBRD/IDA PROJECTS

Question proposed that the sum of \$5,630,000 for Division XXII, Ministry of Education, IBRD/IDA Projects, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will Hon. Members please indicate.

Mr. Teekah: I wish to speak on the Head as a whole.

Mr. Cheeks: Subhead 5.

Mr. Teekah: This is what I would call the propaganda head of the Ministry of Education. I would reinforce my statement. In the 1971 Budget, the sum of \$4.1 million was voted under this Division. But it is shocking to note that only \$528,000 approximately was

actually spent. The Government votes \$4.1 Million for 1971 and says: we are spending a lot of money on education, on multi-lateral schools alone, \$4.1 million. Comes the end of the year, \$½ million has been spent.

I want to observe further that since January 1969 when the Lome' Agreement was signed with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the International Development Association, Government has been placing the record of \$5.2 million on multi-lateral schools year after year, 1969, 1970, 1971, but they have not built one multi-lateral school so far, and every year a lot of boast; we are spending so many millions on multi-lateral schools, it is going to provide so much education for Guyanese, so many new stream will be opened after the primary level. But not one multi-lateral school has been built so far.

Just to show how much this programme has been lagging, at one time Government had a multi-lateral teachers' training programme. That programme was supposed to train the first batch of teachers to coincide with the first school. The teachers are already out but no school has been built. As a matter of fact, these teachers are now being used in the secondary schools and when she was bombarded by the question: why has not your building programme coincided with your teachers' training programme, the then Hon. Minister of Education, Miss Field-Ridley, said:

“you see, we want to give teachers some experience and that is why we put them in secondary schools.”

That was not in the contract at all. I looked over the contracts, both the I.B.R.D. and the I.D.A. contract, yesterday and nothing like that was stated. The teachers' training programme was supposed to coincide with the building programme and the teachers are already out, but no school has been set up.

The next point is this: according to the legend here six schools are to be built at Mahaica, Anna Regina, Wismar, Ruimveldt, Vigilance and New Amsterdam. This again is a breach of the contracts with I.B.R.D. and I.D.A. In both the contract with the World Bank and with International Development Association it was stated that several schools will be built. Five more schools will be built and two primary schools will be reconverted to multi-lateral schools, one at Annandale. Nothing has been said here about the Annandale school.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not wish to interrupt you, but did you not make this particular point in your previous remarks under the other Head?

Mr. Teekah: No, sir. I have not spoken on this yet. Can the Hon. Minister say why the contract is being observed in the breach? What has happened to the school at Annandale? In both contracts Annandale was earmarked for a school. Is it a question of discrimination against the young people of Annandale? Or is it that Annandale is being left for the last? What reasonable explanation has the Minister to give?

Since the programme has been lagging so much, how early does Guyana expect its first multi-lateral school? I want to urge the Government to spend the money we are voting under this Division, \$5.6 million, this year. The Hon. Prime Minister had boasted that \$30 million will be spent this year on education. Last year he made the same boast but the money was not spent. Please let us have this money spent this year and let our young people have the education they deserve.

3.20 p.m.

The Chairman: The Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 4, Consultant Services. What Consultant Services are we referring to here? One would have thought that the explanatory note would have said these

services are, but it merely says, "To provide for consultant service." Obviously this is so. Have we got any further? We want to know what consultant services. Is it for teacher consultants to advise, for example, on subhead 2, Instructional Equipment and Books? Or is the vote for engineering or architectural consultants to advise on civil works? Is it for combination of these services? We would like to know.

The Chairman: The Hon. Member Mr. Cheeks

Mr. Cheeks: I should like the Hon. Minister to tell us whether Government has now come to the conclusion that those teachers who were selected for training two years ago in multi-lateral schools are not fit for work in schools at that level.

I remember that many of those who were selected did not have the minimum qualifications required because Government had moved a little late. Nevertheless, they were selected. They have been trained and they are now graduates. What has become of them? Has Government discovered that they are not fit for work in the multi-lateral schools? What is the Government's intention with regard to the staffing of these multi-lateral schools?

Miss Baird: Mr. Chairman, I am surprised to learn that the Hon. Member Mr. Vincent Teekah has seen contracts. The true position is that no school was scheduled for commencement before 1972 and it was not proposed to have teachers ready with the re-opening of schools. The plan was to prepare teachers in advance. Some of that money was therefore spent on preparing teachers locally and preparing administrative personnel abroad. Some went into architect fields. I should like to announce that the contract has been awarded and building activity will start early in the New Year.

With regard to the comment made by the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh on Consultant Services, I should like to explain that the consultants go under the name of Project Planning

Associates. They are contracted consultants who carry out all drawings and plans. They give us general technical advice.

The Hon. Member Mr. Cheeks commented on the first batch of trainees for multi-lateral schools. It is not true to say that they were under qualified. At the moment, these teachers are working in other secondary schools. They will be used in multi-lateral school when they are opened.

There is a programme carried on by the Centre for teachers' education for those teachers who will teach in secondary schools. The programme is that the tutors follow these students up in the schools in which they are teaching at present and give them extension courses which will prepare them to work in multi-lateral schools when they are opened.

Mr. Teekah: The Hon. Minister said that she was rather surprised that I had seen the contracts. There was an inference that there was something irregular. May I inform the Hon. Minister that before she was a member of this House, the contracts were laid in Parliament.

3.30 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 17.

HEAD 2 – SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE

Question proposed that the sum of \$592,492 for Head 2, Supreme Court of Judicature stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Twenty minutes are allocated for this Head. There are two pages, 17 and 18. Members will bear in mind when they speak that Hon. Minister will have to reply.

Dr. Ramsahoye: Your Honour, may I speak generally on the Head.

The Chairman: Yes, Hon. Member.

Dr. Ramsahoye: Your Honour, I wish to draw to the attention of my learned and Hon. Friend the Attorney General that the facilities for work in this Court have outlasted their usefulness. The Court space is inadequate, and the furniture in the Court leaves much to be desired; chairs and desks are not available for members of the profession. I wonder whether the Hon. And learned Member knows about this because it has been a recording thing for the last two or three years and whether any steps could be taken to remedy the situation.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State (Mr. Ramphal): Mr. Chairman, I can assure my learned and Hon Friend that I am well aware of the deficiency with regard to the accommodation and facilities in the Supreme Court building but that it is extremely difficult for me to hold out any immediate promise of substantial relief. We have a long-term plan for building both in relation the Supreme Court and the Magistrates Courts where the situation I am sure he knows although they are not institutions that he frequents as often as the Supreme Court itself, the Magistrates' Courts to say the least, are very much in need of improvement. It is a question of priorities and priorities at the moment, I think we must say so very frankly and I hope unapologetically are in the productive sector. It should not be taken as any indication of any lessening of the Government's concern that the law and its enforcement should be conducted in institutions and establishments which will preserve its dignity and command the respect of the community as a whole; nor should it be taken as an indication that we do not accept our obligations to members of the legal profession who play such an important role in the whole process of the administration of justice. I am in discussion with the Hon. Chancellor and the Hon. Chief Justice from month to month about ways in which we can make small improvements which do not involve a great degree of capital out lay but which will ameliorate conditions of some kind. From time to time I have discussions with the Bar Association who have through their executive raised particular issues of this kind. The learned and Hon. Member has my

assurance that I will do everything within my power and within the general order of priorities to which the whole Development Programme is directed to see that these conditions are improved.

The Chairman: Page 16.

Dr, Ramsahoye: Subhead 13. May ask what are the expenses which are covered by that Court?

The Attorney General: Mr. Chairman, the subhead I am informed covers a number of miscellaneous items but principal among them is subscriptions to periodical and a certain amount of recurrent maintenance in relation to library and other facilities in the building.

Head 2, Supreme Court of Judicature, \$592,492, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 19

HEAD 3 – MAGISTRATES

Questions proposed that the sum of \$860,758 for head 3, Magistrates, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: There are two pages. We have gained ten minutes. Therefore the allocation there has been increased to twenty minutes for Magistrates.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 1, items 1 and 2.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Item 5.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Mr. Chairman, will the Hon. Attorney General tell us what is the Ministry's reaction to the proposal for the creation of a post of Chief Magistrate? Originally, we had two Senior Magistrates, now the Estimates make provision for three Senior Magistrates. You will agree that the suggestion for the creation of such a post came from the highest authority in the Judiciary because that authority feels that the magistracy would be better supervised and there would be greater efficiency. Indeed, if such a post is created Magistrates would be able to represent their problems more effectively so that there would be greater efficiency in the administration of the magistrate's Courts.

If the Government agrees to the creation of the post of Chief Magistrate then it follows that there should be a post of Principal Officer of Courts. There is provision under item 2 for a Executive Officer but this officer is only concerned with the Magistrates Courts in Georgetown. There must be an officer who has jurisdiction and control over all the courts throughout the country and particularly in the Interior. We have had our own experience in other quarters of Parliament about the weaknesses in certain courts. I would wish on this occasion to support very strongly the proposal, which I am sure the Hon. Attorney-General is aware of, for the creation of such a post and secondly, for the creation of the post of Principal Officer as distinct from Executive Officer who deals with the Georgetown Magistrates' Courts alone. The Principal Officer will be responsible for all the magistrate court offices throughout the country.

3.40 p.m.

It is true there is a clerk attached to the Registrar of the Supreme Court, who deals with the affairs of the magistracy at that level, but we know from experience that such an officer has never worked in the magistrate's Court and so he will not have the necessary expertise and experience to advise and to give the service that is so necessary in the magistracy. We are also aware that the Registrar of the Supreme Court has enough on his hands to deal with at that level.

When the post of Registrar was created, we had a lesser number of judges and courts. There has been an increase in the number of courts and judges at the Supreme Court level and now we have calls from the Berbice Bar Association for resident judges for the county of Berbice. Probably, the Hon. Attorney General can give us his views on this particular representation for resident judges. Probably, such an appeal may soon come from Essequibo.

The proposal for the creation of a post of Chief Magistrate and Principal Officer of Court, to my mind, has a lot of merit, and the Government should accept the recommendation.

On the question of item (2), Executive Officer, I urge that whoever holds this position, even if the post of Principal Officer of Court is established, has a greater number of courts to deal with than the clerks say at Vreed-en-Hoop, or on the East Coast or in the various areas in Berbice. I think we have thirteen magistrates' courts in Georgetown and the Clerks of Court for these country areas are paid under A9a. The Executive Officer is paid under A7. The maximum of a Clerk of Court in the country areas is higher than the minimum for the Executive Officer under A7. It can happen that if a Clerk of Court in the country areas is at his maximum, he will be drawing more money than the Executive Officer at the Georgetown Magistrates' Court whose duties are onerous and great. The time is ripe for the regrading of this particular post of Executive Officer.

I have not seen under this Head provision for the payment of magistrates who are serving overtime in the Assessment Courts, or provision for the payment of staff.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 5, Books and Publications: We note that for 1972, again the paltry sum of \$600 is provided. Is the Hon. Minister not aware of the gross dissatisfaction in respect of books and publications available to magistrates in Magistrates' Offices? Time and again we have come to this House and talked, yet nothing seems to be done. In Guyana, we still have the binding doctrine of precedent. Even some of the ordinary reference books are not

available in Magistrates' Courts, where justice is administered, a very important part of our democratic society.

I should like the Hon. Minister to tell us what, if anything, is going to be done next year, apart from this \$600, to alleviate the position and to make satisfactory arrangements for books and publications to be available to magistrates and magistrates' Court.

The Attorney General and Minister of State: As regards the observations of the Hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, the representations to which he alluded have, of course, been made more directly by the persons involved and have been under consideration both by the Office of the Registrar working with the Hon. Chief Justice and by my own Ministry. They have also, and this applies to the second group of observations that he made, been brought to the attention of the job evaluation team, both in relation to the possible establishment of a post of Principal Office for the magistrates as distinct from a person holding the post of Principal Officer in the Registry and performing functions to the Registrar in relation to the administration of Magistrates.

I should like to assure him that particularly now he has lent his parliamentary authority to these representations, they will continue to receive our very serious and urgent consideration. We must await the report of the job evaluation team on them, as indeed on the anomaly which we acknowledge to be an anomaly of the Clerks of Court in the rural areas and the levels of their maximum and the minimum and the rate for the Executive Officer. This, too, is engaging attention of the job evaluation commission and of the Public Service Ministry. I thank him for his observations on this.

As regards the question of publications and the general need for more money to be made available for law books and publications, certainly no Attorney General is ever satisfied with the amounts that are voted annually for this purpose. Suffice it to say that in the person of the Minister of Finance at the moment, we have always found a sympathetic and receptive ear and

we shall continue to do what we can within our resources to improve the facilities of all the libraries to ensure that all those involved in the administration of justice, whether they be judges of the Supreme Court or the Justices of the Court of Appeal, or the Magistrates, or the officers in the Registry, and, of course, in the Chambers of the Attorney General, have access to the very necessary legal texts, which are required if they are to perform their duties effectively. These observations from Hon. And learned Members help us in our own representations, and I am very grateful for them.

The Chairman: Page 20.

Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud: Subhead 14. In 1971, for temporary clerical assistance, we spend \$8,463. In 1972, there is an increase and my information, if it is correct, is that the assessment work being done after hours will come to an end of February or not later than March. This being so, one would have expected this amount to be reduced considerably. Instead, there is an increase of some \$5,000. If my information is correct, I am told that many persons employed under this Head are not qualified and, in fact, they do hardly any work. This might be an attempt to keep them there despite the fact that there is no work for them to do.

3.50 p.m.

I am not opposed to the Government creating employment for the people of this country, but employment must be on the basis of merit and qualifications. Undoubtedly, this item needs an explanation as to who will be employed and who will be retained under this vote after March when the assessment work comes to an end.

I have not seen – and the Hon. Attorney-General omitted to answer me directly on this – provision for additional payment to magistrates who are serving overtime or provision for clerks who are employed in the magistracy and are working in the assessment courts, as distinct from temporary clerical assistance.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: I am surprised that my Hon. Friend injected into his otherwise constructive remarks observations relating to the employment of temporary assistants on other than perfectly normal and objective terms.

The position is that the additional magistrates, the special magistrates who were appointed to deal with the backlog of rent restriction issues, and the drive that we have been making for the service of warrants have not relieved the position by the end of 1971 sufficiently for us to say, with any certainty, that the whole operation can be brought to an end in the early part of 1972.

A substantial dent has been made, particularly in the rent restriction cases, but some areas – areas not originally contemplated as part of the operation – are yet to be dealt with. These must engage the attention of those who have been retained and who continue to perform this work, if I may say so, very largely on a voluntary basis because the additional emoluments which are paid to them in no way can be regarded as full or normal compensation. They are, in many respects, performing a public service and they will continue to perform this service well into 1972. The Estimates have been constructed on that basis.

The Hon. Member will have observed, when we were dealing with Head 3 on page 19, that provision has been made for the continuation of this expenditure under subhead 1 (14) and for the payment of overtime allowances to magistrates employed on this work under subhead 1 (17).

In relation to the assistants, for which subhead 14 on page 20 provides, these people will continue to be needed. There is no question of the posts being provided to relieve unemployment. These are posts that are provided to enable the continuation of the project and the programme of work on which we have embarked in relation to rent restriction matters and the serving of warrants. A large number our citizens have a very direct and immediate concern for that work to continue and it will be continued with the assistance of these provisions.

Head 3, Magistrates - \$860,758, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 8 – PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS

Question proposed that the of \$127,764 for Head 8, Public Prosecutions, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 8, Public Prosecutions - \$127,764, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD15 - ATTORNEY GENERAL

Dr. Ramsahoye: Subhead 1, item (4) to (9)

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 1, item (8) to (12)

Dr. Ramsahoye: It would appear that the machinery of the Law Officers department is under tremendous drafting pressure. I have observed that legislation to implement the 1970 Budget is only now before the House. This must mean that the department is fetching a burden and is in arrears.

I see that there are six posts provided for Parliamentary Counsel and I should like to know how many are actually filled at the moment. The legend shows that they are not all filled. How early does my Hon. and learned Friend expect to be able to have a full complement to carry on the public business?

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 1, item (8) Supernumerary Parliamentary Counsel, and item (12), Supernumerary Senior Legal Adviser. These are both supernumerary posts that are

reflected in the Estimates and that seems to be continuing for some time. They were there in 1970 and will be there in 1972.

One would have thought that supernumerary posts would have a limited life. Are these people doing specific jobs or are they part and parcel of the general staff in the office? One knows that the Government is suffering from lack of Parliamentary Counsel. Perhaps it will think in terms of increasing the establishment rather than reflecting supernumerary posts year after year. How long will we keep reflecting supernumerary posts? If it is considered that an increase in the establishment is needed, why not add these posts to the general establishment and take away the appellation of supernumerary?

Similarly, where is the post? Is there an individual person in a particular job, or is it part and parcel of the General staff attached to the Senior Legal Adviser?

The Attorney-General and Minister of States: My Hon. And learned Friend, Dr, Ramsahoye, is right when he says that the legal drafting section of the Attorney-General's Chambers is under considerable and severe pressure. No one knows better than he himself the pressures to which that section is always subjected in the regime of every Government. Indeed, I do not know of a section in any Government which is not under similar pressure. The truth is that there are never enough legal draftsmen to handle the volume of legislation which the Government machine requires for the implementation of Government's policies and programmes.

I have said before in this House what a scarce talent legal drafting is. It is not a case of our not having adequate provision on the Estimates. It is not a case of our needing more posts. In fact, none of the posts for which provision is made is really at the moment not filled.

We are in a programme both of training and of recruiting Assistant Parliamentary Counsel of proven aptitude and this means that within the administration of the Chambers we

seek to allow young lawyers coming into the Chambers to demonstrate an aptitude and ability for drafting. I think we are making some progress. We are participating in a far-sighted progressive Canadian scheme for the training of legal draftsmen and one of our Assistant Parliamentary Counsel is now in Canada undergoing training of this kind. I am certain it will mean a strengthening of the section when he returns.

We shall continue, we hope, with this training programme so that one at least of our Parliamentary draftsmen may be on training at any given time. My Hon. and learned Friend, Mr. Feilden Singh, raised the question with regard to the designation of two of the posts. So far as the post of Supernumerary Parliamentary Counsel is concerned, I think it is correct that it should so remain. This post was established to enable the Commissioner for Law Revision to perform his functions. It is a post that is provided under the United Nations Development Programme auspices and it is a post that we expect will wind itself up with the completion of the first stage of the law revision exercise within the first half of 1972.

4.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, it gives me an opportunity to inform Members of the House of the progress that we have made on law revision. We have reached the stage now where printing of the Revised Edition of the Laws should begin and I am glad to be able to say that in the first time in the history of the country a Revised Edition of our Laws will be printed within the country by our own printers. I think this will represent a very considerable step forward.

I have already told Hon. Members that the Revised Edition will take the form of a loose leaf edition. This means that it should be the last time when we should embark on a full-scale revision of the laws, scrapping editions that are out of date and replacing them entirely by new volumes. It means that if we carry out this exercise efficiently our laws will be kept in a constant state of revision with new pages being substituted for pages on which there have been amendments or in which particular provisions of legislation or whole acts have been repealed. It

means that we have got to build up a whole new body of expertise in this because it is a very specialized function.

We are hoping that with the assistance of parliamentary counsel who have been working with the Law Revision Commissioner it will go forward smoothly and that by this time next year I should be in a position to tell Members and perhaps hopefully to present Members with samples of the new Edition of the Laws and of course at that stage to delete from the Estimates the post of Supernumerary Parliamentary Counsel.

The same type of explanation does not really hold good for the second post. If I may say so, with every respect, there is very substantial merit in my Hon. Friend's observations. It is a provision that was originally made when one of the officers was seconded for special duty in the Commonwealth Caribbean Legal Secretariat. It is the case that the time has come for us to consider moving it up into the normal Establishment. One tries to avoid this in terms of the Estimates at an early stage in the hope that Supernumerary posts can, in fact, be made redundant. I doubt whether this one ever will be. I hope the Hon. Member will agree that what we should do is to allow the Estimates to go in this way, that we will take account of his observations and within the next year we will endeavour to regularize the matter one way or the other - either to delete the post or increase the Establishment.

Assembly resumed.

Sitting suspended at 4.05 p.m.

On resumption –

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: When the suspension was taken we had completed page 46 Page 47.

HEAD 15 - ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Question proposed that the sum of \$243,897 for Head 15, Attorney General, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Head 15, Attorney General, \$243,897, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, before we proceed to the next Head, by agreement between the Government and Opposition we will proceed right through. There will be no suspension for one and a half hours.

Head 16, page 48.

HEAD 16 – ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Dr. Ramsahoye: Subhead 6.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 1, item 1

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Singh

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, Official Receiver, Public Trustee, and State Solicitor and Deputy State Solicitor. I know that these posts have been vacant before. I know there has been some difficulty in filling these posts. I wonder whether my Hon. and learned Friend can tell us whether these posts have been filled. If they are not, are arrangements being made to fill these posts?

Dr. Ramsahoye: Your Honour, may I ask my learned and Hon. Friend how it is that the vote for legal costs, fees, etc., has gone from an estimated \$24,000 to \$120,000 for 1971? I wonder whether my learned and Hon. Friend will not be prepared to consider a policy whereby funds collected by the State for legal costs and fees be credited to some common fund with this amount.

The Attorney-General: Mr. Chairman, as regards the first question, the answer is that the post of Official Receiver, Public Trustee and State Solicitor is filled but that it is filled on a month to month basis and not on a permanent pensionable substantive basis. The post of Deputy State Solicitor is filled on a permanent basis.

As regards the observation by my learned and Hon. Friend, Dr. Ramsahoye, this is a matter I hope he might have raised with me before this debate began. The amount in 1971, a rather substantial amount, is attributable to legal costs incurred in the interest of the State. I am not prepared to go beyond that at this stage although I would be willing to have frank conversation with the Hon. Member.

The observation that he made as regards the enlargement of the regular vote, as it were, to cover all legal costs incurred by the Government is one that I do not at the moment follow. Apart from the exceptional expenditure we would hope in a normal year that the amount provided should suffice and while these amounts vary from year to year there has never been any difficulty in securing the concurrence of the House in increases that are required to meet Government's obligation. I recognize that both costs and fees represent obligations and the

Government is always ready to discharge them, but they vary from year to year and from situation to situation.

4.35 p.m.

Head 16, Attorney General, Official Receiver - \$99,577 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 17 - ATTORNEY GENERAL DEEDS REGISTRY

Question proposed that the sum of \$127,279 for Head 17, Attorney-General Deeds Registry, stand part of the Estimates.

Dr. Ramsahoye: Subhead 6

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 1, items (1) and (4), and subhead 4. The post of Registrar of Deeds is on the salary scale F9. The post of Registrar of the Supreme Court is also on the same salary scale yet one sees that the Registrar of the Supreme Court is receiving a personal allowance; in terms of emoluments, he is receiving more than the Registrar of Deeds. The duties and responsibilities of the post of Registrar of Deeds are no less onerous than those of the Registrar of the Supreme Court. My personal opinion is that both posts should be revised in terms of increased salaries.

I know the Hon. Minister would probably say that this has to wait on the job evaluation exercise. We know so many other posts have been revised since the job evaluation exercise has been going on and one wonders why not this post also. The fact is, this officer is a particularly hard-working officer and the salary is not commensurate with the duties, responsibilities, and hard work put in by this officer. Speaking generally, I feel all these officers are worthy of consideration in respect of increased salaries.

Item (4), Senior Registry Officers. The 1971 Approved Estimates provided for the sum of \$20,759 yet the revised figure is only \$15,703 which seems to suggest that there are more vacancies than one in this category of officer. What arrangements are being made to fill these vacancies?

The Chairman: The legend says one vacancy.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Mr. Chairman, let the Hon. Minister say whether is one post vacant. It is not always that the legend reflects what is in fact the position.

On subhead 4, Telephone, one notes that the Approved Estimates provide for \$2,000 and the Revised Estimates reflect only \$650. Why then are we providing \$2,000 in the 1972 Estimates? Is there going to be an expansion of the telephone system in this department. Surely, the bills come in every month.

Dr. Ramsahoye: In 1959, legislation was passed by the then Legislative Council to provide for an alternative system of land registration in Guyana to the one which we then knew. This system has been in operation for some time. I would like to learn if I may from my Hon. And learned Friend what progress has been made in converting the holdings to the Torren system and how much more has to be done in order to bring this entire country under the new system of land registration.

I should also like to learn whether the Government has taken steps to establish the assurance fund which is provided for under the 1959 legislation but which as far as I know had not been provided up to last year.

The Attorney General and Minister of State: The observations made by my hon. and learned Friend Mr. Feilden Singh concerning the post of Senior Registry Officer are accurate in

relation to the existing vacancy which, Mr. Chairman, as you yourself pointed out, is referred to in the legend. The position at the moment is that an officer is acting in the post and steps are being taken to have the post filled on a permanent basis. I do not think there is any substantial difficulty.

As regards telephones, there is an unfortunate accounting arrangement in which working through one central switchboard in the Supreme Court complex, the several accounts of the various departments are in process of being reconciled and sorted out. It may well be that when this exercise is completed; the amount of \$2,000 that is provided for in these Estimates proves to be in excess of what is needed. If this is so, no expenditure above what is needed will be required, but until the accounts are fully reconciled, it has been considered prudent to make provision to the extent that had been made in the 1971 Estimates, so that there would be no need to come back to the House in the event that the accounts prove to be in excess of \$650.

The Chairman: The Hon. Member did ask about the apparent disparity in salaries between the Registrar of the Supreme Court and the Registrar of Deeds.

The Attorney General and Minister of State: I thought my Hon. and learned Friend recognised that the personal allowance payable to the Registrar of the Supreme Court was part and parcel of an arrangement which I have outlined in this House on at least three separate occasions, under which a legal officer who is offered a Judicial appointment by the Judicial Service Commission, and in respect of whom the Government indicates that that officer's services are required in the post that he presently occupies, if he is then not released to accept the judicial appointment that his conditions of service in terms of remuneration and allowances automatically become those of the post which he was offered and which in the public interest he has been required to decline.

This is the situation as if affected the Registrar of the Supreme Court during 1971. As in the case of the other officers who have fallen under that category, the adjustment in allowances and salary is made in the form of a Personal Pensionable Allowance, pensionable in so far as it affects salary. That is the explanation of the discrepancy between the two salaries. I do not wish to venture into the wider issues that he has raised or to add to the embarrassment of the distinguished officer concerned, who is in the Chamber, by further adding to the encomium the hon. Member has lavished upon him.

As regards the question of substance raised by my hon. and learned Friend, Dr. Ramsahoye, the position is that we have not, over the period of 11 years since the Land Registration Ordinance was passed, realized the hopes and expectations of the several Governments, including the Government in which he was himself the Attorney-General, in expanding the land registration system as fully as we would wish. It is still our hope, it is still our expectation, that we should do so because certainly it represents a progressive development in our system of land tenure and of legal title to land.

It is a curious fact that the impediment to this progress has little or nothing to do with the administration of the legislation on the legal side. The principal and overriding impediment is the constant shortage of surveyors. The result of this is that fewer areas are brought under the land registration scheme as entirely new areas in a process of expansion. It is as much as we can do, with the surveyors at our disposal, to keep pace with the immediate demands for bringing titles under the land registry system arising out of the need for settled titles in particular areas.

I am glad to be able to say that steps are now being taken in relation to training of surveyors on a basis which we hope will provide a sufficient number to permit this development to take place. The Government is committed to the expansion of the Land Registration Ordinance and so soon as we can secure the necessary surveyors this will be implemented.

Hon. Members probably know that Guyana has for some years now been the training ground for surveyors of the Caribbean and I suppose that as many of our surveyors are outside, working in other territories in the Caribbean, as are here in Guyana. I believe that this situation is likely to be remedied, if not in the next few months, certainly within the next few years. As it remedies itself so we shall be in a position to implement a policy which, as far as I can make out, is common both to Government and Opposition.

Head 17, Attorney General, Deeds Registry - \$127,279, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 13 – MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$3,504,020 for Head 13, Ministry of External Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

Dr. Jagan: I should like to speak generally on this Head.

The Chairman: Please proceed, but may I enquire, when you say “generally”, are you dealing with pages 39, 40 and 41?

Dr. Jagan: Yes, sir. On one previous occasion, the Minister indicated to this House that Guyana was most economical in expending money for external affairs. We see that the expenditure has mounted from half a million dollars in 1966 to \$3½ million this coming year and the Minister made the point that so far as the Caribbean was concerned we were spending less and getting more value. I presume by that we are spending less per unit or per area of representation. Of course, we have to excuse the Minister because he is always dealing in quantitative rather than in qualitative terms and I am more concerned about the quality than the quantity.

In the newspaper, the Sunday Chronicle of December 1971, some questions were put to the Prime Minister by Mr. Hamaludin. Mr. Hamaludin asked some very leading questioning. He said:

“Mr. Prime Minister, people once accused you very strongly of being pro-American but only a couple of days ago there was a Yugoslav vessel moored in Georgetown with a floating trade exhibition from a socialist country. Further, we have signed a bilateral trade and technical agreement with the People’s Republic of China.”

The Prime Minister in his reply said:

“I have never been pro-American. I have always been pro-Guyana. If you examine my speeches from way back you will find I always adumbrated a policy of non-alignment. I am not particularly anti-anybody except South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia.”

And then he went on to say:

“Of course, my friends of the Opposition when they talk of non-alignment would want us to be aligned with the Soviet bloc.”

On the right side of page 39 of the Estimates we see listed the cities in which we have set up offices, namely, London, Ottawa, Paramaribo, Brasilia, Kingston, Lusaka, New York, Washington, Caracas and New Delhi.

I raise the question of non-alignment as the Government says this is its policy. To talk about Yugoslavia and China does not necessarily, in our view, bring the Government’s policy within the realm of non-alignment. As we are aware, there are two main blocs today in the world, the world socialist system and the world imperialist system. So far as Yugoslavia and China are concerned, they are marginal to the world socialist system. In fact, at the meeting in

1969, in Moscow, of the World Communist and Workers Parties, neither Yugoslavia nor China was there. And indeed both of these countries generally tend to associate themselves in today's world more with the non-aligned bloc of countries. The non-aligned bloc is a mixed bag; some of them are oriented to the socialist world system, most of them oriented to the capitalist world system. One would have thought that the Government, in talking about non-alignment, would have treated both systems equally. This is our point.

I think the Prime Minister is incorrect to inform the nation as he did through the Chronicle that the P.P.P., when it talks about non-alignment, would want the Government to align Guyana with the Soviet Bloc. This is not the question and this is not true. What we are saying is if you are genuinely non-aligned then you must have representation, meaningful recognition and relations with both blocs. But, sir, if you look at this list of countries here where we have embassies or offices it cannot be said that Guyana is genuinely non-aligned. Most of these countries are within the capitalist orbit with the exception of Lusaka and New Delhi which belong to the non-aligned bloc. As such, we say that the Government is really not practising what it is preaching. That is why we are not querying the amount of money we spend in relation to the West Indian countries, but rather, how much we are getting for what we are spending.

Taking the realities of that world as it is sir, I would say that if the Government clearly wants to fulfil its role of non-alignment then it must have meaningful relations with the socialist world as it has with the capitalist world, and we have no such indication of this at the moment.

I should like to ask the Hon. Minister what about recognition of Cuba. In a speech made by the Prime Minister not too long ago, it was suggested that political union of the Caribbean must in the end embrace not only British territories but French, Dutch and Spanish. Besides that, the Government in its Budget Statement said that Caribbean Unity and political integration is a cornerstone of its policy. Why is it this Government has not recognized the Republic of Cuba?

This Government does not only claim that it is non-aligned but also that it is socialist. Why then it has not given diplomatic recognition to the People Republic of Cuba? We would like the Minister to answer this question. We would like him also to say when Guyana proposes to have meaningful recognition of the world Socialist system, to accord the same status, for instance, to the Soviet Union, as it has accorded to West Germany, to the United States of America and other capitalist imperialist States.

If one were to compare oneself with another Latin America country, Chile, which also claims to be non-aligned, one sees that recognition has been given to the Republic of Cuba. I should like to ask the Hon. Minister whether the Government is not according recognition to Cuba because of its desire to get into the O.A.S. Is this what is preventing it from doing so?

Recently there came to hand a circular letter which was sent out under the name of a Mr. Haynes from the London Office not doing Government work but doing P.N.C. work. I notice under this head that the London Office is very large compared with the many other office that we have. I should like the Minister to tell us whether this large staff is necessary so as to carry out the work of the P.N.C. as a political party as distinct from the Government. We know that the Minister of Information does not make any distinction between the two. We wonder whether this is also the view of the Ministry of External Affairs that there is no distinction between the two and that the External Offices must carry out the work of the P.N.C.

I should also like to ask the Minister to tell us – since there is so much talk and we know that the Government of Guyana is more or less initiating this more towards Caribbean unity – why is it that Barbados and Guyana which had a united representation at some levels have now parted company? Perhaps the Minister will be good enough to inform the House. Because we understood that this was going to be one of the areas in which the West Indies could co-operate without a political union. We would like to know what is the reason for this break up with a

small beginning which was made. Will the Minister tell us what other plans the Government has to unify external representation so far as the Caribbean is concerned? We would be glad to hear because that was an objective which was expressed both by the P.P.P. and the P.N.C. We would like to know what is preventing this because if that can be achieved it will probably mean that Guyana can save a lot of money to spend on more vital services.

Another point which I should like the Minister, perhaps he in collaboration with his colleague the Minister of Finance, to tell us is since again West Indian unity, political union is a cornerstone of the Government's policy, how is it that on a fundamental question, a common currency, we have not either gone along together? Or perhaps the Minister will tell us how much consultants there were on this issue of devaluation?

Although it is a financial matter I feel that it has to do with Caribbean unity and external relations in a way. All along we have had close collaboration with the whole West Indies on a common unified currency, and it seems now at this stage when we are embarking on a more profound form of union even the little that we have is now going apart. Perhaps the hon. Minister would like to tell us what is the position on this score, because it seems that while one horse of two-horse chariot is leading us in one direction, the other horse is taking us in another direction.

5.05p.m.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: I was not really expecting another second reading debate on the subject of external affairs on this Head of the Estimates, but the questions raised by the hon. Leader of the Opposition do provide an opportunity to clear the air in respect of matters he has raised and to resolve any doubts he himself or Members opposite may entertain about the course and direction of the Government's policies. The first and the principal observation concerns the question of Government's policy of non-alignment.

I was a little surprised at some of the observations that came from the hon. Leader of the Opposition. He seemed as he was speaking, to be like a man who was finding it increasingly difficult to sustain his charge that the Government's policy of non-alignment was not a serious and fundamental part of its policies and its programmes. There was a time when the hon. Leader of the Opposition used to say that this whole business of non-alignment is a myth, in terms of Government's foreign policy, that we were not non-aligned, that we were not really members of the non-aligned group, that we were not so regarded by members of the non-aligned group and by the world at large, and that this was so much dust thrown in the eyes of the Guyanese public and, I suppose, of the Caribbean and International public.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition, naturally, in the light of events-which have established Guyana not only as a member of the non-aligned group of countries but as a member playing a significant if modest role within the group, a Guyana that is at the United Nations, which is now the centre of non-aligned activity, as I said at an earlier stage of this debate, a member of the steering committee of sixteen of the seventy odd non-aligned countries, and within the group ultimately for the day to day co-ordination of the work of non-aligned countries, and within the group of sixteen, a member of the working group of five that is responsible to the steering group and to the whole non-aligned group ultimately for the day to day co-ordination of the work of the non-aligned countries- in the face of this overwhelming evidence not merely of the acceptance of Guyana as a part of the non-aligned group and the non-aligned movement but of our intimate involvement in it, proceeds to the matter in a slightly different way.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition seems to now acknowledge, and I am glad that he is ready and gracious enough to do so, that Guyana is an important element of the non-aligned movement. But he says it is not enough for us to be apart of the non-aligned movement, to identify with countries like China and Yugoslavia, which are unequivocally members of the non-aligned movement, but that we must hold the scales evenly between, what he describes as, the imperialist and the socialist blocs which stand outside the movement. He charges us with not

doing so by reference to one solitary aspect of the organization of the work of the Ministry of External Affairs, namely, that we do not have an Embassy in Moscow. He draws our attention to the table on page 39 of the Estimates, which sets out the establishment of our missions overseas, and he says the whole – not in so many words – is imperialist oriented. No mission in Moscow!

Now I really think the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is going to have to do better than that if he is to convince the country that the Government is not committed firmly to non-alignment in all its ramifications, including the question of the holding of the scales evenly between the two power blocs that stand outside it. Is the Hon. Leader of the Opposition saying, first of all, that we should shut down one of these missions, perhaps, Washington, if we cannot at this moment establish a mission in Moscow? Is he saying that had he been the Prime Minister of Guyana in 1966, when we became Independent, that he himself, given all his own past relation with the government of the United States, would not have established diplomatic relations with the major country in the hemisphere, of which Guyana is a part, and diplomatic relations at an embassy level?

I do not think he is really saying that, because I think he must acknowledge that not only would he have done that but that preparations under his regime were in hand for doing that, before Guyana became Independent, and it is a perfectly natural thing for him to have prepared for the establishment of an embassy including an embassy in the United States. He cannot charge us with being imperialist oriented because we have a mission in London. It is perfectly obvious that one of the first place in which we would establish a resident mission would be the metropolitan power with which the colonial relationship existed because of the carryover of functions and relations within a whole host of areas, not least in the area of external aid and the servicing of the many Guyanese resident in Britain and in North America.

We, perhaps among a handful of countries not only in the Caribbean but in the Commonwealth, held the line against the establishment of a third in Ottawa. If it had been our

intention to proliferate missions all over what he describes as the imperialist world, would we not like our colleagues in the Caribbean have established a full-scale mission in Ottawa as well? We did not. We serviced Ottawa from Washington. We had an arrangement where, and which still exists, we have a desk officer, an operation that is no more than an officer and an assistant sent from Georgetown, who function in relation to the Government of Canada. We did that having previously secured the consent of the Government of Canada to an arrangement which they recognized as something that was an interesting innovation in the organization of the external relations of a young country.

Is he suggesting that missions in Paramaribo, in Brasilia, in Kingston, in Caracas are indication of Guyana's commitment to the imperialist bloc? Of course, he is not suggesting that. What is he suggesting? He is suggesting that here and now Guyana must establish a full-scale diplomatic mission in Moscow and that so long as we fail to do that we are not holding the scales evenly between the imperialist and the socialist worlds.

The people of Guyana cannot take the Hon. Leader of the Opposition seriously when he advances such a proposition. How many Guyanese reside in the Soviet Union? What are the Consular and diplomatic functions that we must discharge there which are comparable with the functions we discharge in Washington? How can he really say that, that is an indication that we are not really serious when we talk about non alignment? The Hon. Leader of the Opposition surprised me even more when he said, and I wrote his words down, China and Yugoslavia are marginal to the world socialist system. That is an expression that I hope we will ponder long over.

5.15 p.m.

It means that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition is not talking about the world socialist system. He is talking about his own particular identification with a particular segment of that system. The people of Yugoslavia, nearly 800,000,000 people of China, cannot be written off as being

outside the socialist system as readily and as easily as the Leader of the Opposition writes them off. They reject certain things. They reject certain doctrines. They reject, for example, the doctrine of limited sovereignty. Is he saying, in this House, that that is a doctrine that he upholds? And does he uphold it on the basis of a proposition that any socialist country that rejects it rejects socialism? That, Mr. Chairman, would be going very far in terms of the proposition that the Leader of the Opposition seeks to adumbrate.

We have established meaningful relations with the socialist world. We have established the most meaningful relations with all our contemporaries in the Caribbean. We have established within the last year diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. We have established effective and functioning trade relations with the Soviet Union and we expect and hope that those relationships will develop on a basis of mutual trust and respect, because that is the only basis on which lasting relationships can develop.

The Hon. Member suggested to us, and I was alarmed to hear it suggested, that Guyana does not recognise Cuba. Let me make it abundantly clear, not only does Guyana recognize Cuba, but Guyana recognises the regime of Dr. Fidel Castro as the legitimate Government of the Republic of Cuba. There has never been any question of our non-recognition of Cuba.

The question of recognition and the question of diplomatic relations at Embassy level are two very separate and distinct questions. We have been dealing with the Government of Cuba that we recognise to be the Government. It is a Government with whom we have conversations, with whom we from day to day are engaging in meaningful conversations with a view to developing those relations further.

As I explained in my speech on the Second Reading debate on the Budget Speech, in response to the Hon. Leader of the Opposition, we are at the moment in the course of discussions with the Cubans for the exchange of trade missions to Havana and to Georgetown. All these conversations take place against the background that the Prime Minister has adumbrated part of

the Caribbean scene, that we recognize Cuba as being an essential part of all hemispheric arrangement.

What more does he wish us to do? And with what speed does he wish us to proceed without taxing our resources, both human and financial, beyond our ability to bear them? I suggest that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition does less than justice to the Government's record of non-alignment and our efforts in seeking to establish relations with all the countries of the world with whom we ought to be having and developing relations with all the speed at our disposal.

The Hon. Leader of the Opposition referred to a matter that had been raised by the Hon Deputy Leader of the Opposition at an earlier stage in this debate, and while I do not wish to get into particular incidents, which I do not think ought to be the subject of this debate, let me make it perfectly clear that Guyana's Missions abroad are Government Missions. They do not represent political parties. They do not represent the P.N.C. any more than they represent the P.P.P. They are to service our relations with the countries to whom they are accredited and to deal with the services required by all Guyanese citizens. I would like the Hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition to undertake, on his part, that he would encourage all Guyanese who may be aboard and attentive to him to, in return, reciprocate that obligation which I frankly state in the House and persuade them to make use of our Missions in all the ways open to them.

Then, finally, the Hon. Leader of the Opposition dealt with the question of Caribbean unity and raised the specific matter of common representation. I do not suppose anyone has spoken more frequently than I have done about the value of joint diplomatic representation among Caribbean countries. We were responsible for the experiments that were launched first of all in London and to a more limited extent in Washington.

These experiments, I think, worked well in their initial stages. When I say "initial stages" I mean to the point that they ceased to exist. The fact that they have ceased to exist should not be

taken as indication that they may never be resumed. We have, in all these matters, to work in liaison with Governments and Governments from time to time will hold differing views on their particular needs in particular Missions.

If the Government of a particular Caribbean country feels that the time has come for separate representation in London or Washington or Ottawa, then obviously the Government of Guyana must fall in line with it.

At the level of the Commonwealth Caribbean Heads of Government we have had discussions initiated at official level with a view to exploring all the possibilities. We have had discussions with our Caribbean colleagues on the possibility of joint representation in Africa and in Europe in terms of Brussels and Geneva.

I think we must recognize frankly that not all our Caribbean colleagues are as enthusiastic as we are over the question of joint representation and our achievements are therefore limited by this consideration but there is no diminution of enthusiasm on the part of the Government for these arrangements and perhaps as a token of this I should inform Hon. Members that there is some measure of co-operation with Trinidad and Tobago in relation to our new Mission in New Delhi where, while not sharing a common Ambassador or High Commissioner, we are, at least, co-operating through joint services in working out of the same building, sharing certain common facilities.

This is the type of thing that we continue to explore, in relation to every Mission we establish and I assure the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that we are in no way second to him in his support for our being able to establish these arrangements on an effective basis, whenever it is possible, given the willingness of our colleagues in the Caribbean.

The Minister of Finance(Mr. Hoyte): Mr. Chairman, I am glad that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition raised the question of consultation with Caribbean territories in respect of the

monetary adjustments we have made in Guyana. I was a bit disappointed, to say the least, to read in the *Press* and to hear on the *Radio* that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition had made the categorical statement that Guyana had proceeded without consultation and had acted in a unilateral fashion. Having made that statement as a fact, the Hon. Leader now comes to this House and does the right thing, that is, he has now inquired whether there was consultation.

First of all, there has always been very close collaboration between the Central Bank Governors of the Caribbean Territories.

After 15th August this year when the Americans took the action which they did which caused the present monetary crisis, the Governors of the Central Banks met in Kingston, Jamaica, in September to consider what common action the territories of the Caribbean should take. In October there was another meeting in Bridgetown at the same time when the Governors of the Caribbean Development Bank were meeting in Bridgetown. Of course, the Governors of the Banks are, by and large, the Finance Ministers of the various Member-States. Therefore, those two meetings of technicians in consultation with their political head set the stage for the technical analyses which had become necessary as a result of what is happening in the monetary world.

It is to be noted that there are only two States in the Caribbean, apart from Guyana, which have got their own currency and their own Central Bank. Those States are Trinidad and Tobago, and Jamaica. Barbados does not have her own currency; she uses the Eastern Caribbean currency which is, of course, tied by law to sterling. The Government of Barbados, therefore, has no free will at the moment in relation to re-aligning her currency.

As I said, sir, after those two meetings there were frequent discussions and exchanges between the Governments. When the announcement was made of the agreement by the Group of Ten there was again consultation and collaboration both at the level of the Central Bankers and at the level of Finance Minister. I, myself, spoke with my colleagues, the Minister of Finance of

Trinidad and Tobago and the Prime Minister of Barbados who happens to be Minister of Finance of Barbados. I tried for two days to get in touch with my colleague in Jamaica without success, but the Governor of our Central Bank was more successful in contacting his counterpart. It is a bit irresponsible, to say the least, for anybody to allege that we have proceeded without consultation and without collaboration.

I may point to the fact that, consequent upon the discussions of Central Bankers, the Government of Jamaica took action to untie Jamaica currency from the pound sterling to which it was tied by law and denominated the value of its currency in terms of gold in the same way as the currencies of Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago are denominated. It is not for me to give details of our discussions; those are confidential matters. One would have to appreciate that these matters cannot be discussed in public forums.

But in the final analysis, every State has to take a decision as to what is best for itself on the balance of economic convenience. Guyana has made that decision and we cannot dictate to our colleagues in the Caribbean. It is for them, looking at their economies and looking at the various factors involved in determining such matters, to come up with their own solutions. It is a bit naive for the Hon. Leader of the Opposition to say that we should go forward together. How can we go forward together unless we have what we have been striving at all time to create, that is, a political union with a central political authority which can make a decision for the entire region? In the absence of that, every State is sovereign and every State will make, and must make, its own decision.

Dr. Jagan: The Hon. Minister said that I said there was no consultation. The Minister himself said in the paper presented to the House that there was consultation. I was getting down to the root of the bigger problem, and that is the necessity, if you are going to talk in term of political union, to move in step with others. One of the reasons the Federation broke up, my Friend the Minister of State will tell you – was because Jamaica wanted to do things on its own so far as incentives were concerned. How are you going to reach our objective when everybody

is not going to act together? Are you going to do it by dragging them into a political federation? Or are you going to try to go along and reach agreement so that that will lead to the political union you want? This is why the union cannot come about, because they cannot arrive at consensus.

There was obvious consultation. The Minister said Guyana must protect her own interest, but Trinidad and Guyana, their economy, by and large or less the same in terms of commonwealth preference imports, in terms of exports into dollars areas – oil and bauxite. The same economic factor large, underlay the economies of Guyana Trinidad and Jamaica. But Guyana goes along and own unilaterally. The Trinidad dollars is now \$1.15 here. That is talking about. That is the reality. How can you talk about cornerstone when you are setting the pace, Caribbean unity, political union, when you can agree on these basics. That is what is going to bring about the union super-imposition because somebody wants it from the top; that is my point. The Hon. Minister missed my point completely. Then I made the second point. Let him dispute that the Caribbean Governments are more responsive to public opinion. They know that if the cost of living rises, as it will here because of devaluation, what is going to happen in the streets of Trinidad and Jamaica. This Government feels that it has the rigging machine, it has the Army, the Police and so it is oblivious of public opinion. Let the Government deny that one.

The Minister of State says that if we were in Government we would have done the same thing, we would have set up in London, Washington. In fact, sir, that he can say that because it is true; he has the papers. When we started to initiate the whole functioning of the Ministry, those offices were contemplated. That nails the lie to what the Prime Minister is saying that we would have been aligned completely with Moscow. The two of them are obviously confounding each other on that point. But my main point is this: is he justified in not having meaningful relations with what I call the world socialist system by saying that we have not got the money or the personnel? The reality of today's world, as we saw in the Pakistani issue on the United Nations, is not how many voted but who has the strength in Pakistan. There are two power

systems, and the Government in its foreign policy, we are saying, must deal with both of these on the basis of their creed, non-alignment. It is not only a question of money.

5.35 p.m.

If they cannot afford, I should like to ask the Hon. Minister whether they have objected to the Soviet Union having any embassy in Guyana on the same basis as the West Germans. Let them explain that, which shows that they do not mean what they say. On the one hand, they justify it on the ground of no money, but if they really want to be non-aligned, they could cut out some of these offices. Why do you need one in Brazil and one in Venezuela? A poor country could have one representative in the whole of Latin America, one in the West Indies including Suriname, and one in Cuba instead of one in Suriname.

I am saying what non-alignment would have meant. The Minister was virtually asking what I would have done. I am showing how a genuinely non-aligned country should behave. But they are not. They only talk to fool some other people outside of Guyana, but not those who think, those who understand.

Mr. Hoyte: I did not miss his point at all and I am quite sure that all Hon. Members who were listening to him understood him to be accusing us of not having consultations. I do not take his argument that we should proceed together. How can you proceed together when you have separate sovereign States, each of which has got the right to take its own decision? It is a trifle naïve to say that the economic situation is the same in each of these territories we are talking about.

First of all, as far as currency matters are concerned, it is Britain who will be speaking for the Eastern Caribbean and, having regard to what I said, for Barbados. Therefore you are left with Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica. It is a bit odd, to say the least, for anybody to suggest that the territories must necessarily take the same decision when one looks at the criteria which

one had to apply in arriving at a technical decision. Implicit in what the Hon. Leader of the Opposition has been saying all the time is the suggestion that these matters can be the subject of a political decision. But the relevant factor in it all is technical aspect of the whole thing. In arriving at a decision, one takes into account three criteria, First of all, the effect on the real incomes in the community; secondly, the effect on price levels, and I say price levels and not cost of living, and thirdly, the effect of the price/cost structure on your main industries. And when we have balanced all of these factors against the fact that (a), imports and exports are never in balance, (b), and this is a critical point which members ought to bear in mind that the exports of exporting countries are not necessarily denominated in the currencies of the exporting countries' (for example, bauxite and petroleum) prices are determined and denominated by other currencies, and (c), that, in the overall, there is bound to be a shift of emphasis in imports and exports taking all of these factors into consideration, we arrived at an economic decision that what we have done in relation to the re-alignment of our currency is in the best interest of Guyana.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago may arrive at a different conclusion and the Government of Jamaica may arrive at a different conclusion. Let me nail this mis-statement here and now. I have read in the papers and I have heard over the radio, an estimable gentleman like the President of the Chamber of Commerce saying that the cost of living will rise by 15 per cent. That is the absurdity of the year! It is obvious that whoever has given him that information is either a person who does not know what he is talking about or actuated by a spirit of malice. The Cost of living impact is likely to be minimal, if at ... first of all we have to take into account the fact that we do not have all of our commodities from non-dollar sources. Secondly, many of the commodities which we import do not necessarily go into the cost of living matrix. We are not talking about cost of living and if we are not to be confused, if we are not going to spread mis-information and alarm people unduly, we must be quite clear in our own minds what we are talking about. What are the staple foods and commodities we use, when we are talking about living and existing in Guyana? Rice, sugar, fresh fish, green vegetable! How are those basic things going to rise by 15 per cent?

Dr. Jagan: To a point of order.

The Chairman: What is your point of order, Hon. Leader of the Opposition? Unless it deals with the Rules and Regulations –

Dr. Jagan: Yes, sir. I am coming to it.

The Chairman: Please tell me at the right time what Rules and Regulations you are raising.

Dr. Jagan: I was dealing with the question of relevance. I do not mean to insult the Hon. Minister but I would suggest to him, let us have a full-scale debate on this. All the facts will come out and I will put a Motion to this effect. I think he well misses my main point. I was talking about the Caribbean moving together.

Mr. Hoyte: I am glad that the Hon. Leader of the Opposition will have an opportunity for a substantive debate on this matter, when we can go into greater detail and with much more nicety; but I want to say most emphatically that there is no question of the cost of living rising alarmingly. I would draw attention to the statement I made, when I announced in this House the new rates of exchange for the Guyana dollar, of Government's action to deflect the impact of the cost of living in Guyana.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I want to speak on page 40. I expected that you would proceed to page 40. Subhead 26, Contribution to African Liberation Movements: Under this subhead we are asked to make a contribution to the African Liberation Movement. We are supposed to be liberated in Guyana and as a consequence, if we are liberated, we should help others to liberate themselves. I should like to quote from page 10 of the President's Address, when he told us in this National Assembly this year.

“In the field of external affairs my Government's policy will continue to be conditioned by the requirements of Guyana's national interest and the needs of the world community for an international system that secures the imperatives of peace, justice and progress for all mankind.”

Continuing, he said:

“ my Government will continue its resolute and tangible support for movements of liberation engaged in the struggle against racial inequality and injustice and for the cause of human dignity throughout the world.”

5.45 p.m.

These are very good words but they make the poor man's address a mockery –

The Chairman: Which poor man, Hon. Member Mr. Yacoob Ally?

Mr. M.Y. Ally: I am saying that it is a poor address and a mockery because this would only suit the P.N.C. We are being asked to give \$50,000 to fight.

The Chairman: Can you confine your remarks to this item?

Mr. M.Y. Ally: We are asked to pass \$50,000 to fight racism, apartheid and racial discrimination. When we see a headline like this in the newspapers –

The Chairman: Which newspapers and what headline?

Mr. M.Y. Ally: The *Guyana Graphic* of Thursday, July 29, 1971. On page 1 we read that four Africa missionaries who came here on a peace mission were taken into police custody. The Prime Minister was in Lusaka with a big safari and he was speaking of the harmony which exists in this country. He made a big point because some of the delegates who were there told me that they admired his spirit, but when these people heard that this Government detained four African missionaries and took them into police custody, they were amazed and shocked. They were alarmed to note that this was the same Prime Minister who went to Lusaka and boasted: “I am fighting for the liberation of African people.” When they came here they said to me, “What are we giving this money for.” To help the oppressors or the oppressed whilst we are jailing the

oppressed.” This Government, to build goodwill, is trying to tell outsiders that it is going to help to liberate their oppressed people but when those same people come to this country, the Government jails them.

The Chairman: Please proceed with another point.

Mr. M.Y. Ally: The Minister should note about the persons concerned and should be careful that when people from other countries come to visit Guyana he must be able to distinguish between the oppressor and the oppressed.

The Chairman: Have you not said that already, Mr. YacoobAlly? Couldyougo toanother point?

Mr. M.Y. Ally: If the money allocated is not enough I would ask that we give double the amount. But it is no use trying to give a handful as a show and then oppressing the same people.

Dr. Jagan: May I make a small point on that very question?

The Chairman: I note that you are making good use of my indulgence.

Dr. Jagan: To whom is this contribution of \$20,000, which is provided under subhead 16, Expenses of Guyana Boundaries Commissions, paid? Are we still spending that much money as expenses of the Guyana Boundaries Commissions?

With regard to subhead 27, Contribution to the International Commission of Jurists, does the Minister think that this expenditure is justified?

The Attorney-General: If I may answer those questions in the reverse order, the answer to the last question is “Yes, we think that the International Commission of Jurists is serving an

important cause in the world, particularly as regards its recent work in the cause of human dignity in South Africa. We are making this contribution to the annual expresses of the Commission.

The answer to the question concerning the Boundaries Commissions is again Yes. It is in relation to problem affecting our boundaries on all sides. It is not necessarily concerned with Venezuela.

As regards the question on the liberation movement, the contribution is paid to the Committee of the Organisation of Africa Unity responsible for the work of the liberation movement. It is paid through the Government of Tanzania.

Head 13, Ministry of External Affairs - \$3,504,020, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION VIII - MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Question proposed that the sum of \$444,000 for Division VIII, Ministry of External Affairs, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 2 and 4.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. M.F. Singh: Subhead 2, Acquisition of Overseas Offices and Residences. The sum of \$224,000 is reflected here for acquisition of Overseas Offices and Residences. In the Explanatory Note it is stated that this is "To provide for purchase of buildings. "What does this tell me? Absolutely nothing! Will the Minister tell us what buildings are being purchased and where? Why put an explanatory note which does not say anything more than the actual subhead

states. Will the Minister tell us if this sum of money is for one building, or two or three buildings and what amount is to be paid for them?

The legend against subhead 3, Heads of Missions' Residences – Redecoration, similarly states “To provide for the refurnishing and redecorating of residences.” What else could it provide for? The Government should tell us something more or leave the explanatory note out if it does not want to tell us anything. We want to know where this sum of \$100,000 is to be spent. The amount voted had moved from \$60,000 in 1971 to \$100,000 in 1972.

We should like to know that the residences are not to be redecorated again next year and that they are not redecorated every time there is a change of personnel. Let us know the details. Tell us whose residences are to be redecorated and what is the figure involved.

The Attorney-General: The first question asked by my Hon. and learned Friend was a question of substance. The second question was a question of minutiae which he could not possibly expect me to answer.

The answer with regard to the acquisition of overseas offices and residences is briefly this: we have found, particularly in the larger metropolitan countries – by this I mean the centres in London and New York and to some extent in Washington – that we have been paying exorbitant rents.

We started off, in External Affairs, in renting our accommodation, both offices and residences. The economics of the situation now suggest that it would be very much more in our interest, if we can secure the right type of financing that did not involve a drain on our own capital here, for us to purchase. The appreciation of building in these centres is so rapid and so consistent that all the evidence points to the wisdom of purchasing.

We have, therefore – as I have had occasion to say before in this House – resorted to the policy of purchasing wherever we can find suitable premises at suitably low prices and to secure the right type of financing for it. We hope, out of the provision that is being made under this item, \$22,000, to secure permanent offices for our High Commission in London which would be adequate to meet our enlarged consular services as well as the normal work of the High Commission and to be able to provide a permanent residence for our permanent representative in New York

5.55 p.m.

I cannot say what the building will cost. Buildings come on the market in these centres at a moment's notice, they have to be surveyed, valued and bought; they cannot await supplementary provision being made by this House. Therefore one has in some way, taking account of current prices, anticipate the possibility and to provide. When the time comes and we do purchase under this provision I shall be happy to inform Hon. Members of the exact details of the transaction. But this in general, is expected to represent part payments of the capital outlay on these premises which we hope will then be financed under arrangements made on the spot.

Division VIII, Ministry of External Affairs, \$444,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 147.

HEAD 61 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Question proposed that the sum of \$705,700 for Head 61, Ministry of Labour and Social Security stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Lall: Subhead 1, items 14, 18, 20 and 21.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Lall.

Mr. Lall: Sir, I should like to take items 14 and 18 together. Berbice extends from Abary to Orealla and goes southwards to Kwakwani. In Berbice we have only one Senior Labour Officer and one Labour Officer. The Establishment for Labour Officers is fourteen and Senior Labour Officers is eight. We feel that one Senior Labour Officer and one Labour Officer posted to Berbice is inadequate. Many times workers come to the Ministry of Labour in New Amsterdam and the Labour Officer is out; he has gone to Kwakwani or Crabwood Creek. The workers have to go back without receiving any attention. Could the Minister indicate to this House how the Government intends to grapple with this situation that is confronting the people in Berbice?

In addition to the eight Senior Labour Officers and fourteen Labour Officers on the Establishment you have a Chief Labour Officer, a Deputy Chief Labour Officer and an Assistant Chief Labour Officer who are all stationed in Georgetown. Could the Minister say what the Government is prepared to do so as to grapple with the shortage of labour officers in Berbice area?

The Chairman: What about item 20?

Mr. Lall: Item 20, Agricultural Assessors. I am wondering if the Minister could say why the disparities in the salary scale? You have the A25 and the A10 salary scales. All these assessors, I take, it, are doing the same type of work. Could the Minister say why the disparity? Item 21, Chief Factory Officer: This officer enquires into the question of toxic chemicals in the sugar industry. Up to this day although the Report was submitted to the Ministry of Labour, it has not been made public. Could the Minister say how soon the Government is prepared to declassify this Report? We feel that the Chief Factory Officer should look into the preventative measures and do not wait until accidents occur.

At Albion, a curing basket burst and a sugar curer was blinded in one eye and almost blinded in the other. Could the Hon Minister indicated to this House how often these factory officers visit the estates in order to ensure that preventive measures are taken?

Mrs. DaSilva: I crave your indulgence, Mr. Chairman. Would you allow me to speak on subhead 1, items (17) and (22)? Vocational Guidance Officer: Would the Hon. Minister give please this House some information about the duties of this officer, where he goes, whether he or she visits the schools, youth clubs, meets the young people, what sort of programme does he lay out for them? Or is it that those seeking guidance have to go to the Ministry, because I rather fear that if this is the case, not many people would bother to do this, so I would like to know how they give them the necessary guidance.

On the item (22), Assistant Chief Factories Officer, we still have only 3 factories officers to assist, and there are over 300 factories in Guyana. Could the Minister say if and when the Government will consider increasing the staff of the factories inspectorate? It is impossible for three men to get around the whole of Guyana to inspect and do their safety regulations, to check on the register to see that the laws are being adhered to.

Mr. Carrington: Let me first answer the Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva's remarks. The Vocational Guidance Officer, I am sure Hon. Member will remember that last year the Ministry of Labour promised to introduce this new officer so, I am not surprised that the questions are asked. We have just appointed the officer and she is now being trained. As soon as she completes her training she will be put in the field to do the work which she was employed to do. Her main work would be visiting schools; she will be connected to the Guyana Industrial Training Centre and to the Manpower Division of the Ministry, but her duties will go further in guiding youths in all areas as regards vocational training.

On the question of the number of Factory officers we presently have, you agree I promised that we would increase the number. At the time, we had only one officer and his

assistant. Today, we propose to have six such officers. They also are being trained because they have just been recruited. The Chief Factories Officer is the person who is responsible for such training.

On the question raised by the Hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, in keeping with my promise as regards providing more service in the field of labour, we did send one of these officers to the New Amsterdam area where we had only two officers. We now have three, one factory officer and two senior labour officers, not junior labour officers as suggested by the Hon. Member. Along with those officers, there are the field assessors whom we have also introduced. They had to undergo training for eight months before we put them in the field to mediate mainly on the question of piece work. In keeping with the promise that we will improve the services in these areas, we have done so.

On the question of the Chief Labour Officer being stationed in Georgetown with his deputy and having to serve Georgetown and other places, we are satisfied that such services are adequately carried out. We hope to establish an office in Linden and with this new office, we are satisfied that better service will be provided generally. Mr. Chairman, those are the answers.

The Chairman: Page 148.

Mr. Harry Lall: Subhead 10.

Mr. Durant: Subhead 10 and 13. I will speak after the Hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall, if necessary.

Mr. Lall: Subhead 10, Contribution to the International Labour Organisation. I notice here the Government is requesting \$65,000 for this subhead. If Government is affiliated to this world body, one would expect that Government will implement all the recommendation of this body. The I.L.O. recommended medical facilities for the dependents of a workers. It is sad to

note that the Government did not accept this recommendation. Could the Hon. Minister say how soon Government is prepared to implement the recommendation as made by that world body?

Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House what type of training is being given under subhead 13, Guyana Industrial Training Centre, what are the criteria in selecting trainees and how many trainees are trained each year?

6.15 p.m.

Mr. Durant: Under subhead 10, the sum of \$65,000 is being voted as Contribution to the International Labour Organisation. We have no quarrel with this which is being voted to the I.L.O. because as a labour leader I am connected to this organization, but I am wondering if the Minister can inform this House whether this organization has not made certain recommendations which would assist the Government greatly in its plan to make the small man a real man.

A small man does not become a real man only from the wages he is allowed to earn. If he is continually exploited by his employers you are still not making him a real man, but if he is adequately looked after he could make himself a real man.

We run into a difficulty that there is no law whereby the Minister could compel an employer to call at the Labour Ministry when so requested by the that Ministry. There is now a case where a Trinidadian contractor has exploited workers to the tune of a few thousand dollars. When I reported the matter to the Ministry the officers went in and declared the premises a factory. The workers had been working nights, Sundays and holidays with no overtime paid. When the employer was called to the Ministry he flouted the order given by the Ministry. But there is no law to compel the employer to call at the Ministry. In the circumstances, I am wondering what the Ministry of Labour proposes to do in 1972 to alleviate the sufferings of such workers.

There are many legitimate cases pending where the workers cannot succeed because there is no law, whereby the Minister could compel employers to call at his Ministry. It is no fault of the Minister; he goes all out; his officers go all out, but no law exists. We cannot go from year to year saying that the small man must become a real man while the small man is denied these basic items that would give him his livelihood and permit him to save something to put in the Co-operative Bank. No law exists to help him.

I should like the Minister to tell us tonight that there is no provision in the law for us to look after the small man whom the Government wishes to make a real man. I should like the Minister to say whether under the factories Ordinance –

The Chairman: Under what item are you speaking?

Mr. Durant: Under the Factories Ordinance, factory officer can declare a building to be a factory.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Durant, whilst I am very much inclined to permit you to speak, certainly this has no relevance to the subhead. I will not allow you to continue.

Mr. Durant: Under the Labour Codes of the I.L.O. all these things are set out, that the worker has to have medical facilities, that there must be protection for the worker. These come under the I.L.O. and the Minister will be able to tell us if these are to be implemented.

The Chairman: This is a contribution to the I.L.O. That is another matter. Are you in favour of this contribution?

Mr. Durant: The Factories Ordinance –

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Durant please do not proceed along that line. Kindly continue with your contribution.

Mr. Durant: I shall speak on subhead 13, Guyana Industrial Training Centre. We have been told that when students gain certificates at this centre they are not equivalent to the City and Guilds Certificates from the Government Technical Institute. We would like to know if this is so or not.

Mr. Carrington: The Hon. Member would like to know if the certificates from the Guyana Industrial Training Centre are equivalent to the certificates from the City and Guilds. I should like to tell him right away that they are not equivalent. The Guyana Industrial Training Centre is not a technical college; it more or less teaches crafts and most of the courses are short courses. The training there is to give young men some training in certain skills.

With regard to the G.I.T.C. as a whole, we train young men after they have been tested. The test is the criterion for their admission. We have introduced a new system of testing for skills and aptitudes. After these young men have taken the test they are admitted to the Training Centre, depending upon the marks they get for the test.

The students are trained in carpentry, heavy equipment, electricity, masonry, welding and plumbing. Approximately 150 students are trained in a year and they go in cycles of three. The G.I.T.C. completed one of its graduation exercises on the 17th December this year and I would invite Hon. Members to pay a visit to the centre so that they can see what we are doing there for these young men. They receive approximately \$8 a week as a stipend. They equip themselves to make their contribution. As Hon Members know, there is a shortage of skills in Guyana.

On the question of the contribution of \$65,000 to the I.L.O., we are satisfied that this contribution is money well spent. We receive quite a lot from the I.L.O. Hon. Members will remember that it was an I.L.O. expert who came to Guyana to establish the National Insurance

Scheme. We have received other assistance from the I.L.O. Many of our young men are sent to Turin in Italy for training in technical skills. They come back to Guyana to teach and to train others.

6.25 p.m.

As regards the Conventions, no country is bound to accept Conventions when they are passed the ILO. It depends on the country's economy; it depends on the social, political and economic circumstances of the country. It would be left then to the leaders of the respective countries to decide whether or not they would ratify such Conventions. Guyana, over the past years, did ratify many ILO Conventions. We are about to introduce two in the year 1972. We would apply them as the needs arise and our economy can afford them.

The Hon. Member Mr. Durant wanted to know something about the Ministry of Labour being able to invite or summon employers to the Ministry when there are grievances, and as the Hon. Member says we are without such laws. It is a fact. This Government attempted to introduce such laws when we were about to introduce the Labour Relations Bill. This, at the present moment, is still being examined. But we went further because we would like to improve the industrial situation in Guyana and we have decided that in 1972 a commission will be appointed to set out labour codes for Guyana. The Hon. Leader of the Opposition has been written to inviting his party to take part in such a commission.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, any Government which likes to call itself socialist will implement Medicare for its inhabitants.

The Chairman: Under what items are you speaking?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, it is the ILO. Convention I am referring to, because the Minister said ---

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall the Minister said that the Government is not bound to accept all the ILO Conventions only those which are in keeping with its economic policy and political strategy. What are you asking about now?

Mr. Lall: I can agree with the Minister in saying that, but when you call yourself socialist ---

The Chairman: Hon. Member I will not allow you to reply to the Minister on a point which was not raised. If you wish to comment on anything he said I will allow you.

Mr. Lall: With your permission, Sir, I should like to remind the Hon. Minister about the excess amount in the N.I.S that would comfortably take care of ---

Mr. Chairman: What has that to do with Head 61? Where does that arise?

Head 61, Ministry of Labour and Social Security \$705,700 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 149.

**HEAD 62 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY
EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE SERVICE**

Question proposed that the sum of \$71,709 for Head 62, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Employment Exchange Service stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Lall: Subhead 1, item 1.

Mrs. DaSilva: May I make a general remark on the Employment Exchange? The Minister very kindly last year gave us some figures of the number of people for whom the Employment Exchange Service found jobs. Up to the 15th December, 1970, 8,953 adults and 350 juveniles. In view of the fact of the general state of affairs in the country today, of all the unemployment, we keep hearing about the figures rising, firms closing down and people being thrown out of work, can the Minister give us the figures for the period this year and say whether there has been any improvement? Could he give us any information on that score?

On the other point, in the Budget of the Minister of Finance on page 21 it is stated:

“In keeping with the drive to reduce unemployment, a new type of Co-operative Society, the Labour Contract Society – will also be organized particularly among the unemployed and underemployed to do work with a pronounced labour bias.”

Could the Minister say how this Labour Contract Society will tie in and work with the Employment Exchange Services? Will this Labour Contract Society to be formed function to provide employment for all without any question of race or party politics or anything like that?

Could the Minister give us some information as to how this would operate?

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make an observation pertaining to the Employment Exchange and the system used for recruiting persons for employment. A person has to report every week on Tuesday to the Employment Exchange to get his or her card stamped. This is a very expensive exercise because some people have been going to the Employment Exchange for four to five years and no employment has been found. One can just imagine what it costs a person in dollars and cents. Could the Minister indicate how soon Government is prepared to streamline the Employment Exchange so that the exercise can be less costly to the people?

Mr. Carrington: Let me reply to the Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva. I am in no position to give the total number of person registered at the Employment Exchange but I can give the number of placements: 3,000 adults and the juveniles numbered 2,000.

On the question of the labour Contract Co-op, this can be adequately answered by the Hon. Minister responsible for co-operatives, but surely the employment section of the Ministry of Labour is prepared to work with any organization that is prepared to assist in channelling persons to the Employment Exchange for employment. I know as a fact that the Employment Exchange exercises impartiality and there is no question of a person being a member of the P.N.C. to secure employment through the Employment Exchange.

On the question of stamping cards and being registered, this system was in existence for many years. We hope to improve it in 1972 by setting up centres in various parts of the country; we have established one at Linden and we intend to do this on the East Coast and in Berbice. We hope to introduce a mobile system but all of this can only be done when the funds are available

Mrs. DaSilva: I did ask the Hon. Minister regarding this labour contract society; is it part and parcel of the policy of Government as enunciated here in the Budget speech? Maybe another Minister would be able to answer that. It has to do with labour. How does it tie in? I feel we ought to know.

Mr. Haynes: The Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva asked about the labour contracting co-op society. Labour contracting co-operative societies are something new to Guyana, not that they are not known in other parts of the world. We are attempting to mobilise unemployed people who have skills in the labour intensive technique. These labour co-operatives will sell their skills to other co-operative societies that need the mobilization of labour in whatever contracts they have to execute. Perhaps I can give an example.

If there is a building co-operative that has a contract to build houses within a particular area, then there is drainage and irrigation to be done, roads have to be mapped out, and things of that nature, the labour contracting co-operative will sell its skills to that particular co-operative for have this type of work carried out. The labour contracting co-operative will be the co-operative that will provide labour for sale to other co-operatives to assist in labour intensive work. That is what the labour intensive co-operative is about.

Head 62, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Employment Exchange Service - \$71,709 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

HEAD 63 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$4,329,479 for Head 63, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Social Assistance, stand part of the Estimates

Mr. Lall: Subhead 1, items (6) and (19).

Mrs. DaSilva: Subhead 1, item (16)

The Chairman: The Hon. Member Mr. Lall.

Mr. Lall: Under item (6), Social Assistance Officers, I should like to draw Government's attention to the fact that applicants for social assistance and old age pension, for over three years, have not had their applications processed by these officers. Many, not only P.P.P. supporters, but many P.N.C. and U.F. supporters are confronted by the same problem in having their applications assessed by these officers. Could the Hon. Minister promise the House to streamline the investigation section of the Social Security Department?

Item (19), Social Workers: Could the Hon. Minister indicate to this House what will be the area of operation of these social workers and what would be their function?

6.45 p.m.

Mrs. DaSilva: Subhead 1 (6), Social Assistance Officers. The actual amount spent in 1970 was \$70,852. The sum in the Approved Estimates for 1971 was \$95,364. The Revised Estimates for 1971 show \$70,000. We are now asking for \$89,603.

It would appear that there are not 28 Social Assistance Officers actually working. Can the Minister say whether this is so not? In other words are there any vacancies? If there are no vacancies the whole vote should have been taken up. Does it mean that there are vacancies in this department which needs every single social assistance officer it can lay hands on since there are many applicants for social assistance.

It takes a long time to process applications, and there is a saying, "while the grass is growing, the horse is starving."

If these vacancies are not filled, will the Hon. Minister give us an assurance that they will be filled as soon as possible? When money is voted it should be spent. The sum of \$89,000 that is being voted could possibly allow the employment of six additional officers on the scale to swell the number of people who process the applications for people requesting social assistance.

Mr. Carrington: Mr. Chairman, I should like to reply to the Hon. Member Mr. Harry Lall in the first place.

TheChairman: With respect to item (6).

Mr. Carrington: Yes. He inquired what would be the work to be done by the social workers. Two additional officers have been appointed in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, in the Social Assistance section. The work that they will have to do, after training, will be in areas based on a recommendation that we should try to rehabilitate the inmates of the Palms and so give them an opportunity to return to Life in the community instead of being left in the institution, as in the past, to rot. We propose to have these two social assistance officers work in these areas of rehabilitation.

On the question relating to social assistance officers, before social assistance is granted there is a means test which the applicant will have to subject him/self to. The Board has to meet to examine the various applications. Social assistance officers visit those persons who have applied for social assistance to satisfy the Board and the Ministry that their cases are deserving cases. I do not know of any person who had to wait three years. Surely the Hon. Member can bring this to the attention of the Ministry at any time. If any Guyanese has applied for social assistance and the matter is so long outstanding, he is free to approach the Ministry to see what can be done about it.

On the question of the amount voted, there was really an over-allocation. In other words, there were vacancies in 1971 and this was responsible for the reduction to \$70,000. There are no vacancies at present for 1972 because we have filled those vacancies. We must therefore allocate the amount required. The amount must vary in accordance with vacancies. There are social assistance officers being trained overseas and social assistance officers receive subsistence. This will definitely increase the amount, but there are no vacancies at present.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Hon. Minister could tell us why a senior officer at the Social Assistance Department, who acted for 18 months, was removed and the post given to a teacher from the Essequibo Boys School.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Harry Lall, I will not allow you to do that again. When you rise to speak on one item, please exhaust all your questions. I will not allow this again. Please proceed.

Mr. Lall: I am craving indulgence.

The Chairman: Do not crave it again.

Mr. Lall: I mention this point because there must be dissatisfaction in the department if an officer replaces someone who deserves to hold the position. It is our duty to bring this to the attention of the Government. If members of the Government are not aware of it, then it is our duty to tell them of what is going on. We hope that the Government will investigate the matter and make suitable adjustments.

Mr. Carrington: In reply to the Hon. Member, I should like to say that we believe in unions making representations on behalf of workers. Employees with grievances are free to go to their trade unions in the first place. I suppose that the officers to whom he is referring are all members of the Public Service Association. It is a matter for the Public Service Commission where appointments are concerned.

Head 63, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Social Assistance \$4,329, 479, agreed to an ordered to stand part of the Estimates

DIVISION XXV – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Question proposed that the sum of \$176,000 for Division XXV, Ministry of Labour and Social Security stand part of the Estimates.

Mrs. DaSilva: Page 151, please.

The Chairman: We are on page 152.

Mr. Lall: Mr. Chairman, there are very import items on page 151. I would not take much time.

Mr. Ram Karran: Could we have a recommital of Head 63 so that the Hon. Member might be able to ask questions on these items?

The Chairman: Hon. Members, the question is that Head 63 be recommitted. Due to an error I did not allow question on page 151.

Head 63, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Social Assistance, recommitted.

HEAD 63 – MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY
SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Lall: Subheads 16, 17 and 18.

Mrs. DaSilva: Subhead 12, 15, 16, 17 and 18.

The Chairman: Please proceed, Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva.

6.55 p.m.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Chairman, under subhead 12, Grant to Salvation Army for social work, I notice the Revised Estimates for 1971 is \$2,160. We are only being asked to vote \$1,440 for this worthy organization. When you take into consideration that this organization does many jobs that should rightly be done by the State, I think it is a shame that we could not at

least get the \$2,160 that the Revised Estimates had last year. I should like to find out what can be done to help this organization.

Subhead 15, Meals for Nurses. The Approved Estimates for 1971 is \$24,000 and all that was spent was \$22,000. The nurses work very hard, they are entitled to a decent meal. We are always hearing about the kind of food they get at the Public Hospitals. If the money is voted why is it not being used up? Could we have some explanation?

Old age pension: The Minister quite rightly recognizes the need, especially with the high cost of living today, that the nurses should be granted more money for their meals. But with the pensioners they are old, they do not have the means of going out and getting two or three jobs as some of the young girls can do to augment their small incomes. These people depend on the meagre pittance they receive from the State. They have given their years of service to the country in one way or another and year after year we come to this House and we cannot see any increases for the old age pensioners. I should like to know how long this state of affairs is going to continue and what the Government proposes to do. The same applies to Public Assistance.

Subhead 18, Grant to Religious and Charitable Organisations, \$27,000: I note this year for the first time since I have been in this House the money is lumped together. The names of the various organizations which will benefit from these grants have not been mentioned. But I checked back with last year Estimates and I see Ursuline Convent, St. Ann's Orphanage, Plaisance Orphanage for boys, Dharam Sala, the Blind Institute, the United Sad'r Islamic Anjuman Boys' Orphanage, Gandhi Memorial Orphanage. That adds up to \$24,000. The last \$3,000 which makes it \$27,000 is for the African Development Association. There is a question I should like answered. These figures tie up with last year so I presume the same set of people is going to get it.

28.12.71

National Assembly

6.55 – 7.00 p.m.

I should like to ask about this development of an African Association. We are Guyanese here and we should not be having grants given to an Association for African Development. We have so many races in our country. The Indians may want for Indian development, the Chinese for Chinese development, even the coloured people for coloured people development, and the Portuguese for Portuguese development. What is this? What contribution does it make to our county that it should be singled out for special recognition and special grants in its own, and all those other organizations like these Orphanages which are looking after Guyana children regardless of race, colour or creed and year after year – the cost of living goes up – they keep on getting the same small amount. I wish the Minister would tell us something about it.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will take a short suspension of ten minutes. We will resume at 7.10 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 7.00 p.m.

7.10 p.m.

On resumption

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: When the Suspension was taken the Hon. Member Mr. Lall was about to speak.

Mr. Lall: Subhead 16. I should like to ask the Government to consider whether it is not time to abolish the means test. So long as a person reaches a pensionable age he or she should be given pension and should not be given a means test. The means test should be abolished.

Subhead 18, \$10,000 to the Dharam Sala: It is a grant which was given as ---
(*Interruption*)

The Chairman: Are you going to address Members of the Government or are you going to address me?

Mr. Lall: I am sorry. Mr. Chairman, the inmates now at the Dharam Sala amount to about five hundred and if one should assess the amount given to the Dharam Sala it works out to six cents per day per inmate. With the cost of living going up I do hope that the Government would reconsider this grant and give an adequate amount to the Dharam Sala. I do not want to deal with subhead 17 any longer.

Mr. Carrington: I should like to reply to the Hon. Member Mr. Lall first on the question of old age pension and his request to abolish the means test. We all know that Guyana is a very poor country compared with the countries which the Hon. Member visits from time to time and we the custodians of the people's money will not pay out monies to persons willy-nilly, but that there must be some rationale for granting such assistance in the form of old age pension. Surely if one is in receipt of money that can provide them with a livelihood I do not see why we should pay such persons when there are thousands of people who need assistance in other areas. I do not think that the request of the Hon. Member will be granted. With the development of the National Insurance Scheme we would be paying old age pension in 1972 and onwards and this will reduce the amount of old age pension to be paid by the Social Assistance Division of the Ministry. In such cases some consideration may be given to extending it.

On the question of the Dharam Sala, as the Hon. Member, Mr. Harry Lall makes reference to this charitable organisation, I take the opportunity in answering the Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva at the same time. This is the reason why it was decided at this time not to mention organisations. We could not insist that these organisation should change their names from African or Dharam Sala or what have you, but surely we would not want to mention it here in

our Estimates as we did in the past. They are put under one head and I am told that they would be receiving the same amounts that they received under previous Estimates.

7.15 p.m.

The only reduction is in the amount allocated for the Salvation Army because they have changed one of their organizations to that of a girls' home and in such circumstances, the Ministry decided to reduce the amount that was really allocated to the boys' home, which was situated in Bent Street. It was intended for boys but they have now re-organized it to take care of working girls and as such we did not consider it a charitable organization to warrant the continuation of the grant.

The Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva asked a question concerning meals for the nurses. There is a discrepancy there and the amount stated in 1970 is shown under the dietary subhead. If the Hon. Member would look at that page, she would see the true picture. It was really separated because at some point in the institution, the nurses' meals were separated from meals for other staff, and this is why these figures are separate, but the amount is definitely more than is stated here. Mr. Chairman, I think I have answered the questions.

Head 63, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Social Assistance - \$4,329,479 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XXV - MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Question proposed that the sum of \$176,000 for Division XXV, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will Hon. Members who wish to speak please indicate.

Division XXV, Ministry of Labour and Social Security - \$176,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 64 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$669,127 for Head 64, Ministry of Finance, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will Hon. Members please indicate.

Mr. Ram Karran: Subhead 1, item (3), Commissioner of Insurance. Can I ask the Hon. Minister to say whether the post is filled and will he kindly indicate the officer's whose salary is on the F6 scale?

Mr. Hoyte: There is an acting incumbent and his duties are those set out in the Insurance Act of 1970. That Act makes provision for a Commissioner of Insurance to administer the scheme of the Insurance Act in terms of the Act itself.

The Chairman: Page 154.

Mr. RamKarran: Subhead 14, Agricultural Statistics. I wish to ask the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, possibly, to give us an explanation of what is meant by this expansion of this agricultural statistics programme. It seems strange that this amount is tucked in here for the first time without some reasonable explanation.

Mr. Hoyte: The Hon. Member is incorrect when he says that the amount is tucked in for the first time, because the amount really was brought in last year as will be seen from the Estimates. The subhead and the amount appear under the Ministry of Finance because the work

is being done by the Statistical Bureau which is under the Ministry of Finance. It is very important and necessary work, having regards to our agricultural programme.

What the Statistical Bureau is doing is in fact compiling statistics about our agricultural sector in terms of numbers of persons engaged in agriculture, the number of persons engaged in various types of agricultural pursuits, the location of farms, the size of farms and other holdings and as far as possible the income earned by various types of farmers and that kind of information, which will give the Ministry of Agriculture broad perspective of the agricultural position. This type of information is needed very urgently if we are to proceed with a rational and intelligent programme of agricultural expansion.

Head 64, Ministry of Finance - \$669,127 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 65 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE
ACCOUNTANT GENERAL

Question proposed that the sum of \$1,405,331 for Head 65, Ministry of Finance, Accountant-General, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will Hon. Members please indicate.

7.25 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wish to ask a question on subhead 18, Special Visits and Representation at External Conferences. I should like to ask the Minister if the Government is realistic about this vote, having regards to its performance in the year 1970 and in the light of the revised estimate for 1971. The Government continues to provide the sum of \$200,000. We on this side would welcome a reduction in the expenditure to what is recorded in the Estimates. I wish to ask the Minister if he hopes to keep this vote as it is for the coming year.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, in answer to the Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran, I would say, yes. When the Financial Paper showing the increase in the 1971 allocation was debated in this House I did take the opportunity to point out that substantially the amount covered a number of unexpected visits, such as the visit by the Chinese Trade Mission here and the visit of our mission to China. There were things like that which had not been anticipated at the time.

Contrary to what seems to be a popular belief, the visits and representations really refer principally to visits and representations abroad by public servants who are going to conferences and similar meetings in relation to their particular field of expertise.

Next year the Ministry of Finance does propose to draw the line rather heavily on visits abroad and we propose to make a very serious effort to ensure that this vote does not keep escalating. Perhaps this is as good a time as any to serve notice on public servants that they need not send up to the Ministry too often submissions recommending officers in their particular Ministry for visits abroad.

Mr. Ram Karran: I take it that it is not a question of the amount of money spent, but that there will be a reduced number of visits.

I say that because of a statement made by the Prime Minister in the *Press* when one delegate from Guyana went abroad and was accommodated at the Dorchester. The Prime Minister is reported to have said in the *Press* that any representative of Guyana must be accommodated with the best facilities.

I assume, from what the Hon. Minister said, that there will be a reduced number of visits but that the status and standard of entertainment will remain as it is.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, we propose to effect economies at every level. Certainly there will be a reduction in the number of visits. The proposal from the Ministry of Finance is

that it is only in cases where we are satisfied that there is going to be a real benefit to this country that we will give our sanction for this type of visit to be met from this particular allocation.

At the same time, when we send our representatives abroad, we must ensure that they are accommodated at acceptable standards. I am certain that the Hon. Member will not want representatives from this country to go abroad and not be accommodated in a way befitting their status at the particular meeting or representation. We are not saying that the accommodation must be palatial, but certainly it should be adequate and convenient.

Head 65, Ministry of Finance, Accountant General - \$1,405,331, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 66 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

Mr. Ram Karran: I should like to ask a question on subhead 1 (3) and, with your permission, sir, to deal generally but briefly with the Head, Customs.

The Chairman: Please proceed.

Mr. Ram Karran: There is provision for two Assistant Controllers of Customs. I should like to ask the Hon. Minister if he can give us, without divulging any secrets or any personal information, the reason why the senior officer in this position, who was acting as the Head of this department has been reverted to his substantive post and is now on the verge of leaving the Service because of Government's persistent attacks on him.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, I do not wish to interrupt you but this type of question has been asked *ad infinitum* and every Minister has replied that it is the function of the Public

Service Commission to make appointments. Are you going to continue asking this type of question?

Mr. Ram Karran: While one agrees that the Public Service Commission has certain statutory functions to perform, one must not push one's head in the sand.

The Chairman: You should ask the Public Service Commission.

Mr. Ram Karran: The Public Service Commission is not in this House to answer questions. The Public Service Commission will not make itself available to members of Parliament.

The Chairman: There is a Head for the Public and Police Service Commissions.

Mr. Ram Karran: This refers to this department. I want to know why it is that this party in office uses its position to penalise people who are not of its political persuasion and why it is hounding out of the Service people who have had years of service.

The Chairman: Hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, you know that I will not permit you to continue with this type of question.

Mr. Ram Karran: If Your Honour insists that I should not proceed with the question I will not.

May I come to another question and ask the Hon. Minister to give this House an indication as to when conditions are going to change in the building we call the Queen's Warehouse.

As you will recall, sir, the old customs bond was destroyed by fire some time ago. The previous Government was well on the way to providing the country with a proper bonded warehouse, but since the departure of Mr. D'Aguiar from the Ministry of Finance some sort of organization has been set up to rebuild in this country a warehouse suitable for its imports and things like that.

I understand that the architect's fees have already been paid, but nothing more has been heard about it. If Your Honour were to take a walk to what is called the Queen's Warehouse in Kingston or if Hon. Members were to go there to see the condition under which the men work, they would see the hazards that workmen face every day, the danger of the stands collapsing. We would then know where we stand.

The Queen's Warehouse was used in the military days. It was abandoned, but as a result of the fire we started to store goods there. It is unsafe. I am surprised that we do not hear of thefts; the place is unsafe and insecure. Will the Hon. Minister tell us what are Government's plans for the rebuilding of a proper warehouse for the country's imports?

7.35 p.m.

You would recall, sir, that the place by the Stabroek Market was intended to be rehabilitated with a modern building to take care of all the financial buildings including Customs, but instead of that, we notice that the Government is moving in another direction. I understand it is proposed to house the Ministry of Finance at the Transport and Harbours Department as a Central financing office. Maybe the Hon. Minister will give us some indication as to what are the Government's plans with respect to this most important aspect of Government's activities.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, with respect to the first question asked by the Hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, I will tell him in all sincerity that I do not know what he is talking about.

Whatever accusations he and his party may make against me, I am certain that they cannot honestly say that I interfere with personnel in any of the Departments under my Ministry.

Whatever is the particular problem he is talking about I know nothing about it and I do not consider it a matter for me. I certainly reject the allegation that the Government or the party to which I belong interfere in matters of this sort.

Secondly, one slight point of correction. We no longer have a Queen's Warehouse; we have a State Warehouse. But, nevertheless, we all know that that building is in a state of disrepair and that there is a need for a new structure. I agree with the Hon. Member that we should not repair but construct a new one. I cannot tell him when we will put up a new one because from year to year the question of Government buildings and, indeed, the question of expenditure in particular fields become a matter of the priorities at the particular time. Buildings are important, so is agriculture. What I can tell him is that the Ministry of Works, Hydraulic and Supply is at present engaged in an exercise of trying to identify the government buildings which need to be urgently repaired, reconstructed or rebuilt. When we have got that report well, then, it becomes, again, a matter of priority, I have no doubt that a building of this sort is one which will rank high in the Government's list for putting up a new public building.

The Chairman: Page 158

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 10.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Sutton.

Mr. Sutton: When we look at subhead 10, Refunds of Revenue, we notice that the Approved Estimates for 1971 shows \$1 million and the Revised Estimates \$400,000, and for 1972 allocation is exactly half a million dollars. In reference to the legend we notice it is stated that the amount was overprovided in 1971. This is a little difficult to understand and I wonder if

overprovided in 1971 means that the number of claims outstanding cannot be handled and therefore \$400,00 could have been paid.

The Minister is aware that representations have been made to him by the Chamber of Commerce on the question of payment of the refunds of revenue to the Customs Department and except the situation has clarified itself almost overnight, not too long ago it was said that the number of claims outstanding was in the vicinity of several million dollars. We notice that despite the fact that \$1 million was provide on the Approved Estimates, only \$400,000 was paid and it does not appear, to anybody who knows anything about this matter, that the amount which have been paid and suggested to be paid for 1972 are in fact adequate. Could the Minister therefore be good enough to tell us what in fact is the total amount of outstanding claims in respect of refunds of revenue for the Customs Department and whether meetings did in fact take place with the Chamber of Commerce, and that a promise was made to step up the situation? Is it a fact that the amount proved for in 1972, \$500,000, represents what they anticipate can be paid rather than the amount of claims outstanding? Could the Minister give us some idea what relations the amount provided for 1972 bears in fact to the number of claims outstanding for refunds of revenue in this respect?

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I can begin by rejecting out of hand the statement alleged to be made by the Chamber of Commerce that there are several millions of dollars outstanding in respect of refunds of revenue. I can also assure the Hon. Member that the Chamber of Commerce never requested any meeting with me and never had any meeting with me; had they so requested I would have met them. I recall some time ago I got a letter couched in vague terms suggesting that there were large sums of money owing to businessmen and recommending that there be some expedition. But that kind of letter is unhelpful. I personally always believe in identifying in a positive way the particular problem and coming to grips with it. I find no help at all in people making general statements to me. I would wish to say that if the

Chamber of Commerce has a problem of this sort and they are in a position to give me the details in support of their claim, I will most certainly get after my officers to have the situation corrected.

Last year, we had a problem with refunds. The Director of Audit questioned the legality of refunds which the Comptroller of Customs and Excise had been making and the Comptroller quite naturally had to hold up payments pending advice from the Law Officers. The advice from the Law Officers indicated that the point made by the Director of Audit was correct and that the Comptroller of Customs was paying out money illegally. Hon. Members will recall that we brought legislation to this House to do two things – to legalise the payment and to ensure that people who, in fact, had valid claims did not lose their right to recover.

7.45 p.m.

Secondly, I would like to point out to this House that the Comptroller of Customs and Excise is introducing a new system which would make refunds more expeditious. Refunds, instead of being payable at the Treasury, will be paid at Customs House and we are now awaiting the forms from the printers in order to put this new system into operation. We hope by this means we will be able to get on more quickly. Government does not have any intention of depriving citizens of money which is legitimately due to them. We hope that with the co-operation of businessmen, the new system will work smoothly and will remove some of the irritations about which businessmen complain.

Head 66, Ministry of Finance, Customs and Excise - \$1,876,725 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 67 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE
INLAND REVENUE

Question proposed that the sum of \$2,073,346 for Head 67, Ministry of Finance, Inland Revenue, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will Hon. Members please indicate. Page 159. Page 160.

Mr. Ram Karran: Subhead 2, 8, 10 and 12.

Mr. Sutton: Subhead 8 and 12.

The Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran.

Mr. Ram Karran: Subhead 2. Mr. Chairman, I wish to ask the Hon. Minister of Finance to explain to us, if possible, the very large increase in transport and travelling which in 1969, as you can see from the schedule, was \$20,000 and which has now risen to \$32,000.

May I under subhead 8, Refunds of Revenue, ask the Hon. Minister if the Government is really sincere when it says in his words, that the Government does not wish to deprive any of its citizens of money legitimately due to them, when the Government today uses the legislation, which has been enacted in this House to protect the country by imposing a large percentage of the tax due on it being questioned, to pillory people who do not support the Government.

I refer, sir, particularly to those people drawn under the organization known as GADM, who tell us that, because the Government cannot get at all of them or most of them, and most of the self-employed people, and the professionals, against whom the Government cannot act, the Government merely issues assessment. I understand a large number of Maha Sabha personnel

has been affected by this. The Government issues assessments against them and they have to find two-thirds or a large portion of it or else the matter cannot go to appeal, and these people are forced to consign themselves, I say advisedly, in some form or the other to become some puppet here or there of the Guyana Government.

This law is supposed to be secret and silent. The other day we heard the Hon. Minister referring to an arrangement between myself and the Commissioner of Inland Revenue with respect to the application of this law which makes everything in the Commissioner's office secret. I say advisedly and most strongly, that the Government has not been using the law in the best interest of the Guyana Government and it is using it to persecute those people whom it cannot get at in any other way. These are no friends of the P.P.P. or of mine, but I ask the Government very strongly at this stage to stop this nonsense, not to arbitrarily use this law to persecute people whom it cannot get at in any other way.

I listened when the Hon. Minister said that he does not interfere with the Public Service. I am inclined to agree with him because it is a problem that he inherited, but I hope he can say the same thing unless his department is being directed over his head. I do not want to call the names of people. How can you assess Mr. "X" for \$24,000 and ask him to pay a large portion of that before he can have his matter heard? This law was intended to catch the sharks.

The Chairman: Has this House not passed that law?

Mr. Ram Karran: Yes, Mr. Chairman, but the law should be used in the spirit of the law. Not to persecute people. How long is it going to go on? Does the Government mean to bring everybody down to their knees unless they can join the bandwagon of the P.N.C. and curse the country in which they were born? No nation is going to stand up to that. Time will catch up with this Government.

I mentioned subhead 8, Refunds of Revenue, and 10, Expenses of Board of Review, with respect to the same thing but I want to draw another matter which has been repeatedly flaunted in this House, drawn to the attention of the Government without any relief. I refer to the very large amounts of money held by the Commissioner of Inland Revenue for taxpayers.

I recall one case, an illustration of which will probably move the Hon. Minister to do something about it, the case of a man who wanted to go to the West Indies on his regular job. He goes every six months to the West Indies and he works there and returns after six months. In attempting to go, he went to the Inland Revenue Department and they assessed him arbitrarily allegedly because he is a self-employed man. He had to pay taxes amounting to about \$1,200 backdating for several years although his returns were faithfully submitted to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue every year. Having paid this \$1,200 – he borrowed it, he is paying interest on it – to the Commissioner to obtain the tax exit, he left the country. One year has elapsed since this man's return to Guyana. He had not been able to uplift this money, which was pledged to the Commissioner of Inland Revenue for him to get a tax exit, although his forms had been submitted all these years.

The Chairman: Hon. Member, you will appreciate that the Hon. Minister may not be able to answer that.

Mr. Ram Karran: No, sir, but the Minister and his predecessors' attention has been drawn to this fact, that the Commissioner is far behindhand. As soon as the end of the year comes, if you have overpaid tax, you should get it back. This happens in the United Kingdom and all these places.

7.55 p.m.

Income tax is deducted on the P.A.Y.E. system and goes to the Inland Revenue Department and yet the department writes to people telling them to send a cheque. The

department is not functioning as it should. It is nearly a decade that the Inland Revenue Department has been operating under this system of P.A.Y.E. and I am saying that it is time for something to be done to bring it up to date so that people may know where they are. I am sure that the sophisticated people in Georgetown who come under the P.A.Y.E. system and who can write their names are finding it difficult. More so the people I am talking about, the workers on the sugar estates who can ill afford the dollars that are taken from them. They cannot get the money back. They will go to their graves without having the money returned to them. The Government must do something about it.

The last point I wish to make is this: I wonder whether there is truth in the information contained in the newspapers that Mr. Sukhu of Sheet Anchor and Mr. Raschid of No. 11, have had their heads rolled. Both of them gave support to the Government in the matter of the toll gates on the Corentyne. Perhaps the Government has also changed its mind with respect to the operations of the toll system in the Corentyne. The Hon. Minister should give us an indication if that is so, as he has dropped these two stalwarts and reduced the head appropriately.

Mr. Sutton: Mr. Chairman, in view of the time that the Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran has spent on subhead 8, Refunds of Revenue, I shall spend only two minutes on it to cover grounds which he does not appear to have covered.

In the light of the figures which we see in front of us for refunds of revenue, that is, \$1.5 million approved in the Estimates 1971 and revised to \$1.4 million and \$1.2 million for 1972, would the Hon. Minister tell us whether the position with regard to the amount outstanding for claims for refunds of income tax is in fact better than it was some time ago? Would he also say whether it is taking less time to pay refunds and whether the total sum outstanding is in fact less than it was a year ago.

With regard to subhead 12, Expenses, Operation of Road Toll Systems, it is noted that the sum of \$150,000 has been estimated as the expenses for the operation of the toll gates. The

legend states, "Due to establishment of three additional toll stations."

The Prime Minister told us that the new toll would not be put into operation on the Corentyne until the transport services was available so that people could get cheap transport. If Hon. Member inspected the head of revenue they would find that \$550,000 is earmarked for collection on the Corentyne Road.

Would the Hon. Minister tell us whether the time-table for setting the tolls in operation on the Corentyne has been revised and that the tolls will be introduced early in the new year? It appears unlikely that this sum could be spent unless the system was working very early in the year, particular in view of the fact that it is projected that \$550,000 will be collected as revenue on the Corentyne. Would the Hon. Minister tell us what is the time-table for the completion of the toll gates? When will the buses be put on the roads and when will collection of tolls on the Corentyne Road be started?

Mr. Roshan Ally: May I seek your permission, sir, to ask two questions? On subhead 12, Expenses, Operation of Road Toll System, I should like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he is aware that toll gates on the Corentyne Road would affect agriculture. I would like the Hon. Minister to say whether he knows that the Corentyne Road is not a highway. There are zebra crossings on the road and the road passes through a residential area.

I should also like to ask the Hon. Minister whether he knows that a large number of animals are to be found straying on the roads in Guyana and the road system is the largest zoo in the world.

Mr. Hoyte: Mr. Chairman, to dispose of the questions asked by the Hon. Member Mr. Roshan Ally. I agree with him wholeheartedly that the Corentyne Road will affect agriculture.

It will affect agriculture favourably. My own conviction is that the road will prove a boon to people engaged in agriculture for a variety of reasons which I need not spell out here and now.

The Hon. Member asked me whether I knew that the road was not a highway. I do not propose to engage in a dialogue on semantics with him. Whether he calls it a highway, a road, a freeway, whatever he chooses to call it, the Government has put down a first-class road in that area and we believe that residents there will benefit enormously from the existence of that road.

With respect to the road being a zoo, I am not quite sure what is the point the Hon. Member is making, but it might have been helpful to this honourable House if he had spelt out the kind of animals contained in this zoo which he sees every day on this road.

To a more serious aspect of the discussions on this page: The Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran questions the increase in the vote for Transport and Travelling, that is, subhead 2. There are two reasons for the increase in 1971 of the Revised Estimates over the Approved Estimates, and I did give this explanation when we were discussing the Financial Paper in which we sought the increase under that subhead.

First of all, because of the nationalization of DEMBA, the Commissioner of Inland Revenue and his staff were required to travel frequently to Linden to audit both the books and stock of the Demerara Bauxite Company. That audit had been going on since December of the previous year.

Secondly, towards the end of the year, there was an increase throughout the Public Service of transport and travelling allowances. That is why it is projected at this figure of \$32,000 for the year 1972. There has been an upward regarding of allowances paid to public servants.

The Hon. Member chose subhead 8, Refunds of Revenue, to indulge in a tirade and to take up cudgels on behalf of some organization he called G.A.B.M. I do not propose to reply in kind, but merely wish to say that Government intends to pursue relentlessly and without apologies all persons who have not been fulfilling their obligations to the state in respect of income tax payment.

The Hon. Member claims that I see income tax files. Under the law, the President has power to direct the Commissioner of Inland Revenue to disclose information to specified persons and the Hon. Member could not be serious in suggesting that I, as Minister of Finance, responsible for the collection of public revenue, ought to be denied access to files and ought to be precluded from investigating the workings of a department within the ambit of my Ministry. I do not think he is really serious.

May I say that it is obvious from our income tax returns that a substantial percentage of people eligible for the payment of income tax are not, in fact, making a contribution.

8.05 p.m.

That is why next year there will be an intensive effort on the part of the Government to ensure that as many people as possible fulfil their obligations in this respect. The Hon. Member complains that very many people fail to get refunds of income tax due to them. This is so, but I think we must understand the reason for the failure of many of these people to get the refund which is due to them; and the Income Tax Department has been carrying this cross all the time. People have been criticising, they complain to me personally, members of my own family have complained to me about failure to get their refunds.

But sir, there are two important reasons. First of all, you cannot get a refund unless you file a return, and very many people who pay income tax under the P.A.Y.E. system believe that, as long as the money is deducted they have nothing more to do and at the end of the year of

assessment they do not make a return. I think the major problem which the Commissioner has been facing is that persons who are employed have their income tax deducted from month to month or week to week as the case may be, and at the end of the year the employer submits Forms II stating the name of every employee and the amounts of deductions made. Frequently two things happen: (1) you cannot get that Form II from the employers, and (2) very often when the Form II is submitted it cannot be reconciled with the actual amounts paid in. Therefore, the staff of the Commissioner is tied up in pursuing pettifogging things like these. Sometimes, the fact that you cannot reconcile the forms with the money paid in is due to the fact that the Form II is prepared in a slovenly manner. Sometimes it is due to the fact that some dishonest employers deduct income tax from employees' salaries and do not pay in that money.

There are many problems; what I want to do now is to give notice that next year we are going to apply the law vigorously. Whenever the law is applied you get complaints of discrimination, when in point of fact it is not so at all. The whole system can only work smoothly if everybody complies with the rules and regulations. If people do not do that you get into snags and bottlenecks and people suffer.

The Hon. Member Mr. Sutton raised a question under subhead 8, Refunds of Revenue. There is this problem with refunds of revenue and it is this: it is always an estimate and it is very difficult to arrive at anything near to the real figure. The reason is that large taxpayers, Bookers Sugar Estate and Companies like that, pre-pay taxes and therefore if their profits do not come up to expectation as happened, for example, in the sugar crop of 1969, you are faced with the fact that income tax has been pre-paid at too high a rate and the Government is with repaying. Last year during the first half of the year, instead of collecting taxes from the sugar companies, the Government was in fact repaying taxes which had been overpaid the year before and it was only towards the end of the year that there was this upturn in taxes from the sugar industry.

The Hon. Member also asked me to give him the timetable for establishing the bus service on the Corentyne. I regret that I am unable to give him any firm answer that question. What I do know is that the Guyana Transport Service Limited, which will be putting buses in that area, has got a number of buses under order. The timetable, to us the Hon. Member's word, for the delivery of those buses is something not under the control of the company. I would like to reiterate the statement made by the Hon. Prime Minister in this House that it is not proposed to establish the system of toll collection until there is an adequate public transport system on the Corentyne. I think that these were the questions asked and these are the responses which I have been able to give to them.

Head 67, Ministry of Finance, Inland Revenue, \$2,073,346, agreed to an order to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Page 161.

HEAD 68 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK

Question proposed that the sum of \$76,194 for head 68, Ministry of Finance, Post Office Savings Bank stand part of the Estimates.

Head 68, Ministry of Finance, Post Office Savings Bank, \$76,194, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 69-MINISTRY OF FINANCE**PENSIONS AND GRATUITIES**

Question proposed that the sum of \$888,355 for Head 69, Ministry of Finance, Pensions and Gratuities, stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Will Hon. Members please indicate.

Head 69, Ministry of Finance, Pensions and Gratuities - \$888,355 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 70 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE**PUBLIC DEBT**

Question proposed that the sum of \$10,000 for Head 70, Ministry of Finance, Public Debt, stand part of the Estimates.

Head 70, Ministry of Finance, Public Debt - \$10,000 – agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

HEAD 71 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE**REVISION OF WAGES, SALARIES AND RELATED PAYMENTS**

Question proposed that the sum of \$10,000 for Head 71, Ministry of Finance, Revision of Wages, Salaries and Related Payments, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Ram Karran: As of coming events cast their shadows, we notice under this heading a word that looks like “evasion” of wages, salaries and related payment. It is only that

“evasion” is spelt incorrectly. One would be inclined to say from time immemorial there has been this intention on the part of the Government to set up some examination of the Public Service, and all sorts of fancy names. Today, we notice this sum to continue this farce which seems to be an exercise that will never come to an end. I wonder if the Hon. Minister can tell this House specifically, having regard to all the fixed dates we have had in the past by his predecessors and by the Prime Minister himself, when this farce is going to end, or is it the intention of the Government to evade, as it says here, its responsibility to the Public Service?

Mr. Hoyte: I have explained time and again to this honourable House what the position is with respect to the job evaluation exercise. Nevertheless, despite what the Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran has said, Government does have the confidence of the Public Service in this matter. I have pointed out that this exercise is not being done by the politicians. This is being done by technicians who are public servants and they themselves admitted that the magnitude of the task was initially under-estimated and they themselves know that the whole question of negotiations about new conditions of service and things like that are dependent upon the finalizing of this exercise; so they have every incentive to bring it to an end.

It was only about a fortnight ago, I believe, I was invited by the Permanent Secretary to go to the Public Service Ministry to see the progress which they had made. I am satisfied that they are proceeding with this job apace, and in the course of the next year, according to their estimates, this whole exercise will be completed. We will then be in a position to proceed rationally with remunerating our public servants. I do not think that any Member of this House who is serious will want us to continue with the old irrational system which has grown up in a haphazard fashion and which has resulted in a large number of anomalies and injustices in conditions of service between public servant and public servant and public servant and between Ministry and Ministry.

Mr. Ram Karran: One does not wish to have the old system continued but I have repeatedly observed that the Government creates anomalies in these Estimates. The most important point I wish to drive home to Hon. Members is the fact that the Government, by carrying out the exercise in this manner, is depriving a large number of people, particularly those who cannot afford to bear the hardship, , namely, the casual workers. They do not benefit under the scheme of temporary payment. I want to point out that the Government is employing people on a daily and hourly rate all over the country and because they do not have permanent employment they are deprived of the benefits.

Mr. Hoyte: May I dispose of this myth which the Hon. Member has been peddling in this House? Every Government employee has the benefit of the allowances which are paid.

Mr. Ram Karran: Not casuals.

Mr. Hoyte: Everybody. I wish to assure this House that every person employed by Government gets the relief which Government has provided in this honourable House.

Head 71, Ministry of Finance, Revision of Wages, Salaries and Related Payments - \$10,000,000, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

DIVISION XXVI - MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Question proposed that the sum of \$12,650,400 for Division XXVI, Ministry of Finance, stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Subhead 10.

The Chairman: Please proceed

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Subhead 10, Rice Rehabilitation Programme:

Mr. Chairman, we are not opposed to money being spent to give life once again to the rice industry which is almost dead in this country. We are not opposed to the Government doing something tangible and positive to help the rice farmers; we are not opposed to the Government taking a loan from U.S.A.I.D. for the rehabilitation of the rice industry.

I do not wish to take issue with the Government on the fact that money is lent to the Guyana Rice Corporation since the Government decides that the money will go to that corporation, but the figures show that the G.R.C. and the Rice Marketing Board have been making profits. The G.R.C. made \$522,321 in 1967, \$411,000 in 1969, \$5000,000 in 1970 and, according to their figures, the R.M.B. made profits.

The point that I wish to make very strong to this Government tonight is that while the R.M.B. and the G.R.C. show profits in their operations, this is being done at the expense of the farmers. Farmers have been complaining that they are producing rice in this country at a loss. There can be no doubt that the farmers have the strongest case for an increase in the prices of rice. I make this point because devaluation has assisted bauxite and sugar but it has "screwed" the rice farmers.

The majority of the machinery and parts that are used in the rice industry was imported from Britain. Therefore, it is logical to assume that prices for agricultural machinery as well as parts will be increased as a result of the devaluation. Without going into details, my figures show that the cost of production of rice will go up by 20 per cent.

One of the first things that the government must do with this sum of \$10 million is to increase the price paid for rice and paddy. Only then can the Government come back to this House next year and justify the provision of this loan for \$10 million.

I therefore urge very strongly that, in view of all the circumstances and in view of the devaluation, Government should consider increasing the prices paid for rice and paddy.

The Chairman: The Hon. Deputy Prime Minister.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture (Dr. Reid): Mr. Chairman, the last point about the rice industry is not new. It is the same old story that the way to run the industry is to increase the prices of paddy and rice.

The programme that we are following now does not impose on the small rice farmer the necessity to purchase heavy equipment for rice cultivation. Consequently, all those who would have been out of the rice industry now have a place, because the equipment used in the cultivation and reaping of rice is equipment that is organized by the Guyana Rice Corporation. My friends will only have a just case if the cost of cultivation goes up because of an increase in the charges. If there is no increase in charges for ploughing and for reaping, then I do not think my friend has any case at all.

When the Hon. Member talks about the price of rice, one must not forget that we grow rice not only to feed ourselves but to export and unless we have an industry that is efficient, the industry will surely be destroyed.

At one time our friends in this House were shouting that the rice industry was destroyed. Now, seven years later, they are talking about the rice industry making substantial sums as profit. They want to tell us how to spend the surplus and that is where we are at conflict with them, because unless you can reinvest in the industry you will destroy it. Unless management keeps improving its business all the time, it will go out of business. We have seen this happen in this country so often that people who used to be in business have had to give up because they took all their profits and hid the money away in a corner or put it in some other business without putting

it back into the original business. Reinvestment is going on in the rice industry. Unless we do that, the industry will fail because we would not be able to sell rice overseas.

At one time people were saying that Guyana was selling rice with a bad odour and rice with discoloured grains. We have had to use the surplus to put up equipment that cost \$1.2 million. The money came out of the rice industry and this is where it should come from. We installed a good processing plant and now we are constructing silos so that we can store and dry the paddy properly. I see no reason why this rice industry should not go from strength to strength.

Division XXVI, Ministry of Finance - \$12,650,400, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

The Chairman: Hon. Members, this completes consideration of the Estimates in Committee of Supply. I wish to thank you for the co-operation you have given me in that we have finished on time. Perhaps for the first time in many years, every item, every Head and Division, have been exposed to debate. Despite the turbulence, "All's well that ends well."

The Assembly will now resume.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Finance.

Mr. Hoyte: I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has considered and approved the Estimates of Expenditure for the year 1972. I now ask that the motion for approval of the Estimates be put.

Question put, and agreed to.

28.12.71

National Assembly

8.25 – 8.35 p.m.

Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Wednesday, 29th December, 1971, at 2 .00 p.m.” (The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House))

Adjourned accordingly at 8.35 p.m.
